



# Gender Equality Observatory

## for Latin America and the Caribbean

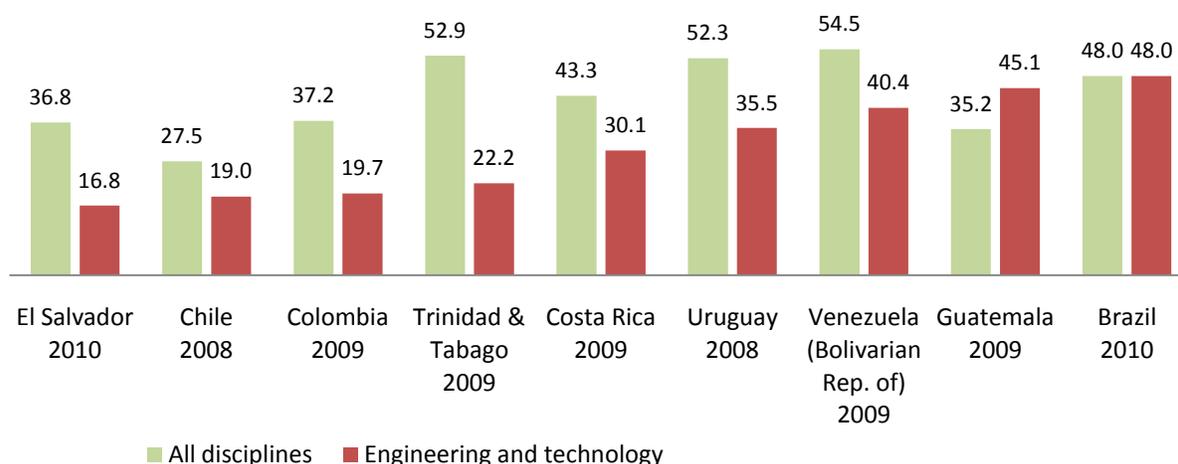


### MORE WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: A NECESSARY STEP

According to UNESCO, 45.2% of the people doing research in science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean are women, a higher percentage than the average of other regions (Oceania 39.2%, Africa 34.5%, Europe 34%, Asia 18.9%).

- Despite the increased presence of women in scientific and technological research in recent years, women do not participate in the same way in all scientific and technological disciplines. They are mainly concentrated in areas that are traditionally been associated with the roles culturally assigned to women, such as education and humanities, health sciences, biology, and social sciences. They remain underrepresented especially in engineering and technology, fields in which men predominate in most countries of the region. This phenomenon is known as horizontal segregation.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (SELECTED COUNTRIES): PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN<sup>a</sup> IN INVESTIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT, BY COUNTRY**  
(In percentages)



**Source:** UNESCO Statistics Institute, "Women in science", UIS Fact Sheet, N° 23, December 2012 y N°14, August 2011; UNESCO eAtlas of Research and Experimental Development.

<sup>a</sup> Data corresponds to the percentage of the total number of people employed in investigation and development, both full-time and part-time.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are concentrated in the lower levels of qualification within the national science and technology systems, and are underrepresented in the higher levels of scientific performance and management positions in scientific institutions. This is known as vertical segregation.

## Barriers in science and technology

- There remains a lag in women who choose to study and pursue careers and professions in the scientific-technologic area, despite the range of policies and programs that have been developed in the last decade. For example, in the Dominican Republic women 61% of education enrolment however only 11% choose a career in Information and Technology in the university or technical level<sup>1</sup>.
- The chances of qualified women to enter, remain and be recognized in the scientific community are restricted by barriers caused by the weight of unpaid work and care, especially in the initial phase of their careers, and by the strong male predominance in the power structure of science and technology.

## Affirmative action

States should define affirmative action necessary for the survival, mobility and recognition in the professional career of women scientists. These actions could be envisaged:

- The inclusion of specific gender-equality oriented actions within national digital strategies, as is done by Ecuador (Estrategia Ecuador Digital 2.0), Mexico (Agenda Digital.mx) and Dominican Republic (e-Dominicana).
- The production and improvement of national and regional statistics on the participation of men and women in science and technology.
- Promoting equitable access to professorships, research funds and awards for women scientists.
- Implementing quotas for access to research funds, tutoring programs and mentorship for female investigators within the areas where they are underrepresented.
- Promoting discussion and exchange of experiences on best practices and policies of gender equality in science and technology developed and implemented at local, national, regional and international levels.
- The development of strategies in the education system to increase interest in science and technology in girls, such as the initiative developed in Dominican Republic: math club "E - girls" and " Super matic " , aimed at maintain interest in science subjects among girls and adolescents in the Dominican public schools.
- The definition of goals and quotas to promote the representation of women in the decision-making instances of national science, technology and innovation systems.

**This document has not been submitted to editorial review**

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<sup>1</sup> Alejandrina Germán, speech in the Preparatory Meeting for the XII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Costa Rica, May 8 2013.