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Promising Practices Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Autonomy in Response to Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean

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I. INTRODUCTION

Climate change has increased in pace as a result of the dominant development model. Dealing with the complexity of this phenomenon is a challenge for the whole world, and for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in particular. We urgently need to address its effects and develop adaptation and mitigation strategies according to regional contexts. Discussions about climate change have focused on economic and social issues; however, analysis has only marginally considered the situation of women and gender inequalities, which spread and grow stronger with this global phenomenon.

Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be the most unequal region of the world and it is the region whose development has been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (ECLAC, 2021). In this context, where poverty and inequality have deepened, the unequal impact of climate change from a gender perspective is closely linked to socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty within an economic growth framework that is exclusionary and unsustainable. Before the health crisis, women were already over-represented among those living in poverty. In 2019, according to data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, for every 100 men living in poor households, there were 112.7 women in a similar situation, this demonstrating their lack of economic autonomy.

The crisis caused by the pandemic has revealed even further the exhaustion of the development model in the region, based on the extraction of natural resources and fossil fuels, which have been exploited without any thought for environmental or social sustainability and where there is scant investment in activities focused on knowledge, technologies, or the creation of quality employment, above all for women. At the same time, the structural nature of gender inequality means that women face constant barriers to accessing productive resources such as credit, land, water, training, technologies, and time (ECLAC, 2017a).

Despite these barriers, many of the efforts to incorporate gender equality into responses to climate change are limited to interventions that, on implementation, have failed to break down the unequal power structures or structurally influence efforts to close the gender gap. Consequently, gender inequality continues to hinder sustainable development and it is manifest in different spheres and sectors: initiatives related to adaptation and mitigation associated with climate change are no exception.

Therefore, action against climate change can reinforce or exacerbate inequalities, or it can intentionally aim to overcome them and accelerate steps towards gender equality. As countries and communities examine their legal, fiscal, economic, and sociocultural structures in response to climate change, long term gender inequalities can be identified and addressed.

¹ This document is based on: L. Aguilar Revelo (2021) "Prácticas promisorias que promueven la igualdad de género y la autonomía de las mujeres en la respuesta al cambio climático en América Latina y el Caribe". Projects Documents (LC/TS.2021/110), Santiago, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

II. PROMISING PRACTICES PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Conscious of the issues outlined above, various countries in the region are carrying out a series of promising practices² that have the potential to influence the possibility that gender equality and the autonomy of women's and girls', in all their diversity, could be prioritised and addressed in an integral way in the context of action on climate change at a national level; that the full participation of women as climate actors could be ensured; and that their capacity for resilience and that of their communities could be developed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Discussed below is a set of promising practices analyzed in relation to seven spheres of action³.

A. Incorporating the response to climate change into equality policies

The gender equality plans (GEPs), promoted by the mechanisms for the advancement of women (MAWs), are instruments used by most countries in the region to guide State action, planning and development of a process of joint work between different sectors, strengthening the institutionalisation and mainstreaming of gender (ECLAC, 2019).

Of the existing 37 documents in total, 20 include the term "climate change", which corresponds to 54% of the total. Of these 20 GEPs that contain a mention of climate change, eight of them (that is, 21.6% of the total) can be divided into two groups: those that highlight the need to incorporate a gender and human rights perspective into climate change programmes and policies and; those that note that there is governmental commitment to guarantee women's participation in decision-making spaces relating to adaptation to climate change (Aguilar and Aguilar, 2021).

Without doubt, this group of GEPs represents promising progress for the region. However, it will be necessary to review and renew national equality plans so that they reflect and implement international, regional, and national level mandates and agreements relating to gender equality and climate change. There is also a need to harmonise national climate change legal frameworks with the gender-related mandates adopted by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other regional instruments such as the [Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030](#) and the [Escazú Agreement](#).

B. Incorporation of a gender, intersectional, intercultural and rights perspective in laws, policies, and programmes relating to climate change

In the region there are promising practices that have incorporated a gender perspective into climate change policies and programmes. Examples of this include: the Nationally Determined

² Promising practices are initiatives based on the identification of the causes of gender inequality, and the interests, needs and priorities of women and girls in their diversity, and they implement activities to reduce the gender gap and overcome historic biases relating to gender in policies and interventions associated with mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change.

