

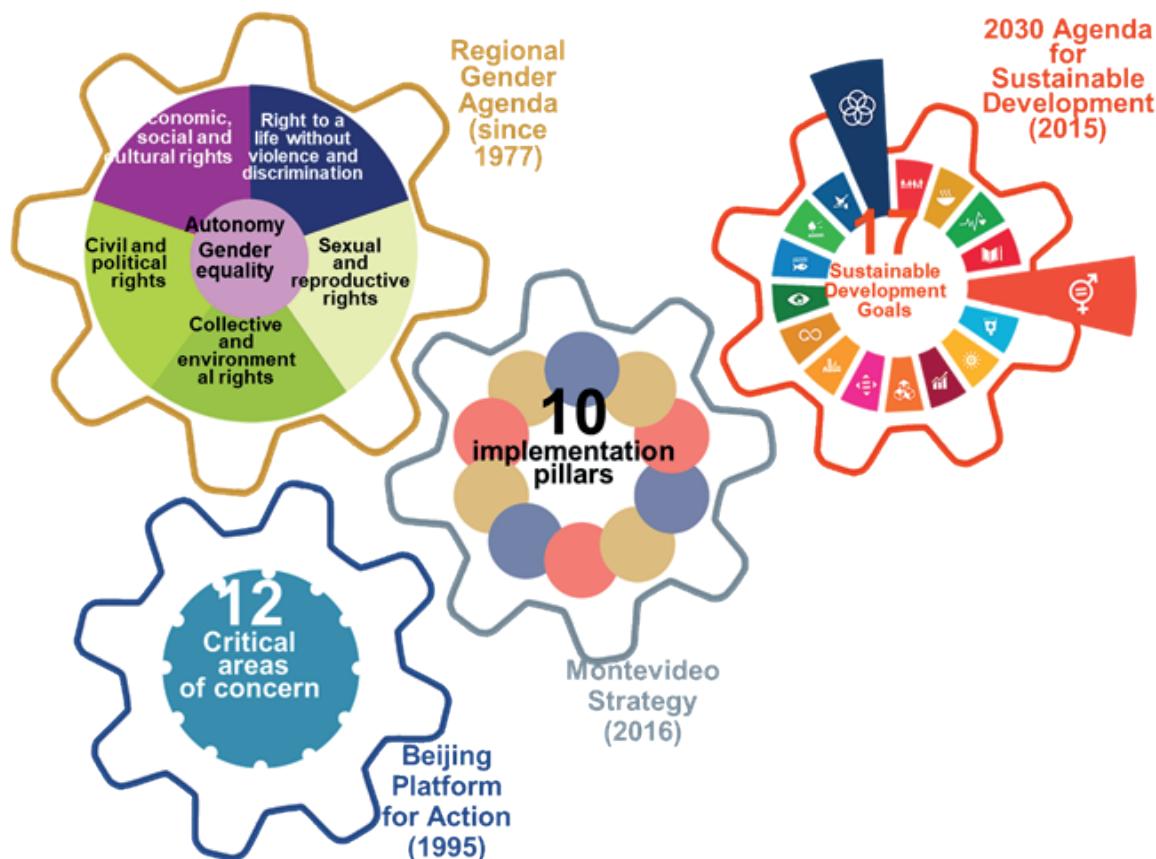


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Latin America and the Caribbean: 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

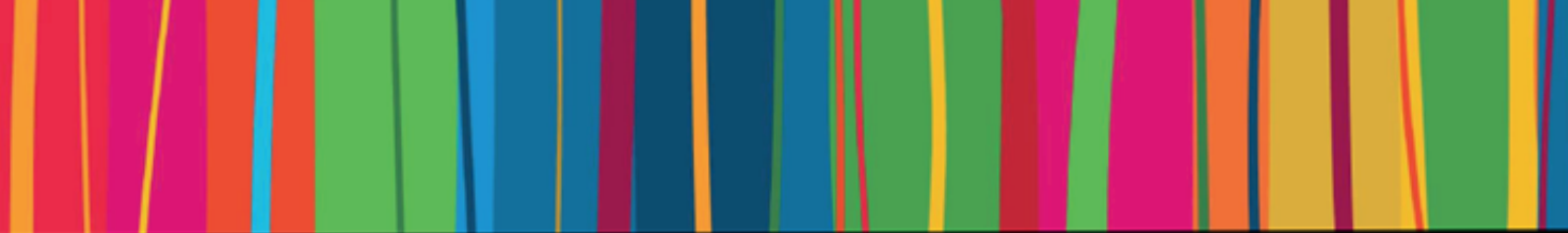
The region has been a pioneer in promoting a Regional Gender Agenda which, since 1977, has embraced the commitments assumed at national and regional levels and has even been influencing global agendas. Twenty-five years on from the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, there have been important efforts made by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to recognize and guarantee the rights of women. Overcoming gender inequalities was placed at the center in order to move towards sustainable development and advance with the fulfillment of the commitments that were assumed in synergy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The region has been a pioneer in promoting a Regional Gender Agenda which, since 1977. In 2016 the countries of the region adopted the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, thus accelerating the implementation of the agreements embodied in the Regional Gender Agenda and the Beijing Platform for Action. This political and technical instrument has become a key regional tool for bridging the gap between de jure and de facto equality, by strengthening public policies that guarantee women's autonomy.

