

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME  
REGIONAL GENDER EQUALITY  
STRATEGY FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN 2023-2025**

The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025 for Latin America and the Caribbean was developed through a co-creation process that began in September 2022. The first milestone was the celebration of the “Gender Equality Week”, organized by the UNDP Regional Hub’s Gender Team, during which consultations were organized with government institutions and mechanisms for the advancement of women’s rights, civil society organizations and the feminist movement, academia, as well as the private sector. At the same time, a consultation on the Sparkblue platform was organized, which allowed UNDP staff in the region, belonging to different thematic teams, to share their priorities, actions and challenges to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in all their diversity in the region. Subsequently, a UNDP LAC Gender Community of Practice was held in person in Panama in October 2022, which allowed for additional inputs to ensure that the strategy is evidence-based, implementable and actionable. Finally, the draft strategy was validated by gender specialists from UNDP country offices in the region, UNDP Regional Hub staff and colleagues from UNDP’s global gender team.

Over 100 people participated in this process, including colleagues from UNDP Country Offices, national and regional partners and UN System agencies. To all of them we would like to extend our profound gratitude for their valuable contributions and invite them to make this strategy their own, as well as to continue collaborating with UNDP for its successful implementation.

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# Foreword

The progress made towards gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean is at a crossroads. The multiple crises affecting the region are having a disproportionate impact on women and girls, affecting to a greater extent those who face discrimination based on socio-economic, ethnic, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or migratory status, among others, widening the pre-existing gender gaps.

In order to provide a strategic vision that addresses gender equality and women's empowerment in all its diversity as a core and transversal axis of inclusive, sustainable and true transformative development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025. At the corporate level, three key documents inspire this strategy and frame its content: the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025; the Regional Programme 2022-2025 and the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.

This strategy was constructed on the basis of a participatory process of analysis of lessons learned from previous years. It recognizes that addressing the complexity of the current reality requires systemic, comprehensive, and coherent solutions that take into account the diverse circumstances and capacities, as well as the structural inequalities that affect women, their rights and their life trajectories.

UNDP is committed to a comprehensive institutional transformation to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in all of our programmes ensuring that women's experiences, needs and contributions are taken into account in all development efforts. We have therefore prioritized: i) promoting inclusive economies and women's economic empowerment; ii) contributing to the creation of the inclusive and egalitarian societies; iii) promoting nature based, gender transformative and risk-informed development; and iv) fostering inclusive democratic governance with women's participation and leadership. This requires a committed, sensitized, and trained team to address and promote gender equality, with adequate resources invested and enabling environment and conditions. In this sense, the UNDP Gender Equality Seal has been an important tool and learning tool in this process of institutional change.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the UNDP team and the various individuals who have been instrumental in the development of this strategy. I invite you to read it to learn about the strategic priorities on gender equality that will guide our work as UNDP in Latin America and the Caribbean during the period 2023-2025. Through our offices throughout the region, we will continue to work hand in hand with governments, sister agencies of the United Nations System, multilateral organizations, civil society organizations, the feminist movement and academia to implement collective, multi-stakeholder solutions that will lead to major agreements that accelerate the closing of gender gaps. It is time to join efforts and wills and take bold and transformative steps to achieve equitable and just societies that are committed to gender equality as a central condition for the common good and a prerequisite for sustainable development.



**Michelle Muschett,**  
UNDP Regional Director for  
Latin America and the Caribbean



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01

**Regional  
context**

The population of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is currently facing the effects of multiple and overlapping crises: the COVID-19 pandemic is intertwined with persistent crises such as the economic and environmental crisis; the persistence of inequalities and an increase in democratic fragility and weakness in several countries; and other emerging crises, such as, the food crisis, the care crisis, and global inflation resulting from the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. These complex and multidimensional crises, which generate new types of uncertainty<sup>1</sup>, have exacerbated gender inequalities in countries, which in turn are affecting to a greater extent women who experience different types of discrimination linked to their socio-economic status, race-ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or migratory status, among others.

In addition, the region faces complex challenges that require systemic solutions. We are witnessing a growth in the concentration of economic and political power that has never been seen before and countries' fiscal space continues to shrink in the absence of reforms aimed at progressivity. There is also an acceleration in political, social, economic, and environmental conflicts, accompanied by increased political polarisation and a crisis of traditional party systems; a rapid technological transformation associated with the new digital age, which brings new challenges and opportunities for women's inclusion in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); as well as the rise of fundamentalist ideologies that undermine gender equality and women's rights, which are gaining more access to institutions and decision-making positions, and perpetuating gender biases that are more resistant to change. The region also presents territorial tensions within countries, that results in the exacerbation of territorial inequalities and challenges for local governance. This requires a new generation of public policies with the capacity to address complexity and transform realities in a context marked by uncertainty.

The situation of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean deserves a special mention, as they have their own vulnerabilities and characteristics. In general, these islands

The transition towards a new development paradigm can only be conceived from a transformative and sustainable perspective that permeates our strategic planning

tend to be ecologically fragile and vulnerable. Their small size, limited resources, geographical dispersion, and isolation from markets put them at an economic disadvantage and prevent them from achieving economies of scale. They are also on the frontline of climate change and exposed to greater impacts. Since 1970 it is estimated that SIDS have lost US\$ 153 million due to climate-related events<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, many also face excessively high debt-to-GDP ratios, which threaten their ability to cope with complex crises. On the other hand, on average, the tourism sector accounts for 30% of GDP in these countries. The COVID-19 crisis led to record revenue losses in countries with limited sources of foreign exchange to service their external debt and imports and had a strong impact on women, who are over-represented in the tourism sector. In this context, marine and coastal ecosystems are of strategic importance and a valuable resource for sustainable development. Women play an important role in fisheries value chains and in the tourism sector in SIDS. However, women's contributions, priorities and interests tend to be undervalued and they are under-represented in decision-making related to natural resource management and disaster risk management, due to discriminatory social norms.

