

Women’s rights and autonomy at the center of Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that: “Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets. The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. (...) The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.” (United Nations, 2015) The 2030 Agenda includes a Sustainable Development Goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5) as well as cross-cutting commitments under the other Goals.

The governments of Latin American and the Caribbean agreed that each economic, social and environmental policy should contribute to guaranteeing women’s rights, gender equality, and women’s autonomy. In order to facilitate this process, ECLAC has classified the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as described in the following figure.

Figure
Proposal for mainstreaming gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Equality and Women’s Autonomy in the Sustainable Development Agenda* (LC/G.2686/Rev.1), Santiago, 2016, figure I.1, updated at 8 March 2017.

All the targets of the 2030 Agenda Goals are, to a greater or lesser extent, linked to the achievement of gender equality or women's rights. For instance, in SDG 9 on Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 4 out of 8 targets create the conditions for gender equality. In addition, the figure shows explicit and implicit targets on gender equality for each of the SDG. This opens the way to understanding the interconnections between the targets and strengthening the collaboration between machineries for the advancement of women, sectoral ministries, decentralized agencies, other state institutions and civil society organizations.

Progressing towards SDG 5 involves implementing public policies to end discrimination and violence against women, recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work, ensuring women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making, as well as universal access to sexual and reproductive health. To this end, laws must be approved to ensure women's rights to economic and natural resources, the use of technology for empowerment should be enhanced, and policies for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels must be adopted.

The Regional Gender Agenda encompasses commitments made by the governments of the region on women's rights and autonomy, and gender equality, at the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, during 40 years. This Agenda complements and deepens the SDG by urging, among other objectives, to promote care as a right, to construct parity democracies and economies that account for the unpaid work, and to guarantee the sexual and reproductive rights of people without discrimination. It is the platform that allows the governments from the region to analyze their progress and identify challenges and priorities to fulfill the 2030 Agenda.

In terms of public action, the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 is the instrument that strengthens the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a view to ending discrimination against women, avoiding setbacks and moving towards substantive equality.

Without gender equality, sustainable development is neither development nor sustainable

ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs

<http://www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/gender-affairs>

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For more information see: [Equality and women's autonomy in the sustainable development agenda](#) ; [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) ; [Regional Gender Agenda](#) ; [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030](#) ; [The 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda: Synergies for equality in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)