³ The complete text on the practices is available in detail in the Latin American and Caribbean Observatory for Gender Equality: <https://oig.cepal.org/es/documents/language/es>.

Contributions (NDCs), the national action plans on gender and climate change (ccGAPs) and the gender action plans or strategies for specific sectors such as forestry and renewable energy.

1. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

In the first round of the NDCs (2015), presented at the COP21 in Paris, of a total of 161 countries, 40% included some mention of gender and/or women (Huyer, 2016). Fifteen Latin American and Caribbean countries, out of a total of 33, include some mention of gender or women,⁴ although this does not mean that it is mainstreamed into all the sections. For example, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Peru, and Uruguay, have a specific gender objective and Barbados, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, and Venezuela include mentions of gender in some other objective.

Since 2020 countries have begun to present new NDCs. In Latin America and the Caribbean, according to preliminary studies carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), by June 2021, 17 countries⁵ had presented their NDC, and 100% of them incorporate the term gender. It is worth noting that there are ten countries that did not include the topic of gender in 2015 that did include it in this new round of presentations: (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia and Suriname). (Quesada-Aguilar, 2021).

Honduras is an example of promising practice in the region in terms of how it has made progress in the preparation of an NDC that takes gender, intersectional, intercultural and rights perspectives into account. The process of updating the NDC in Honduras considered the vision, perceptions and ideas of women, indigenous peoples, and Afro-Hondurans (PIAH), and young people. Throughout the preparation process the participation of representatives of these social groups was seen in different spaces of active listening and consultation. As a result of this process, it was agreed that gender equality, intergenerational equality, and the rights of PIAH would be considered cross-cutting priorities that should be taken into account when prioritising and implementing climate measures related to the updating and implementation of the NDC.

Apart from the text of the NDC, it is important to note that to guarantee the gender responsive implementation of the NDC, a working group on gender, PIAH and youth was established as part of the Inter-institutional Technical Committee on Climate Change (CTICC). This inter-institutional group comprises the National Women's Institute (INAM), the Directorate of Indigenous and Afro-Honduran People (DINAFROH), the National Youth Institute (INJ), representatives of the gender units of the institutions linked to the sectors of the NDC, and other institutions relevant to the climate agenda. Moreover, the implementation of the NDC will be strengthened by the participation of experts in human rights, gender, PIAH and youth.

Another promising practice aiming at mainstreaming gender responsive action in the NDCs is the case of Uruguay. The Gender Working Group within the National System of Response to Climate Change (SNRCC) has developed a methodology for categorising each NDC measure (and its monitoring, reporting and verification) in terms of its potential to be gender responsive.

⁴ Barbados, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay and Venezuela.

⁵ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia and Suriname.

This methodology entails classifying each measure of the NDC into four categories: neutral, gender sensitive, gender transformative and potentially transformative.

2. National action plans on gender and climate change

After COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009, as the Party States of the UNFCCC proceeded to approve new mandates related to the importance of incorporating context-specific gender relations into climate change, governments and interested parties became more interested in understanding how to mainstream a gender perspective into national level planning and programming.

One of the first international organisations to respond to these demands was the Global Gender Office of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This office designed an innovative methodology for developing Climate Change Gender Action Plans (ccGAPs).

Across the world 26 countries or regions have developed ccGAPs⁶. The ccGAPs identify the gender effects of climate change in each country, provided a road map for including women's voices in policy development and implementation, and create a space for women who are already dedicated to the work of combatting, mitigating, and adapting to the effects of climate change to exchange experiences and solutions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, six countries have developed ccGAPs: Costa Rica, Cuba, Haiti, Panama, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. The methodology has also been adapted and used at a subnational and local level, for example in Mexico, where a ccGAP has been created for a protected nature reserve in the Sonora State and another for the Yucatan Peninsula.