The region is at a crossroads, where continuing along the "traditional path" is not an option, as the urgency of the challenges we face reminds us. In this scenario, **the transition towards a new development paradigm can only be conceived from a transformative and sustainable perspective that permeates our strategic planning. For this**

## Women are key agents of change in their communities that are needed to mitigate and address these environmental crises

reason, UNDP has developed the **Regional Gender Equality Strategy for the 2023-2025 period, which is committed to an ambitious, strategic, and transformative agenda to promote gender equality and the empowerment women in all their diversity**. The foundations are based in the international and regional normative frameworks that guarantee women's human rights, as well as in the Regional Gender Agenda<sup>3</sup> and the 2030 Agenda roadmap, which places gender equality at the centre of sustainable development. At the corporate level, three key documents inspire this strategy and frame its content: the [UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#); the [UNDP Regional Programme 2022-2025](#); and the [UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025](#).

The development of **public policies for equality**, explicitly aimed at improving women's living conditions and guaranteeing their human rights, has been consolidating in most countries in the region – mainly through gender **equality plans** – thus making the obligations of States towards gender equality and non-discrimination operational<sup>4</sup>. These plans have been developed by national **mechanisms for the advancement of women (MAMs)**, with **Latin America and the Caribbean being the region with the most consolidated institutional framework as 70% of MAMs have a high hierarchical level<sup>5</sup>**, which means that in these countries the MAM is a Ministry or an entity whose head has ministerial rank. However, relative to other state institutions, in general, MAMs still do not have an adequate budget to implement public policies for gender equality<sup>6</sup>.

**Latin America and the Caribbean are characterised by an unjust social organisation of care** that translates into existing welfare regimes that tend

to familiarise care, with the burden of domestic and unpaid care work falling mainly on households and, specifically, on women, who invest on average three times more time than men on non-remunerated care work. This situation responds to the lack of comprehensive responses and co-responsibility for care between the state, the private sector, communities, families and within families, between men and women. The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the implementation of quarantines in countries, highlighted the critical role of women's paid and unpaid domestic and care work in sustaining life.

Unlike previous crises, the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic had a more significant impact on women's employment, registering a setback equivalent to more than 18 years in the levels of the labour participation rate of women<sup>7</sup>. By the end of 2021, women were still twice as likely to lose their jobs compared to men (30.2% versus 14.7%)<sup>8</sup>. At the aggregate level, the pandemic increased the number of years it will take to close the economic gender gap from 90 to 134 years<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, **there is still a significant gender gap in access to financial resources: it is estimated that globally more than 1 billion women still do not use or have access to the financial system<sup>10</sup>**. Furthermore, women's poverty remains a worrying phenomenon in our region: it is estimated that more than 62% of adult women experience multidimensional poverty<sup>11</sup>. The over-representation of women in poor households is a well-documented reality in LAC<sup>12</sup> and acts as a barrier to achieving the 2030 Agenda by limiting women's economic, physical, and decision-making autonomy.

**Women's political participation and representation in LAC has had a notable progress in recent decades, but also presents challenges.**<sup>13</sup> Women parliamentarians represent 34.6% of seats at the regional level, but ten countries still fail to reach 20% representation of women in parliaments; nine countries have electoral legislation that includes parity and another nine countries have quotas of between 20% and 40% representation by sex in electoral candidacies. Notably, at the municipal level women mayors do not exceed 15.5%. On the other hand, women's participation in public administration globally averages 64%, although



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under-representation persists in decision-making as women hold only 38% of managerial positions and 31% of top leadership positions<sup>14</sup>.

In this context, **violence against women in political and public life** affects, restricts or prevents the full exercise of women’s political rights and their participation as individuals and as a group<sup>15</sup>. This problem, little recognised and naturalised as part of the performance in public life, is beginning to be considered in the field of human rights protection; for example six countries in the region have specific legislation to address this manifestation of violence.

**Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and femicide/feminicide (FF)** – its most extreme expression – **continue to represent a serious public health and development problem in the region** that requires the adoption of a comprehensive,

intersectional, multi-actor and multidimensional approach. Although progress has been made through the adoption of regulatory frameworks, public policies, and national action plans<sup>16</sup> to address VAWG, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (the first regional treaty in history to specifically address the issue), its continued prevalence and widespread impunity is a cause for concern. Available evidence indicates that at least one third of women and girls experience gender-based violence<sup>17</sup>, expressed in a continuum of manifestations, both in the public and in the private or domestic sphere, some of which can culminate in femicide/feminicide. In 2021, 4,425 femicides/feminicides were registered in 19 countries in the region<sup>18</sup>, although this figure may be higher due to underreporting<sup>19</sup>, which shows the magnitude of this problem. Violence against women has also



been aggravated by environmental degradation, as women environmental defenders have taken an active role in protecting territories and have consequently been subjected to higher levels of violence. Gender inequalities embedded in social norms dictate how women and men unequally access and control over land and resources related to forests, agriculture, water and fisheries. Evidence suggests that gender-based violence is often used as a way of maintaining these power imbalances between women and men<sup>20</sup>. Between 2015 and 2016, 2,197 attacks against women defenders were documented in Mesoamerica, 37% of which had a gender-specific component<sup>21</sup>.

**The richest region in terms of biodiversity is also one of the most challenged by extreme climate events.** In recent years, countries in the region have experienced intense droughts, devastating hurricanes, tropical storms and heavy rains, floods, severe heat waves and catastrophic forest fires<sup>22</sup>. There is a causal interrelationship between gender inequalities and environmental degradation where both exacerbate each other. Migration and other human mobility processes linked to disasters and climate change are closely related to gender. In Latin America, human mobility processes will be increasingly influenced by these phenomena,

with women and girls being particularly affected. Despite these inequalities, women are key agents of change in their communities that are needed to mitigate and address these environmental crises. In this context, there is an urgent need for nature-based, gender-transformative and risk-informed development.

