



American Model United Nations

**Economic Commission for Latin America and
the Caribbean**

**Report to the Economic and Social Council
on the Regional Conference on Women in
Latin America and the Caribbean**

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Executive Summary

1 The Commission discussed possibilities for improving women's participation in social,
2 political, and economic life in Latin America and the Caribbean through the lens of five
3 comprehensive categories: women's health, economic autonomy, education, physical
4 autonomy, and governmental participation. To address oversights in the realm of
5 women's health, the Commission looked into treating and preventing HIV/AIDS,
6 sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy-related illnesses, and unwanted pregnancies
7 through better sex education, access to prophylactics and a proliferation of health clinics.

8
9 The Commission looked into methods aimed at promoting female economic autonomy to
10 ensure women greater equality and lessen dependence. These included gender-equality
11 workforce legislation, a reevaluation and revamping of social welfare programs,
12 improved access to clean water and other amenities, State-funded day care, transparency
13 in government hiring, and wage-equality enforcement for national and international
14 corporations.

15
16 Education is a particularly dear topic to this Commission as it allows women to advance
17 further in the workforce and make more informed decisions regarding all facets of their
18 daily lives. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean looked into
19 programs to encourage higher educative and vocational opportunities for women. The
20 Commission's deliberations led to a consensus that political education was also very
21 important.

22
23 The Commission further discussed female physical autonomy in the region noting the
24 importance, from both an economic and humanitarian standpoint, that women feel safe
25 and comfortable participating in social, political, and economic life. The Commission
26 inquired into media campaigns to promote awareness of the issue of gender-based abuse
27 and steps women may take to defend themselves. Such methods include self-defense
28 classes, women's shelters, how to obtain restraining orders. The Commission also looked
29 into the possibility of an international reporting toll-free hotline [MB1].

30
31 Finally, the Commission's deliberations stressed the importance of promoting female
32 governmental participation with the reasoning that such involvement serves not only to
33 better ensure that laws passed appropriately take women into account, but also to provide
34 role models for young girls to empower them from an early age. The Commission
35 discussed gender-parity legislation and enforcement mechanisms and ways to deal with
36 harassment targeted at women in prominent political positions.

37
38 Overall, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had an
39 extremely productive meeting and is very pleased with the documents it has emerged
40 with. The Commission believes that the work it has done will help Member States craft
41 and implement new legislation and programs to ameliorate the status and quality of life
42 among women. It is a necessity for all states to ensure that a gender perspective is part of
43 the efforts to measure development in the region, as well as the political strategies and
44 objectives designed to the stated purpose.

Matters calling for action by the United Nations Economic and Social Council

Draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

45 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean recommends to the
46 Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution II/1

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

47 *Guided by the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter,*
48 *Acknowledging the United Nations definition of violence against women as*
49 *meaning, “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in,*
50 *physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such*
51 *acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private*
52 *life,” as stated in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104,*
53 *Noting Article Two of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the*
54 *purpose of the declaration to identify a basic life of dignity and worth of a human,*
55 *Expressing concern towards the negative impacts of gender-based violence on the*
56 *political and economic participation of women,*
57 *Acknowledging the numerous manners in which women and girls in Latin*
58 *America and the Caribbean experience sexual violence,*
59 *Recognizing that the empowerment of women is essential to achieve further*
60 *economic growth,*
61 *Emphasizing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace*
62 *and Security as a way to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in armed*
63 *conflict and increase the representation of women in decision-making roles for the*
64 *prevention and management of conflict,*
65 *Recalling Millennium Development Goal Three that promotes gender equality and*
66 *empowerment of women,*
67 *Respecting the right and sovereignty to maintain their cultural identity,*
68 *1. Encourages Member States to implement legislation that stresses and supports*
69 *the empowerment of women;*
70 *2. Encourages States to pursue diverse individual and regional solutions that will*
71 *best secure equal economic opportunities and political participation for women in said*
72 *State;*
73 *3. Applauds the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Network for*
74 *a Life without Violence against Women (REDFEM), which provides a safe network for*
75 *women who have experienced violence as well as support in addressing the physiological*
76 *impact of violence;*
77 *4. Suggests the creation of a permanent regional public service committee that*
78 *would focus on general plans and measures to ensure that women may enjoy equal rights*
79 *and opportunities as men such as stronger voices in political, social, economic and*
80 *cultural development;*