One of the most ambitious ccGAPs in the region, and indeed the first in South America, was developed in Peru. The Peru ccGAP is a management tool that guides and promotes the action of different Peruvian state entities so that, in the framework of their responsibilities linked to mitigation and adaptation, they design and implement activities that contribute to equal opportunities for women and men in facing the effects of climate change and the challenges of sustainable development in the following priority areas: forests, water resources, energy, food security, waste, health, education, and risk management. Each of these eight areas has specific objectives with corresponding results, indicators, and lines of action to be implemented in the national and subnational measures related to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adaptation to the effects of climate change in the eight priority areas.

3. Gender action plans (GAPs) or strategies for specific sectors

One of the main challenges in designing gender action plans or strategies for specific sectors is the diversity of sectors and topics relating to climate change (energy, forestry, coastal management, disasters, transport, urbanisation, health, among many others). Even when many strategies or action plans are based on the same principles of promoting gender equality and women's autonomy, "tailor-made" processes are needed to respond to the specific needs of the targeted sector or subsector.

⁶ The complete list of ccGAPs is available at: <https://genderandenvironment.org/ccgaps/>.

In the past decade, various countries in the region have been developing strategic documents that aim to guide the action of an entire sector in relation to the promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy.

Notable examples of the above include Mexico and Costa Rica, who have developed GAPs linked to the reduction of emissions derived from deforestation and forest degradation; Nicaragua has a GAP on equal rights related to gender and access to forests, forestry resources and their benefits; the initiative of "*Gender-responsive disaster recovery, climate and environmental resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER)*" which is being implemented in eight Caribbean countries; and the initiative being carried out in Antigua and Barbuda to build capacity to deal with gender-based violence perpetrated by administrators of refugees and hospitals.

In the case of Costa Rica, GAP designs were based on extensive consultations with women's groups throughout the country. This enabled the proposal of concrete action reflecting and addressing their realities, converting it into a proposal for concrete social and environmental transformation, based on the needs and priorities of men and women who contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of Costa Rican forests in their daily lives.

In nine Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Santa Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname), UNDP has been implementing the "EnGenDER" project⁷ that aims to further integrate gender equality and human rights perspectives into disaster risk reduction (DRR), adaptation to climate change and environmental management frameworks and interventions. Likewise, it also aims to identify and address some of the gaps in guaranteeing equal access to DRR and to climate change and environmental solutions for men, women, boys, and girls.

These examples show that the region does have promising practices that have influenced the incorporation of a gender, intersectional, intercultural, and human rights perspective into climate change policies and programmes. Despite this, we do need to accelerate the development of new GAPs or strategies, be it at national levels or for each sector specifically – for countries that do not yet have them – and to update the existing plans, promoting greater alignment with international and national agreements on gender and climate change.

C. The equal and meaningful participation of women and girls, in all their diversity, in decision-making processes at institutional and national levels.

It was in 1992, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, that the full and equal participation of women in issues and decision-making in the environment sector was recognised.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the 2030 Agenda reinforce the importance of the participation of women, in all their diversity, to eradicate poverty, protect the planet and guarantee the enjoyment of peace and prosperity for all people by 2030.

In terms of the UNFCCC's 81 mandates on gender and women's empowerment, six call for the promotion of gender parity and the fostering of the participation and representation of

⁷ Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean

women, in their diversity, in negotiations and decision-making relating to climate change at subnational, national, and international levels (Aguilar, 2021).

On a regional level, in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is worth highlighting three recent instruments that have implications for women's participation: the Montevideo Strategy, the Santiago Commitment and the Escazú Agreement⁸.

A series of promising practices are being implemented in the region that operationalise these mandates and agreements. Examples include the cases of Ecuador, Chile and Mexico who have established inter-institutional round tables or working groups on gender and climate change.

In the case of Ecuador, the main work of the round table is to produce proposals for climate change public policy, based on the expertise of a diverse range of actors, in processes of capacity building, exchange of experiences and innovative action, to strengthen knowledge on this subject from a gender perspective. A central focus of the working group is to work with an intersectional perspective, and for this reason it has the role of planning activities that include the most marginalised women's groups and LGBTI people, who are more vulnerable and at risk, increasing the visibility of rural women, indigenous women, women living in poverty, female heads of households, lesbians, and trans women, among others.