Available evidence indicates that **women are disproportionately affected by climate change and disasters due to prevailing gender roles and inequalities**<sup>23</sup> and that, at the same time, women are powerful environmental stewards due to their unique relationship with the environment and their contributions to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in their rural and urban communities<sup>24</sup>. However, **women experience inequalities in the access to and control over natural resources**. They are generally not recognised as relevant stakeholders and are under-represented in decision-making processes associated with conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. In Latin America, **almost 60 million women live in rural landscapes, but only 30% of them own agricultural land**, only 10% have access to credit and only 5% have access to technical assistance programmes<sup>25</sup>



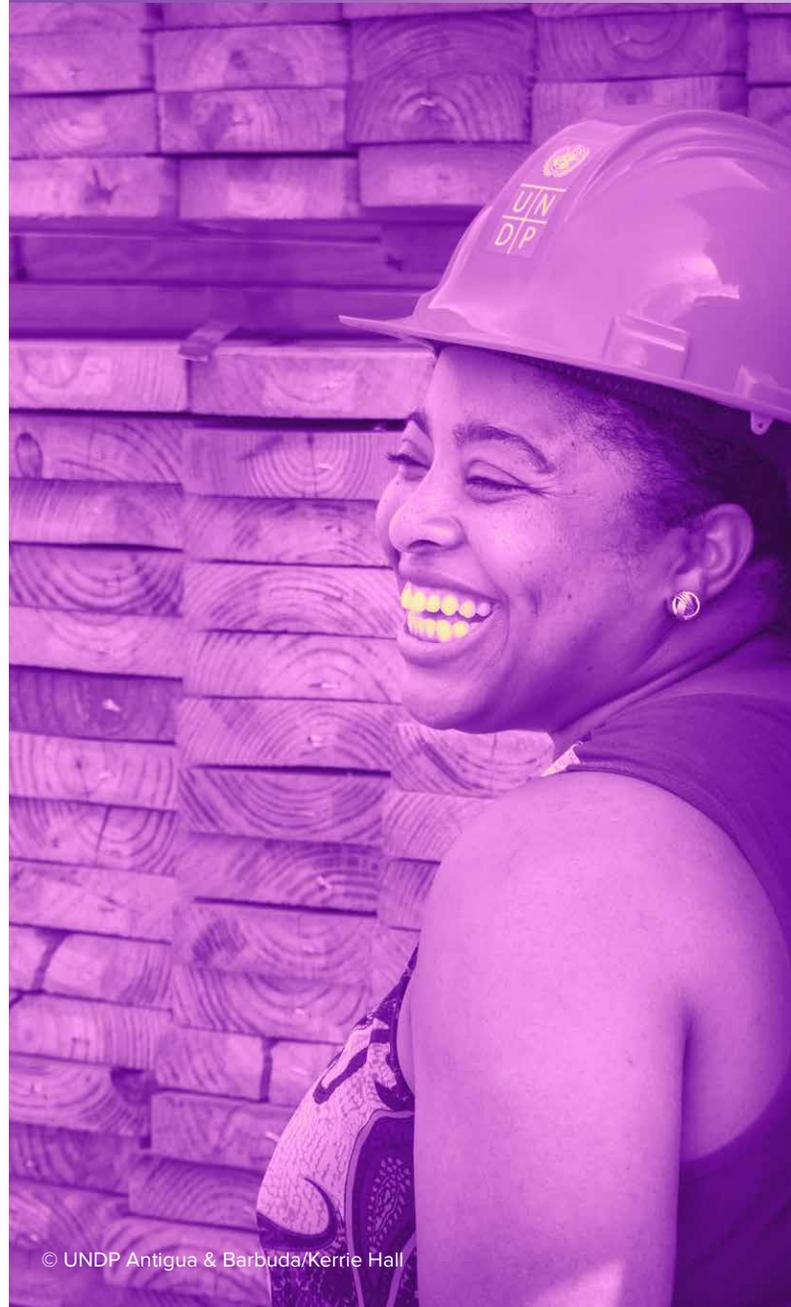
02

**Directions  
of change**

In line with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, the UNDP Regional Programme 2022-2025 and the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025, this Strategy pursues three interconnected directions of change that set the course for our regional roadmap for gender equality.

- 1. Promoting structural transformations:** UNDP aims to eliminate the structural knots that perpetuate gender inequality and that have determinant impacts in the economic, social, institutional, and political spheres. To this end, UNDP will continue to work hand in hand with countries and a wide range of stakeholders to address the underlying power systems and structures that impact the achievement of equality between women and men.
- 2. Understanding setbacks and addressing their impacts:** The multidimensional crises and setbacks in the region jeopardise the progress made on gender equality and hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda in the countries. In this context, it is essential to understand setbacks and their impacts in order to generate effective strategies for their containment, thus ensuring that women enjoy their human rights and reach their full development potential.
- 3. Re-imagining the future:** While, overall, significant progress has been made towards gender equality in the region in recent decades, the pace of change is still too slow, and we need to accelerate efforts to close gender gaps in the near future. Achieving gender equality can wait no longer. The speed and sequence of changes is as relevant as their directionality. UNDP therefore proposes an ambitious, sustainable, and inclusive Regional Strategy that addresses the structural causes of gender inequalities and puts at the centre a series of transformative elements that will ensure that women in all their diversity are not left behind on the path to sustainable development.

Achieving gender equality can wait no longer. The speed and sequence of changes is as relevant as their directionality



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03

**Accelerators  
of gender  
equality in  
Latin America  
and the  
Caribbean**

In line with corporate guidelines, UNDP will implement the objectives set out in the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025, incorporating the following gender equality accelerators in a cross-cutting manner:



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**Innovation:** For UNDP, innovation for development means using the latest concepts and tools to achieve the changes set out in our strategic frameworks. Driving innovation is key to developing the solutions needed

to address development challenges and contribute to creating more sustainable and egalitarian societies. In this area, the UNDP Acceleration Labs, with a presence in 15 countries in the region, have considerable potential for driving strategic innovation and transformation and the collective search for innovative solutions that accelerate the achievement of gender equality.



**Digitalisation:** UNDP is recognised as a leader in digital transformation and it addresses the persistent and emerging challenges affecting women in this area<sup>26</sup>. UNDP supports countries and communities to

advance inclusive digital transformation that contributes to reducing inequalities, including gender inequalities, and paves the way for new solutions to complex development challenges. Digital transformation should aim to close gender gaps in the access, development, and use of digital technology, while avoiding gender biases in technology development, facilitating the incorporation of women in STEM areas and preventing technology-facilitated gender-based violence.



**Finance:** In a context of insufficient resources for gender equality, UNDP will strengthen partnerships to scale up finance for development, with a particular focus on impact investment, new finance instruments and new

public-private finance schemes, the promotion of tax reforms and gender-responsive fiscal policies.