- 81 5. *Asks* the Latin American and Caribbean region to continue to advance the
82 established mission of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325;
83 6. *Reminds* States of the importance women have in securing economic growth in
84 women’s participation that contributes to the stabilization of societies;
85 7. *Suggests* Member States and regional organizations create a series of
86 international toll free Hotline through United Nations Women that would protect the
87 identity of the women and girls;
88 8. *Encourage* Member States to further develop abuse prevention structures;
89 9. *Emphasizes* the implementation of State specific public media campaigns that
90 raise societal awareness to the issue of violence against women within the private live of
91 families and society as a whole;
92 10. *Further Encourages* the offering of programs that work with the perpetrators
93 who commit acts of violence against women;
94 11. *Expresses* the importance of preventative education policies within
95 communities to decrease forms of gendered violence;
96 12. *Invites* the creation of Police Training initiatives that will train male and
97 female law enforcement officials to better understand and aid battered women with legal
98 remedies.

Draft resolution II/2

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

100 *Noting* that of the world’s fifteen most gender inequitable countries, ten are found
101 in the Americas and the Caribbean,
102

103 *Recognizing* the importance of gender equality for the social, political, and
104 economic advancement of nations,
105

106 *Acknowledging* the benefits of diversifying and expanding the workforce by
107 including educated and trained women within it,
108

109 *Recognizing* that equality in the workforce is generally an indication of a
110 developed economy,
111

112 *Recognizing* that increased economic autonomy for women allows for self-
113 sufficiency and women’s empowerment,
114

115 1. *Encourages* Member States to work with United Nations Women’s Fund for
116 Gender Equality to create local, regional, and national initiatives that work to raise wages
117 and promote job opportunities, specifically through:

118 (a) The provision of direct loans to organizations within Member States that
119 promote gender equality while working to conventionalize gender equality into their
120 financial policy;
121

122 2. *Urges* the creation of further job opportunities for women in the following
123 ways:

124 (a) The long term strengthening of the position of women in the workforce
125 through more thorough education and opportunities in:
126 (i) International education programs;
127 (ii) Vocational training;
128 (b) The encouragement of Member States to draft legislation that bases wage rates
129 on performance rather than gender;

130
131 4. *Encourages* the use of previously established programs that utilize micro-
132 financing, such as the International Monetary Fund, to promote wage equality and
133 women's education in the following manner:

134 (a) The provision of investments in women in small business;
135 (b) The provision of financial assistance in education to advance job
136 opportunities;

137
138 5. *Requests* job hiring and employment practices that would improve equality and
139 opportunity for women such as:

140 (a) The encouragement of more equitable and proportional systems that would ensure
141 qualified women's roles in the workplace;
142 (b) The fair practices of maternity and paternity leave and retention;
143 (c) The need for managerial and departmental accountability toward achieving the goal
144 of more equal representation in the work force;

145
146 6. *Encourages* the provision of tax cuts to families that have two working parents
147 or single mothers that are recognized by the state to ease financial burdens and
148 incentivize economic growth;

149
150 7. *Notes* with zest the importance of including women in representative roles
151 including in the judiciary at an increased rate by encouraging the following:

152 (a) Workshops informing women on the campaign process;
153 (b) Scholarships for women to engage in public policy;
154 (c) Workshops informing women on participation on civic engagement.
155

Consideration of Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

156 At its 24th session, the Commission considered agenda item Topic Two, Regional
157 Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Deliberations

158 A. Women's Health 159

160 Along with obvious humanitarian concerns, The Economic Commission for Latin
161 America and the Caribbean notes that sick women are not working women. Not only do
162 states have an obligation to care for the health of their citizens as per The United Nations
163 Declaration of Human Rights, but it is in their best interests to do so. Investing in this
164 field ultimately feeds back into a stronger workforce and a healthier national and global
165 economy.