In Chile one of the main products of the gender and climate change working group has been the preparation of a [check list for incorporating a gender perspective into climate change instruments](#). As a result of these efforts various public policy instruments have been revised, when members of the round table have produced recommendations for relevant institutions to include a gender perspective and reduce the gaps identified in the processes of formulating and updating policies.

The Inter-institutional Group on Gender and Climate Change (IGGCC) in Mexico has defined specific objectives that include: strengthening coordination and collaboration between Federal Public Administration agencies, civil society and other levels of government to promote a gender perspective in approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as in the implementation measures; develop and build the capacity of the IGGCC with regards to gender and climate change and; contribute to the development of institutional arrangements for mainstreaming gender in sector and specific policies associated with climate change.

⁸ Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where, for more than four decades, governments, international organisations, civil society organisations, and in particular women's and feminist organisations meet periodically at the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and Caribbean, with the aim of reviewing the regional and subregional situation of women's autonomy and rights.

Within the framework of this subsidiary body of ECLAC, the member states have agreed on a progressive, innovative, and integrated Regional Gender Agenda. The [Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda](#) within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, agreed in 2016, identifies four structural challenges that need to be addressed to achieve gender equality in the region: socioeconomic inequality and poverty; discriminatory, violent and patriarchal cultural patterns and a culture of privilege; the sexual division of labour and the unfair social organisation of care; and the concentration of power and hierarchical relations in the public sphere. These structural challenges are also evident in the context of climate change. Moreover, as a result of the XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile (2020) the ECLAC member states adopted the [Santiago Commitment](#), which establishes specific commitments to mainstream a gender perspective in the strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Additionally, at a local level one of the promising practices was achieved in Honduras through the creation of the School for the Equality and Empowerment of Rural Women. The aim of the School is to contribute to the integrated development of rural women by increasing their social, cultural, and political participation through the promotion of equality and their empowerment, by means of promoting a space for training and knowledge to develop itineraries for advancing the achievement of real and effective equality.

Despite the above, the promising practices presented in this area of action are the exception to the rule. There is clear legislation at a regional as well as international level that should be implemented. Hence, countries in the region should double their efforts to establish mechanisms for the effective, institutionalised, and representative participation of diverse women, especially in policies and responses to climate change at a national or subnational level.

D. Promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy through hands-on projects, initiatives, or activities at national or subnational levels in mitigation as well as adaptation to climate change.

At present, climate change represents one of the most complex challenges for society, and the transformation needed to tackle it can represent a great opportunity to make progress towards gender equality and women's autonomy. Many programmes and projects have shown how responses to climate change offer an opportunity to overcome the barriers that impede the enjoyment and exercise of women's rights.

To this end, various gender responsive climate change projects are guided by at least six principles: i. enhance inclusion and participation; ii. promote the guarantee of human rights; iii. encourage innovation; iv. contribute to environmental sustainability; v. stimulates transformations to confront climate change in synergy with the promotion of gender equality and women's autonomy; vi. reduce anthropogenic emissions.

Examples of this type of initiative include the promising practice of Paraguay in the capacity building of young peasant farmer and indigenous women to enable them to become leaders for the sustainability of the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve, two promising practices related to sustainable agriculture in Cuba and Ecuador, and the Colombian initiative to create women's knowledge networks to establish cleaner production processes.

In Paraguay, almost 90% of forests have disappeared. The Atlantic Forest is one of the most diverse and biologically rich forests in the world, and simultaneously one of the most threatened. In this context, the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve is more than 64,000 hectares in size and constitutes one of the largest remaining dense and humid subtropical forests in Paraguay.

On the other hand, socioeconomic indicators reveal that more than 80% of the population in the region of the Reserve live in extreme poverty and almost 70% of girls and female adolescents under 16 in this location experience early pregnancy, due mainly to limited access to education, and to women's situation of vulnerability and limited autonomy (Speranza, 2018).