04

**Our priorities**

UNDP's roadmap for gender equality in LAC is structured around 4 major outcomes which are to promote inclusive economies and women's economic empowerment; contributing to the creation of more inclusive and egalitarian societies; generate nature-based, gender transformative and risk-informed development; and foster democratic governance with women's participation and leadership. **The approaches adopted by UNDP that cut across these results**, known as signature solutions, are **gender equality, human rights, intersectionality, interculturality and the life-cycle approach**. In addition, it is essential to incorporate a systemic approach that promotes an understanding of the interconnections between different development challenges and their impacts on women, so as to move from working in silos towards a portfolio approach.

## A. PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

### SIGNATURE SOLUTION 1: INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH WITH GENDER EQUALITY

The post-COVID-19 socio-economic recovery scenario represents a great opportunity to accelerate the advancement of women in the region's labour market and, in general, to close the gender gaps that still hinder women's economic empowerment. The labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean has a high presence of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are estimated to represent 99.5% of the total business fabric and generate more than half of the region's formal productive employment. According to 2019 data, only 13% of formal MSMEs in the region are owned or led by women.<sup>27</sup> The private sector is a central actor for promoting social co-responsibility in key structural barriers, such as care, that still prevent women to join the labour market in equal conditions as men.

To assure the implementation of this strategic priority, UNDP will collaborate with other UN System agencies, such as UN Women, ECLAC and ILO,

governments, the private sector and trade unions, as well as join forces with UNDP's Inclusive Growth team.

**Increased productivity and sustainability of MSMEs through improved value chains, access to services, digital technologies and markets.** In this framework, UNDP has methodologies for strengthening SMEs<sup>28</sup> and their value chains, integrating the gender perspective and developing the capacities of women-owned enterprises, contributing to the improvement of their productivity and sustainability, while closing gender gaps and incorporating them in the just economic transition to new forms of sustainability and care for the planet.

**Future of work and gender equality.** In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, gender inequalities in the world of work have not only persisted but increased. Linked to the historical sexual division of labour, women tend to be inserted in traditionally undervalued and informal economic sectors and occupations, typically with lower wages. For example, women are often under-represented in fields relating to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, despite increasing labour demand.

Urgent measures are therefore needed, and UNDP proposes to address the future of work for women by focusing on the generation of evidence, capacity building, and the implementation of plans and protocols that provide guidance to governments and companies. UNDP will build upon the results of the [Gender Equality Seal](#) to engage the private sector and governments in raising standards of excellence to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in business and a transition to sustainable economies. As well as the promotion of UNDP projects that contribute to closing gender gaps in the labour market – in particular, all Future of Work projects should be GEN 2 and at least 20% should be GEN 3.

**Financing for gender equality.** In a region characterised by countries' limited fiscal space, UNDP proposes to advance in analyses and proposals to engage fiscal authorities with gender transformative guidelines, increase the progressivity of tax systems, favour greater redistribution and

support financing for gender equality. Among other initiatives, UNDP is working on the development of integrated national financing frameworks to align public and private financing with gender equality commitments and the Sustainable Development

Goals. Priorities include supporting tax reforms to ensure progress and engaging public finance ministries, tax authorities and central banks in taking measures to promote gender equality. To this end, UNDP will implement flagship initiatives such as the **Gender Equality Seal in Fiscal and Financial Institutions**, which will promote gender mainstreaming in these institutions, with an emphasis on public development banking.

## GOALS TO 2025



20 new companies are certified by the Gender Equality Seal for the Private Sector



10 financial institutions become certified under the Seal for Financial Institutions and develop financial services for women



100 SMEs, 50 women-owned SMEs, and 2 value chains improve their businesses for gender equality



4 countries improve their fiscal policies for gender equality

## B. CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREATION OF MORE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND EGALITARIAN SOCIETIES

### SIGNATURE SOLUTION 2: EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Women and girls – in all their diversity and throughout their life cycle – face multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination. It is therefore necessary to analyse and assess the diversity of situations and conditions in which they find themselves, to render visible the significant barriers that hinder their autonomy and exercise of rights<sup>29</sup>. This requires addressing key structural issues such as the unjust social organisation of care and discriminatory social norms, as well as adopting intersectional strategies that respond to their specific needs and create more sustainable, inclusive and egalitarian societies.

As part of the implementation of this strategic priority, UNDP will collaborate with other UN System agencies such as UN Women, ECLAC, ILO, UNICEF, IOM and UNFPA, as well as governments, civil society and international financial institutions (IFIs) and join efforts with UNDP’s Inclusive Growth team.

**Gender Transformative social protection and care systems.** Gender-neutral social protection systems deepen inequalities in access to income and improved quality of life. UNDP therefore promotes gender-sensitive social protection systems, as they enable all people, both women and men, to have effective access to health care and basic services, while promoting employment and income security for all. The UNDP has a **Multidimensional Poverty**

**Index (MPI)** focused on women, an innovative measure that allows for a more in-depth analysis of women’s poverty and the targeting of actions by social protection systems, as well as the generation of public policy recommendations. Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the urgency of addressing the **unjust social organisation of care** in the region by building comprehensive care systems at national and local levels. Such systems are key to the fulfilment of the right to care, for a fair and sustainable socio-economic recovery in the medium and long term, as they have the potential to generate employment, and promote social co-responsibility for care between the state, the market, communities and within families.

**Ensure that rural, migrant, indigenous and Afro-descendant women have access to digital assets, finance, livelihoods and productive assets.** SDG 1 target 4 of the 2030 Agenda posits that access to economic resources, basic services, digital assets and finance is fundamental to ending poverty in all its forms, as well as to promoting women’s economic empowerment. To meet this goal, it is necessary to ensure that all women in their diversity have access to full inclusion, put into practice the principle of leaving no one behind, as well as promoting digitalisation and innovation for inclusion. UNDP will play a key role in collaborating with civil society organisations such as REDLAC and FILAC to promote sustainable and inclusive development. In a region characterized by frequent migratory movements, UNDP will continue to promote the empowerment of migrant, refugee and displaced women for their labour and economic inclusion.

**Addressing setbacks in gender equality and changing discriminatory social norms (gender, racial-ethnic, class, age, sexual orientation and gender identity).** Gender inequality is a cause of and caused by persistent discriminatory social norms that determine the social roles and power relations between men and women in society and that impact women’s enjoyment and exercise of rights, especially when different types of discrimination are combined. Changes in social norms, including the promotion of new masculinities, are complex and slow, but necessary

for a profound transformation towards more egalitarian and inclusive societies. It is key for our region to measure and analyse the evolution of these norms, attitudes and behaviours since they are in constant flux and require different interventions to address issues or make progress.