The Montevideo Strategy: road map for implementing regional and international commitments on gender equality and women's rights and autonomy within the framework of sustainable development



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Regional progress report on the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 (LC/CRM.14/5), Santiago, 2019

Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant progress in recognizing women's rights and autonomy, as well as reducing gender inequalities. However, progress has been slow and uneven between countries and between the different dimensions of women's autonomy. Moreover, these progresses have not been constant and there are still obstacles that limit the scope of equality policies and their impact on improving the living conditions of women and girls.



In terms of institutional advances, the consolidation of the mechanisms for the advancement of women, which has allowed the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in various sectors and levels of the State, as well as the implementation of national equality plans and the harmonization of development plans with agreements related to equality between men and women.

Progress towards the achievement of women's economic autonomy is related to the visibility of the link between paid and unpaid work; an institutional framework incorporated in the development of specific policies and plans on care, shared responsibility, labour rights or employment; information systems on unpaid work and time use; and communication initiatives, including campaigns to raise awareness and promote the social co-responsibility of care. Some countries in the region (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Paraguay, Uruguay) have begun to discuss and implement standards and mechanisms for the care of dependent persons (children, the elderly or persons with disabilities) that bring together different institutions to provide comprehensive care with a rights-based approach, with the aim of not only improving the quality of these populations but also facilitating women's labour market participation. Despite the advances in the debates about care and statistical visibility of the overload of unpaid work of women, women in the region spend three times as long on unpaid domestic and care work as men.

Regarding the physical autonomy of women, the adoption of regulatory frameworks to eradicate gender-based violence against women is part of the most significant achievements at the institutional level. In the last 5 years, at least 17 countries have formulated national policies or plans against violence. In turn, 13 countries in Latin America have comprehensive laws on violence against women. However, the figures on violence against women and femicide remain a matter of great concern for the region, accounting as by 2018 at least 3800 women victims of femicide. It is urgent to enforce laws and policies and adopt a wide range of preventive, criminal, protective and care measures to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Progress in terms of women's autonomy in decision-making is associated with both in the formulation of regulatory frameworks that recognize and apply the principle of gender parity and quotas and in carrying out other affirmative actions to promote women's political participation. Twenty-nine years after the enactment of the first quota law in Latin America, several countries have some type of regulation on affirmative action, quotas or parity. This could help to strengthen the principle of parity democracy, which means working towards a social contract in which men and women assume shared and equal responsibilities in all aspects of development. There is still a way to go to achieve parity in the region since in 2019 the average number of women in parliament was 31.6%.

Twenty-five years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, challenges to progress in the fulfillment of the commitments still persist in Latin America and the Caribbean:

- The gaps between the magnitude of gender inequalities in the region and the limited State capacities and resources available to address and reduce them. Therefore, a comprehensive response is needed that covers the 10 implementation pillars of the Montevideo Strategy and guarantees sufficient and progressive financing to meet regional and global commitments to gender equality and women's autonomy
- Mainstreaming an intersectionality and intercultural approach in policies, programs and actions remains a challenge. It is urgent to know and address the situation of rural women, indigenous women, Afrodescendent women, migrant women, adolescent girls and young women, among others, as well as the barriers that they face in their daily lives to fully achieve their autonomy.
- Gender inequalities manifest themselves at the international, regional, national and subnational levels and therefore a new vision of public policy is required in order to respond to them in a coordinated manner. The multiscale approach to State action must be strengthened, together with regional cooperation that transcends national borders.

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

<https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/14/en/documents/womens-autonomy-changing-economic-scenarios>

<https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/14/en/documents/regional-report-review-beijing-declaration-and-platform-action-latin-american-and>

<https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/14/en/documents/regional-progress-report-montevideo-strategy-implementation-regional-gender-agenda-within>