In this context, the Moisés Bertoni Foundation created the Mbaracayú Education Centre (MEC). The MEC is a boarding school for indigenous girls and female adolescents from 15 to 18 years old. The institution takes in young women from the region, which is noted for its

multiculturalism: Paraguayans, daughters of Brazilians settled in the area, Aché and Guaraní indigenous women and even foreigners.

In their classrooms, the female students develop the MEC common plan and technical materials on subjects such as: environmental education, agroecology, environmental economics, natural resource management, meteorology, biology, tourism practices, among others. With a pedagogy that emphasises “learning by doing”, the school offers a Technical Degree in Environmental Studies. The MEC’s mission is to transform young rural women into agents of change, guardians of the forest and entrepreneurs who can improve the quality of their lives and their communities.

Ecuador has implemented promising practices with sustainable agriculture in urban centres. The Metropolitan District of Quito (MDQ) has been implementing a multidimensional initiative, AGRUPAR, since 2002. AGRUPAR seeks to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in the District, working with women (85.71% of all participants), female headed households, the elderly, children and young people, people with special needs or disabilities, refugees, migrants, the unemployed, refugees, health centres, schools, and centres for recovery from addictions and social rehabilitation. 17% of the participants receive more than 300 US dollars, increasing the economic resilience of the participants for attaining an income closer to a decent wage. The project improves income by creating jobs, as well as helping to reduce costs related to family food bills.

The urban agriculture is practiced in public and private wastelands, gardens, balconies, terraces, plant pots or containers, using recycled materials such as plastic bottles and tubes, rubber tyres, pallets, and glass. The programme has 352,600 beneficiaries (56,000 urban farmers with their families and 170,000 responsible consumers). AGRUPAR has trained 16,700 participants, inaugurated 2,500 urban vegetable gardens, and promoted 110 urban agriculture start-ups with 105 different food products.

In Colombia, the initiative “*Creation of women’s knowledge networks to establish clean production processes*” is based on the recognition that industrial contamination devastates the environment and negatively impacts communities and those who work in these sectors. Many women in the industrial sector, traditionally dominated by men, have implemented strategies for a less contaminating production (LCP) to reduce contaminating substances and promote a healthier community. Despite its success in various sectors, in general terms women’s leadership and knowledge are ignored during policymaking at local and national levels and throughout the industrial sector. The organisation *Genstainable* facilitated the creation of women’s knowledge networks or alliances, to highlight these women as leaders, promote the dissemination of LCP strategies, and share knowledge with other women and men in the community. These alliances comprise women from different fields, such as academia, service companies, public organisations, and heavy and light industries. The networks offer a platform for women to share their successes and implement new strategies in their fields. The learning alliances have benefited more than 25 women and have the potential to grow and expand into multiple sectors.

Much remains to be done to ensure that gender equality and women’s autonomy are an integral part of projects, initiatives, or hands-on activities, at national or subnational levels, in terms of

adaptation as well as mitigation in the face of climate change. To this effect it is necessary to continue developing innovative action⁹ that:

- Expands women's and girls' access to productive resources such as climate, technology, and knowledge financing.
- Improves and takes advantage of the capacity of all women and girls, in all their diversity, to develop resilience in the face of climate risks and disasters, mitigate climate change and address losses and damage.
- Enables all women and girls, in all their diversity, to lead a fair transition towards an environmentally sustainable, inclusive, circular, and regenerative economy.
- Offers a response to the increase in unemployment, poverty and greater domestic and unpaid care work created by COVID-19 and climate change (for example, by emissions, environmental degradation, exposure to chemicals and waste).

E. Transition towards a green, just, and inclusive economy

Greener economies¹⁰ have great potential for reducing gender inequality and influencing women's economic autonomy, and they offer the opportunity to make their contributions to society and the economy more visible and to revalue them. However, ecological policies are not automatically fair (McLean, 2019).