## GOALS TO 2025



8 countries implement care policies



creation of a network of more than 200 women scientists and the energy sector is supported



5 countries work on transforming gender social norms



## C. PROMOTING A NATURE-BASED, GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE AND RISK-INFORMED DEVELOPMENT

### SIGNATURE SOLUTION 3: ENVIRONMENT

Gender equality is essential for effective, equitable, just, and sustainable climate action. However, women, in particular those living in poverty and indigenous, Afro-descendant and rural women, see their economic, social and environmental rights violated on a daily basis. **UNDP works to ensure that women are empowered to make environmental decisions and can have access to and sustainably use the natural resources that are essential to their livelihoods.** Moreover, UNDP promotes an environmental autonomy that recognises women's environmental rights, their differentiated relationship and sustainable use of ecosystems and biodiversity, and their environmental stewardship. This autonomy is interconnected with the traditional autonomies –physical, economic, and political – which implies that without a clean, healthy and

sustainable environment and without guaranteeing women's decision-making, access, use and control of natural resources, it is not possible to advance in the other autonomies.

Traditionally, the notion that disaster risk management is gender neutral has resulted in ineffective interventions that exacerbate gender inequalities and vulnerabilities and cost lives. In this regard, **UNDP is committed to the promotion of gender-responsive Disaster Risk Management** in LAC and actively supports policy makers and implementers of Disaster Risk Reduction policies and initiatives through the development of tools and capacity building.

With regards to sustainable energy, it has been found that women and men have different access, needs and uses of energy that define their livelihoods, their health and well-being, and their economic autonomy; and is therefore an important aspect of inequality. Particularly, access to clean energy sources has an important impact on women's lives. Therefore, **UNDP promotes**

**the development of fair, inclusive and gender-transformative energy initiatives** by identifying and addressing gender considerations in energy use and access, energy decision-making and the provision of energy services and technology.

As part of the implementation of this strategic priority, UNDP will collaborate with other UN System agencies, such as UNEP, ECLAC, ILO, FAO and UNDRR, governments and regional disaster prevention, mitigation, as well as relief and response agencies, and will join efforts with UNDP Environment Team.

### **Gender-sensitive natural resource management**

Available global and regional evidence indicates that women and men have a different relationship with natural resources, contribute in different ways to their conservation and sustainable use, and are affected differently by environmental changes due to existing gender inequalities and dynamics. Particularly, it has been shown that women are disproportionately affected by climate change and disasters due to prevailing gender roles and inequalities and that women are powerful environmental stewards due to their unique relationship with the environment and their contributions to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. In this area, UNDP will contribute to promoting gender-responsive natural resource management through the creation of a **Platform for Nature-based Solutions and Gender**, which will include the implementation of environmental projects with gender equality as the main objective, in partnership with the Environment team of UNDP, UNEP and ECLAC.

### **Implementing gender equality commitments in climate action plans**

Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges in environmental, social, and economic terms. This global crisis affects development at all levels, including human rights, increasing inequalities, women's autonomy and empowerment, and poverty eradication. The links between climate change and gender are real and inescapable. For example, through its Climate Promise, UNDP has

supported 25 countries in the region to increase their climate ambition in a holistic, comprehensive and gender-responsive manner. As a result, 100% of the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by countries include gender considerations, compared to only 44% in 2015. Through the Climate Promise, UNDP will continue to promote gender equality in the implementation of the NDCs/NAPs. It will also promote gender-responsive climate transparency frameworks, as well as gender responsive incentives, climate insurance, and green bonds.

### **Gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction and management**

Gender-transformative Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is essential because it promotes a multidimensional risk analysis, recognises the vulnerability and differentiated risks of men and women in all their diversity, addresses inequalities that jeopardise adequate, effective and efficient disaster risk management and response, and enhances the contributions of men and women to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). DRM offers effective, efficient and sustainable solutions that contribute to improving the well-being and livelihoods of men and women in all their diversity. At UNDP, we propose to move towards a gender transformative DRM, with special attention to the particular context of Caribbean SIDS countries, through three key initiatives: 1) Gender responsive early warning systems; 2) Gender responsive recovery programmes; 3) Development of a multidimensional resilience index that includes a set of gender indicators to determine the capacity of communities and women to absorb the impacts of the multiple environmental crises and maintain their sustainable livelihoods and well-being.

### **Energy access, investment and new knowledge to drive women's economic empowerment**

The development of inclusive and gender-transformative energy initiatives, within the framework of a transition to low-carbon economies, requires identifying and addressing gender considerations at three levels: a) energy use and access, b) energy decision-making, c) provision of

energy services and technology, and d) access to employment in the energy sector. The energy sector remains highly male-dominated, where women’s participation in technical positions is limited and there are few women-owned companies. With this in mind, UNDP will support a just, sustainable and gender responsive energy transition and promote the development of STEM skills for women’s employability in the sustainable and green energy sector.

## D. FOSTERING INCLUSIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE WITH WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

### SIGNATURE SOLUTION 4: EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The pandemic further highlighted the crisis of governance in the region<sup>30</sup>. In response to this situation, it is proposed to advance inclusive democratic governance that places gender equality and non-discrimination at the centre of public policy actions and decision-making, ensuring the expansion of women’s choices and the effective enjoyment of their human rights. UNDP has identified that the dichotomy between the public and the private, and the productive and the reproductive, continues to affect women’s possibilities for political and public participation and representation. In this sense, changing the barriers – in society, public institutions and branches of government, as well as in political organisations – that reproduce gender biases, practices and stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequalities is a priority. UNDP will therefore continue to support public institutions in the region in integrating a gender perspective in their work, as well as to promote parity democracy and a comprehensive approach to violence against women and girls.

As part of the implementation of this strategic priority, UNDP will join efforts with other UN System agencies, such as UN Women, ECLAC, UNFPA, UNICEF, Idea International, governments, civil society and academia and will join efforts with UNDP’s governance team.

### Women’s political representation and participation and parity democracy

Parity democracy aims to install substantive equality and parity as the backbone of democratic governance, transcending electoral parity and aiming at the consolidation of an inclusive state that acts integrally for equality. In this framework, it continues to be essential to guarantee the full

## GOALS TO 2025



10 countries have nature-based solutions that promote gender equality



15 countries implement their gender and climate change commitments



5 public and private energy companies commit to gender equality



3 countries have gender responsive national disaster risk management policies



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enjoyment and exercise by women in their diversity of their rights to participation and representation in public and political life, in equality, non-discrimination and without any kind of violence. UNDP's efforts in this area will continue to be catalysed by the Athena flagship initiative, jointly with UN Women and Idea International. It highlights the implementation, from 2015 to 2022, of the Political Parity Index (PPI) in 13 Latin American countries at national and sub-national levels. In addition to the generation of data and evidence through the IPP, UNDP, through the Athena Virtual Platform for Political Training, in collaboration with FLACSO Argentina, will continue to support the capacity building of women politicians and women in decision-making positions with special emphasis on the local level. UNDP will also assist electoral

systems and bodies, as well as parliaments, to promote parity democracy and help eliminate violence against women in politics.

### **Towards States that promote gender equality and women's empowerment**

The institutional framework for gender equality is not homogeneous and often does not have an adequate budget for the magnitude of the necessary actions, limiting its capacity for action in a context that demands rapid and innovative responses from the state. Beyond gender institutions (also known as Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women), the institutions that make up the three branches of government continue to reproduce biases and practices that perpetuate inequalities

## Parity democracy aims to install substantive equality and parity as the backbone of democratic governance

and discrimination against women in their diversity. Therefore, there is a need to move towards equality states that take a holistic view, which requires a structural institutional transformation based on strengthened capacities and adequate budgets. In this regard, UNDP will continue to support the implementation of its flagship initiative in this area: the Gender Equality Seal in Public Institutions. Latin America has been a pioneer in the implementation of this methodology, with 13 Latin American countries having participated since the launch of the Gender Equality Seal in Public Institutions. By the end of 2022, 45 institutions were receiving technical assistance from UNDP under this programme.

### Comprehensive approach to violence against women and girls (VAWG)

VAWG is a complex, multidimensional and multi-causal phenomenon, the causes of which are due to multiple factors with a common origin: the existence of unequal power relations between men and women, which are the basis of the prevailing patriarchal system in most societies. UNDP has a long history of adopting a comprehensive approach to address VAWG, which has been strengthened in recent years through the “Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls”, a joint initiative of the European Union and UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM and other UN agencies, which will begin its second phase in 2023. Furthermore, access to justice and judicial guarantees and protections are indispensable for the eradication of VAWG+FF. In particular, UNDP intends to continue to support the following areas: 1) Generation of data and evidence on VAWG+FF; 2) Technical support in the areas of

prevention, attention, punishment and reparation of VAWG; 3) Innovation in institutional response; 4) Capacity building in institutions; 5) Gender-equal justice systems; and 6) Promotion of positive masculinities. This will be done in collaboration with UNDP initiatives such as InfoSegura and CARISECURE.

## GOALS TO 2025



70 public institutions adhere to the Gender Equality Seal



5 countries are moving forward with legislation in favour of parity democracy and women's political participation



20 countries with institutions with improved capacities to implement evidence-based actions to comprehensively address VAWG, including femicide



**5** IGUALDAD  
DE GÉNERO



# 05

## Lessons learned

This section is based on the lessons learned from the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021, gender audits and evaluations and UN System reports, as well as regional consultations with governments, civil society, UN agencies, academia and UNDP staff in the region, which have informed the definition of the regional priorities described in the previous section.

### **Tackling the structural nodes of gender inequalities requires the transformation of power relations**

Global and regional evaluations have highlighted the growing demand from countries for UNDP's support to make progress in changing power relations and eradicating the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination. UNDP has responded to this request with a multidimensional and integrated approach and proposes a theory of change for this strategy that includes harmonised and articulated actions to address structural gender inequalities and promote a shift in power relations in different key economic, social and environmental sectors.

### **More sophisticated analysis is needed to understand gender complexities and intersectionalities**

To develop more sophisticated analyses, UNDP needs to have a better understanding of the different economic, socio-political and environmental contexts of our region, as well as to understand the intersections between the different forms of discrimination and violence that affect women. To this end, it is essential to have data to inform UNDP's programmes and projects and to influence countries' public policies based on evidence. In this area, UNDP LAC will integrate innovative and transformative gender analysis into its most relevant Human Development Reports and thematic reports. It will develop innovative regional initiatives such as a women-focused Multidimensional Poverty Index, which will deepen the analysis of women's poverty and its specificities, and accompany global initiatives such as the Global Gender Tracker and the Global Policy Observatory.

Gender expertise needs to be fully integrated into all technical teams and sufficient financial resources need to be invested to accelerate and scale up transformative gender equality results

### **Transformative gender results require gender expertise in all technical teams and investment of adequate resources**

Evaluations have shown that in order to accelerate and scale up transformative gender equality results, gender expertise needs to be fully integrated into all technical teams and sufficient financial resources need to be invested. In the region, as of early 2023, 18 country offices have a full-time Gender Specialist dedicated to gender mainstreaming in the different programme areas and 7 country offices have gender focal points. In addition, 17 country offices have active gender focal teams comprising representatives from all areas. Similarly, the UNDP Regional Centre's Gender Area collaborates with the various programme teams to incorporate gender equality in all regional initiatives. This reflects an expanding and consolidating regional gender architecture that lays the foundation for the organisation to integrate gender equality into its DNA.

### **Collaboration with social, women's and feminist organisations enhances the capacity to influence public policy**

UNDP recognises the fundamental role of women's organisations and movements in all their diversity in advancing the gender equality agenda in the region. In the coming years, we will continue to collaborate with civil society organisations, highlighting support for indigenous, Afro-

descendant, rural, migrant and LGTBI women’s organisations and the development of leadership capacities in order to strengthen their participation in decision-making spaces and influence public policies in their countries, so that no one is left behind. A greater role for civil society in the design and implementation of UNDP projects and programmes will also be promoted.