According to a report published by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), more than 80% of new jobs created by the decarbonisation agenda will be in sectors currently dominated by men and only 20% of these new jobs will be created in sectors where women form the majority (Saget, Vogt-Schilb and Luu, 2020). One of the conclusions of this study notes that women will not benefit from job creation unless the real gender segregation is tackled in the labour market of the sectors most relevant to decarbonisation (energy, agriculture, construction, and waste management, among others).

Similarly, in terms of the existing gender gap in "green" employment in the region, the ILO Technical Note *"A green and fair recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean: a perspective from the world of work"* states that in 2019, of the approximately 78 million people working in the key sectors for a fair transition, 72% of them were men and 28% of them were women (Sánchez and Torres, 2020).

Conscious of the above, Latin American and Caribbean countries have begun to implement policies and initiatives that address gender segregation in employment in relevant sectors related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Various promising practices recognise and reduce the barriers that limit women's access to innovative jobs in the renewable energy sector. Examples include the initiatives supported by the IDB on a wind farm in Argentina and in solar parks in Uruguay; the initiative for energy

⁹ These topics are based on the lines of action of the Equality Generation Forum within the area of Feminist Action for Climate Justice.

¹⁰ The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has defined a green economy as "one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities". In its simplest expression, a green economy can be considered as one that is low in carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

efficiency supported by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in Mexico; the feminist electrification project in Haiti; the women's empowerment initiative in El Salvador using geothermal energy and its residues; and through the creation of favourable conditions for gender equality in rural electrification public projects in Guatemala.

Other promising practices, connected to the use, management and conservation of natural resources, the restoration of ecosystems and waste management, have created new jobs through education and training, and the creation of an adequate business environment for benefitting from opportunities and guaranteeing decent employment. Together, the apparently small efforts carried out by cities, subnational governments, and civil society to provide gender responsive improvements to biodiversity, conservation and the mitigation of climate change can make a significant contribution to a more fair, inclusive, and equitable sustainable development. One example of this is the project *Fragments of Hope* promoting the restoration of the coral reefs and mangrove swamp habitats in Belize. Access to training in the tourism as well as marine conservation sectors has enabled local women to earn a higher daily wage than would have been possible doing domestic work or working for the hotel industry.

Despite the rise in gender responsive initiatives connected to a green economy, many challenges remain, for example promoting the consideration of the Paris Agreement Principles and gender equality in economic stimulus packages. It also implies recognising and reducing the barriers that prevent women's access to decent work in sectors that promote a fair transition. This entails recognising the unpaid work overload women experience as a structural barrier, actively fostering women's inclusion in work in different sectors associated with decarbonisation, as well as promoting their training in STEM fields that are related to climate change response efforts.

F. The production of knowledge, data, and statistics

The production, analysis and use of statistics are and should be part of countries' gender equality policies, and a priority for official producers of statistics in the countries in the region. This is stated in the ninth implementation pillar of the Montevideo Strategy (ECLAC, 2017b) establishing that it is key to create gender information systems to transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into political decisions.

Measuring and collecting data on climate change and sustainable development with a gender perspective contributes to the formulation of more solid, evidence-based policies and enables the evaluation of the policies' efficiency, facilitating their improved development (GBA, MIF and IDB, n/d).

Mexico is a pioneer in the production of gender-specific statistics and indicators, not only at a regional level in Latin America, but also across the world. To understand men and women's different roles and responsibilities relating to the environment and natural resource management, the system designed by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) examines not only the gender component, but also other intersectional aspects such as age, ethnic group, geographical location, income, and education. The country's statistical capabilities provide the disaggregation of the data based on different variables, providing powerful enabling conditions for identifying and understanding the problems and tendencies linked to inequity and inequality between men and women and between different ages, regions or in indigenous communities.

Another of the lessons learnt from the Mexican system clearly shows how the collection of data on its own is not sufficient for effectively measuring sustainable development or for applying this information to interventions to achieve real change. The results of data should be analysed with a gender perspective to better understand men and women's different roles and to identify the causes of inequality, including gender inequality. However, what is most important is that the data should be used to guide and inform decision-making at all levels to effectively address inequality and move towards a fair, equitable, and inclusive sustainable development.