**Mobilisation of financial resources for gender equality and women’s empowerment remains insufficient**

While the UNDP gender marker<sup>31</sup> for Latin America shows that there has been a positive trend of growth in projects classified as GEN 2 and GEN 3 in recent years – in 2017 the sum of both represented only 35.22% of the total budget compared to 59.65% in 2022 –, the corporate commitment to the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee (GSIC) to allocate 70% of resources has not yet been reached. Among other possibilities, UNDP has the potential to expand its investment in gender equality through the environment and finance portfolios to help unlock resources for gender equality.

**The local sphere is a strategic space to advance the implementation of public policies that promote gender equality**

UNDP, with its extensive experience in promoting local development<sup>32</sup>, recognises the processes of localisation<sup>33</sup> and territorialisation as an opportunity to close gender gaps. In a region where more than 80% of the population is estimated to live in cities and which is characterised by rapid urbanisation that generates inequalities, cities are strategic spaces for proposing solutions that systemically address gender inequalities. Although cities concentrate a large part of the population, UNDP will also continue to promote approaches adapted to the different local realities in accordance with the principle of leaving no one behind and based on the premise that the challenges, needs and contributions of rural women are not the same as those of women living in large cities. For example, UNDP has promoted the development of care systems in cities such as Bogotá, Santo Domingo, Lima and Montevideo through the implementation of tools such as geo-referencing and costing of care services. Another notable example is the adaptation of the Atenea Political Parity Index (PPI) to the local level and its implementation in Córdoba, the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, among others.

Gender Marker	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
GEN 0: Does not contribute to gender equality	16.36%	14.24%	9.64%	4.84%	36.54%	6.75%
GEN 1: Contributes in a limited way to gender equality	48.42%	46.91%	45.82%	34.99%	29.24%	33.60%
GEN 2: Gender equality is a significant goal	33.46%	36.71%	40.71%	57.37%	32.47%	56.19%
GEN 3: Gender equality is the main objective	1.76%	2.15%	3.83%	2.80%	1.75%	3.46%
GEN 0 + GEN 1	64.78%	61.14%	55.46%	39.83%	65.78%	40.35%
GEN 2 + GEN 3	35.22%	38.86%	44.54%	60.17%	34.22%	59.65%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the UNDP Gender Marker for Latin America and the Caribbean as of November 2022.



06

# Our alliances



Achieving gender equality requires concerted action and commitment from multiple actors in society who have extensive experience in this area at the regional level. These actors include UN agencies, regional multilateral organisations, civil society and women’s movement organisations, academia and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). UNDP will continue to strengthen long-standing partnerships that have produced remarkable results, and will promote new strategic partnerships for the organization that accelerate the achievement of gender equality. The following provides more information on some of UNDP’s main partnerships in LAC that will be key to the implementation of the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025, although it is not an exhaustive list.

### **United Nations:**

In a context of multidimensional crises and growing uncertainty, and in line with the spirit of UN reform, inter-agency collaboration is seen as a necessity to more effectively address development issues, and in particular gender inequalities. UN agencies, from their different mandates, work together to provide integrated solutions to complex problems associated with achieving gender equality. For example, UNDP works closely with UN Women, ECLAC and ILO on the implementation of comprehensive care systems in the region. Also with UN Women (and International IDEA), through the Atenea initiative, the aim is to strengthen parity democracy and

equal conditions and guarantees for the full and effective exercise of women’s political rights in Latin America. With UN Environment, we work together to implement nature-based solutions that are gender transformative. In collaboration with UNFPA, UNDP plans to advance the measurement of gender social norms in the region.

### **Multilateral organisations:**

UNDP collaborates with a wide range of multilateral agencies of different types and territorial scope whose priorities are aligned around gender equality. Whether through programme and project implementation, knowledge sharing or joint advocacy, UNDP collaborates with different multilateral agencies to achieve greater impact in the region and contributing to the creation of more inclusive and egalitarian societies. For example, the Spotlight Initiative for the elimination of violence against women and girls, a joint initiative of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations, is currently being implemented. Under the leadership of the EU LAC Foundation, the EU-LAC International Women’s Network was launched, which seeks to connect women, organisations and institutions from LAC and EU countries to strengthen their work and collectively promote transformations for gender equality. UNDP also actively participates together with the OAS and other regional institutions in the Inter-American Task Force on Women’s Leadership<sup>34</sup>.

## Civil Society:

Civil society organisations and the women’s movement have historically been successful in advancing the gender agenda and improving the living conditions of women in all their diversity. UNDP’s partnership with these organisations aims to achieve more powerful actions, incorporating the principle of leaving no one behind. UNDP will continue to support and learn from these cutting-edge movements in the quest for substantive equality, while making its capacities available to scale up their impact. For example, UNDP, in collaboration with REDLAC, developed a study on the impact of COVID-19 on rural women in LAC.

## Academia:

UNDP values and recognises the leading role of academia in the generation and socialisation of knowledge, which has had a decisive influence on the evolution of feminist thought and the consequent transformation of gender inequalities through public policies. UNDP, as an organisation that aspires to push the frontiers of knowledge, will continue to strengthen and expand its partnerships with academia so that its interventions are evidence-based and its analytical work remains a reliable source of information for decision-making. A notable example of this collaboration was the organisation of a course on care from an inter-institutional perspective with FLACSO Argentina in 2022.

## IFIs:

The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) with a presence in the region represent an important partnership for UNDP, whose cooperation is based on the design, financing and implementation of programmes and projects that address major development issues, including gender inequalities. Among other initiatives, the support of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) in the implementation of the project “Development of state capacities to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls”, which contributed to the strengthening of institutional capacities to implement measures, programmes and policies for the prevention, attention and reparation of violence against women in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru, stands out.



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07

# Institutional transformation

## UNDP aims to realise an institutional transformation that puts gender equality in the organisation's DNA

Experience shows that to promote gender-transformative development through programmes and projects that are sustainable over time, an organisation committed to gender equality and women's empowerment is required. Building on the achievements and lessons learned from the internal Gender Equality Seal, UNDP aims to realise an institutional transformation that puts gender equality in the organisation's DNA. This transformation is anchored in four key elements: leadership committed to gender equality; development of gender capacities; investment for impact; and an enabling environment for gender equality.

### Leadership for equality

As an integral part of a management system for gender equality and the implementation of the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025, the **Regional Gender Focal Team (RGFT)** serves as a key institutional mechanism that will continue to catalyse UNDP's ongoing support for improved sustainable development results on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The RGFT will promote and lead the implementation and monitoring of UNDP policies, values, mandates and strategies related to gender equality and non-discrimination for the full enjoyment of human rights; and will serve as an operational means for the identification and removal of obstacles to women's advancement, including those that impact organizational

culture, such as those linked to gender biases and patterns of hegemonic masculinities.

The organization's senior management will systematically advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment in public speeches, statements and advocacy activities in which they participate and ensure gender parity in meetings and events organized by UNDP.

### Capacities for equality

UNDP will strengthen its gender architecture, through capacity development in country offices, to ensure that the actions implemented are truly aimed at transforming gender inequalities.

Key to this will be the consolidation of a **Regional Platform for Gender Capacity Development**, which will compile resources and tools in this area and will have both an internal and external dimension.

The implementation of the **UNDP Gender Equality Seal** in country offices in the region, with support from the global and regional team, will continue to be one of the key initiatives to promote institutional transformation in favour of gender equality. Under a logic of continuous improvement, the UNDP Regional Hub will be promoting actions to strengthen gender capacities and results.

The LAC Gender Community of Practice, which brings together gender specialists and focal points in the region, will be strengthened and will continue to be the main platform for maintaining an active exchange of knowledge and experiences among the offices in the region.

Resources will be designed and mobilised to implement a Regional Mentoring Programme to increase professional development and learning opportunities for gender specialists in the region.

The Regional GPN Roster will be strengthened through the identification and incorporation of gender expertise in the different thematic areas in order to meet the growing demand from country offices.

UNDP’s communications staff in the region will be key, under the leadership of committed management and in collaboration with programme staff, to increase the visibility of results achieved in gender equality and women’s empowerment. To this end, the Gender Communication Strategy will be strengthened and the **America Latina Genera** portal will continue to be a reference for the region in terms of transformative gender communication.



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## YEAR 2023

68% of country offices are certified or participating in the 2021-2023 round of the UNDP Gender Equality Seal



## 2025 TARGET



100% of UNDP Country Offices have participated in the UNDP Gender Equality Seal

## Investment for equality

Investment in gender equality is necessary to move from words to action and to achieve concrete results. Increased resources are required to close the gender gaps that remain in the region, especially in the context of post-covid recovery. To this end, UNDP will establish the following commitments at the regional level:

- In line with the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025, 15% of RBLAC's project budget will be allocated to gender equality (GEN 3), especially in countries in crisis.
- UNDP RBLAC will progressively dedicate 70% of the budget on promoting gender equality (GEN 2 and GEN 3).
- UNDP RBLAC will progressively dedicate 15% of TRACK 2 resources to gender equality (GEN 3).
- PNUD RBLAC dedicará progresivamente un 15% de los recursos TRACK 2 a la igualdad de género (GEN 3).
- In each Funding Windows call, all submitted and approved projects are classified as GEN 2 and at least one GEN 3 project is approved.
- Integrated resource mobilisation (RBLAC/ Regional Hub/Country Offices) is promoted.

## Enabling environment

In line with the UNDP Gender Parity Strategy 2022-2025 and the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, gender parity will continue to be a top priority for UNDP in LAC. The organisation will continue to monitor the figures, propose measures and ensure accountability to make equal participation of women and men at all levels of the organisation a reality.

A key priority for the organisation will also be to ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse through the proper implementation of existing corporate policies.

Investment in gender equality is necessary to move from words to action and to achieve concrete results



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08

# Monitoring mechanisms



To ensure adequate monitoring and implementation of the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025, the following mechanisms will be created: the Civil Society Advisory Committee and the Governmental Advisory Committee. Both committees will be formed as soon as the regional strategy enters into force and will remain active until its finalisation. Meetings will be held periodically, at least once a year and convened by the UNDP Regional Gender Team, to analyse progress and obstacles in the implementation of the regional strategy.

## Civil Society Advisory Committee

### Objective

Provide advice during the implementation phase of the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025 from the experience, perspective and knowledge of civil society and women's movements.

### Composition

This Committee is composed of individuals from civil society and women's movements with diverse experience and expertise in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean. The group will be made up of a maximum of 10 people, following an open and rigorous selection process. The composition of the Committee will take into account a regional geographical balance, parity, and will be guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, ensuring that women in all their diversity, LGBTIQ+ people and male gender equality advocates are represented.

### Functions

- Provide strategic recommendations to UNDP to achieve the objectives set out in the regional strategy and their adjustment, if necessary, in order to ensure their relevance and gender-transformative impact.
- Identify potential opportunities for collaboration between UNDP and civil society in the framework of the strategy.
- Contribute to ensure that UNDP's actions consider women in all their diversity, in accordance with the intersectionality approach, and promote local development in collaboration with actors in the territories.
- Participate in the reflection on the learning from the implementation of the strategy.



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## Governmental Advisory Committee

### Objective

**Provide advice during the implementation phase of the Regional Gender Equality Strategy 2023-2025 to enhance synergies and complementarity with government-led initiatives to advance the gender equality agenda in the region.**

### Composition

This Committee is composed of national or local decision-makers with diverse experience and expertise in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean. The group will be made up of a maximum of 10 people, following an open and rigorous selection process. The composition of the Committee will take into account a regional geographical balance and will be guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, ensuring that women in all their diversity are represented.

### Functions

- Provide strategic recommendations to UNDP to achieve the objectives set out in the regional strategy and their adjustment, if necessary, in order to ensure their relevance and gender-transformative impact.
- Identify potential opportunities for collaboration between UNDP and governments in the region within the framework of the strategy.
- Contribute to making UNDP's actions relevant to decision-making and policy-making on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Participate in reflection on the learning from the implementation of the strategy.



# ENDNOTES

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- 10 World Bank Group Global Findex Report. More information at: [envivo.bancomundial.org/evento/informe-global-index](http://envivo.bancomundial.org/evento/informe-global-index).
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30 UNDP and International IDEA (2022). *Gobernanza, democracia y desarrollo en América Latina y el Caribe. Documento de diagnóstico y recomendaciones de política pública*.

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33 "Localising" is the process that takes into account sub-national and local contexts, as well as the priorities and needs of territories and their inhabitants, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

34 Inter-American Task on Women's Leadership ([oas.org](https://oas.org))