The region is also in the early stages of witnessing efforts aimed at generating and analysing data on new topics where there is no information from a gender perspective. Countries such as Costa Rica with its transport project and Argentina with the first study of gender and energy are good examples of this type of initiative.

The initiative "Mitigation of Emissions in the Transport Sector (MiTransporte)", supported by GTZ in Costa Rica, implemented research that produced data and information on men and women's different uses, realities and needs related to the promotion of public transport, as one of the measures for reducing GHG emissions in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA).

Similarly, in Argentina the first study of gender and energy was carried out with the aim of producing an assessment of women's participation in the sector, focusing on the category of electrical energy.

There are huge challenges in relation to the production and availability of gender disaggregated statistics and indicators in the environmental sector that hamper a more fair, equitable, and inclusive sustainable development, in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as globally. Limitations range from the lack of global standards to the lack of institutionalisation of environmental statistics and, in the case of the link to gender, the lack of multi-actor dialogues (between the MAWs, national statistics offices, and the sector-specific ministries) to establish the need for information. Additionally, many systems or processes are not designed to capture the complexities of socioeconomic and environmental interactions in the regions; there is a lack of quality data – since they are often not based on standards or they may be inaccurate –; and in the instances where data is available, they are not used, and their dissemination is limited.

G. Climate finance flows, both public and private, directed at and invested in gender responsive climate solutions

Today, for the first time, all the main funding mechanisms associated with climate change are mandated by gender policies or plans. This signifies considerable progress and serves as a cue for the rest of the climate finance architecture to follow its example on a global level. However, one of the greatest challenges is to put into practice the gender policies of the international financial instruments at national and regional levels and to ensure that they have a real influence on progress towards equality.

Despite the above, the climate finance architecture has not been designed to facilitate the participation of small grassroots groups. In general, the funds channel resources through "implementing agencies", for the most part large international environmental organisations or Agencies of the United Nations System, who then distribute the funding to others, and women's organisations often find themselves at the end of this chain (WEDO and Prospera, n/d).

In addition, limited access to funding restricts investment in climate solutions and post-crisis recovery (OECD, 2016). Studies show that only 3% of funding for the environment coming from philanthropic sources is directed at supporting women's and girls' environmental activism (Dobson and Lawrence, 2018).

In this context, promising practices such as the Antigua and Barbuda Sustainable Island Resource Framework Fund (SIRF) and the Costa Rican Gender Equality Award for Productive Units (GEAPU, GIGUP in Spanish) seek to mobilise public climate finance flows for gender responsive climate solutions.

SIRF funding has enabled single parent households (generally headed by women) to gain access to loans for house renovations so that they are more resistant to the climate and disasters. Consequently, more women have gained access to funding which has increased their, and their families, resilience to the effects of climate change and disasters.

The GEAPU is an initiative of the Costa Rican government, via the REDD+ Secretariat and the Ministry of Environment and Energy, to promote a more fair, inclusive, and equitable sustainable development that guarantees gender equality and women's and girls' autonomy, though the understanding of gender gaps and the implementation of action that contributes to closing them.

The GEAPU supports the fulfilment of national commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. It explores the drivers of inequality at the level of productive units, enabling the identification of changes needed to build a more fair and equitable society (for example, gender roles at family and productive levels; access to, use and control of resources including land; the distribution of power in family and productive spheres, among others). At the same time, it calls on governments at national and local levels, donors, and commercial, development and private sector banking, to boost investment and incentives that benefit productive family units supported by the GEAPU.

At the level of productive units, some of the benefits it gives to award winners include access to fresh financial resources such as new private or governmental funds, or investments (decoupling payment for environmental services from land ownership) and connecting proactive individuals with consumers to promote the recognition of the value of gender equality and fair and equitable trade.

As the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation action increases, so too will the distribution of funding and the potential gap between men and women in their access to and control over resources within prevailing systems and mechanisms. Due to the bias in current financial structures, the availability of financial resources intended to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation tends to be different for women compared to men, to the detriment of the former. Although there has been progress in establishing gender responsive climate financing mechanisms, efforts need to continue to guarantee women's participation in decision-making on all aspects of climate financing and direct access to funding for women's groups and organisations.

III. FINAL REFLECTIONS

In light of the multiple crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that are exacerbating poverty and inequality, and in the face of the climate crisis that impacts women differently, there is an

urgent need to move towards development approaches that address environmental sustainability and gender equality with greater synergy. In this regard, as countries and communities examine their legal, physical, economic, and sociocultural structures in response to climate change, there is an opportunity to identify and address long-standing gender inequality and progress towards a fairer and more sustainable world.

The promising practices outlined and analysed in this document are concrete examples from Latin America and the Caribbean that give an account of some progress towards incorporating a gender perspective into public policy instruments, projects and adaptation and mitigation initiatives regarding climate change. Rendering them more visible not only produces knowledge but also opportunities for cross-sectional learning, South-South collaboration, and inspiration for action by the MAWs and other strategic partners in the region.

This analysis has demonstrated that public policy instruments have made important progress in recognising and addressing the links between climate change and gender equality. On the one hand, in the case of the MAWs, several of the GEPs demonstrate that while reflections on climate change began at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, after 2016 the incorporation of this issue became a more frequent element of objectives or strategic guidelines. This constitutes a promising improvement for the region. However, there is a need to revise, renew and harmonise the GEPs with national legal frameworks relating to climate change such as the mandates on gender adopted by the UNFCCC framework and other regional instruments such as the Montevideo Strategy, the Regional Gender Agenda, and the Escazú Agreement.

On the other hand, in the sphere of public policies and programmes focused on climate change, there has been progress in the incorporation of a gender perspective in the NDCs, in the preparation of national plans on gender and climate change, and in gender action plans focused on specific sectors. Despite these promising actions, there is still much to be done to speed up the development of new GAPs or strategies, be it on a national level or specific to each sector, and to update existing plans, promoting a greater alignment with international and national agreements on gender and climate change.

In terms of the implementation of projects and participation, many of the efforts to incorporate gender equality into climate change responses are limited to interventions that, when implemented, have failed to break down unequal power structures or influence the reduction of gender gaps on a structural level. For this reason, gender inequality continues to hinder sustainable development and it is manifest in different spheres and sectors: initiatives related to climate change adaptation and mitigation are no exception. The promising practices identified in the document represent examples that could move this goal forward.

Examples of the above include initiatives that show that the region has promising practices that have influenced the incorporation of a gender, intersectional, intercultural and rights perspective into climate change policies and programmes. Despite this, there is a need to accelerate the development of new GAPs or strategies, whether at a national level or specific to each sector – for the countries that do not yet have them – and to update existing plans, promoting greater alignment with international and national agreements on gender and climate change.

Moreover, it is imperative to accelerate a fair transition in the framework of new development approaches for the region. The practices presented here relating to a transition to sustainability

identify opportunities and benefits for employment, competitiveness, restoration of the ecosystem, and access to renewable and safe energy. However, greater attention should be given to processes of change that can produce virtuous circles among new digital technologies, global knowledge networks, and new technology trends. Similarly, scientific advances and positive changes currently in progress can help to create better options for a gender responsive sustainable development. However, great challenges still exist to achieving the transition to a green, fair, and inclusive economy, for example, promoting reflection on the Principles of the Paris Agreement and gender equality in economic stimulus packages.

On the one hand, this can be achieved by prioritising investment in the care economy, recognising it as a dynamizing sector that can have a multiplying effect on wellbeing, the redistribution of time and income, labour participation, growth with sustainability, and tax collection. On the other hand, it also means recognising and reducing barriers to women's access to decent employment in sectors that promote a fair transition. This entails recognising the overload of unpaid work that falls on women as a structural barrier, actively encouraging women's labour insertion into different sectors associated with decarbonisation, as well as promoting their training in STEM fields related to efforts to respond to climate change.

Despite the promising advances that have been presented in this document, without sex-disaggregated data with an intersectional approach related to climate change, it will be impossible to know how far we have gone and how far we are from achieving a sustainable, fair, and inclusive sustainable development to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

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