166
167 HIV/AIDS is of special concern to this body as women often report disproportionately
168 high incidence rates and find it the most difficult to obtain proper treatment. The United
169 Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS targets a 50% reduction
170 in new HIV infections by 2015. In 2011, within the Latin American and Caribbean
171 region, 68% of those requiring treatment for HIV/AIDS received it. This issue is
172 particularly pressing in urban areas where access to sex education, prophylactics, testing
173 services, and treatment remains inaccessible to the poorest members. Less than 30% of
174 those aged 15-24 years correctly identify how to prevent sexual transmission of
175 HIV/AIDS.

176
177 In addition, women must play an active role in family planning. As per the United
178 Nations Declaration of Human Rights, women have a right to determine how and when
179 they become pregnant. However, among the Member States of the Economic
180 Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, there is an unacceptably high rate of
181 pregnancy among teenagers and unwilling mothers. Over 20% of adolescent girls aged 15
182 to 19 in the region are pregnant or already have children. To combat this, The Economic
183 Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean looked into the beneficial impacts of
184 increased access to sex education and prophylactics as desired. To achieve these goals,
185 Member States may wish to create or expand existing sex education programs in schools
186 and workplaces to educate both women and men in matters including: but not limited to,
187 the risks of unprotected sex, methods of safe sex, and how to obtain prophylactics and
188 sexually transmitted infection (STI) and pregnancy testing. These discussion topics
189 would work to reduce the stigma of reproductive health and ensure that women have the
190 information they need to make healthy, independent choices.

191
192 The fifth Millennium Development Goal is dedicated to improving maternal health and
193 one of its targets is to reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal
194 mortality ratio. The primary direct and indirect causes of maternal mortality in Latin
195 America and the Caribbean include severe bleeding (generally puerperal), infections

196 (septicaemia in most cases), and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (generally
197 eclampsia). Research based on these facts pointed to the necessity of promoting and
198 providing hospital-based birth so that women can receive medical attention throughout
199 their pregnancies. This would require a greater number of health clinics and
200 transportation-based infrastructure along the way.

201
202 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is also of the opinion
203 that in order to best serve their people, States ought to provide access to health clinics for
204 all. The clinics would not be gender specific, but would work to lower the
205 aforementioned women's health issues. Special emphasis should be placed on those in
206 underserved rural and poor urban areas by building more clinics, shoring up roads to
207 connect populated areas to existing clinics, and providing free emergency ambulance
208 services where needed.

209

210 B. Economic Autonomy

211

212 The Commission's deliberations suggest that economic autonomy is essential for
213 allowing women to take charge of their lives and contribute to society and the economy
214 however they choose to. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the
215 Caribbean, therefore, supports state-specific implementation of legislation enforcing
216 gender-equality in the workplace. Such laws would take steps such as barring the use of
217 pregnancy tests when hiring, mandatory equal pay for equal work, and a state-set amount
218 of parental leave. Additionally, The Commission believes that the applicability and
219 enforcement of these laws to transnational corporations should be considered as they
220 extend beyond the jurisdiction of a single state's borders. The Commission believes that
221 the Business Council of the United Nations, as well as the International Labor
222 Organization, could potentially be used as a mechanism to enact meaningful change and
223 ensure that women are treated properly in the workplace both in the developed and
224 developing world.

225

226 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean also found that that
227 land grant programs and many conditional cash transfers in the Latin American and
228 Caribbean region currently primarily benefit men. These, and other, existing social
229 welfare programs should be reevaluated to ensure that women are treated equally so as to
230 reduce female dependency. Programs such as Brazil's Bolsa Familia give women more
231 control over household finances by granting cash transfers to mothers, rather than just to
232 fathers.

233

234 The Commission stresses the need for improved access to clean water and other
235 amenities. Time women spend doing chores—as, due to traditional gender roles, women
236 are considered more responsible for household maintenance—is time taken away from
237 the work day, making it harder for women in rural areas to find employment.

238 The Commission looked into the possibility of state-funded daycare centers, and found
239 that areas with such centers allowed women to go beyond their roles as mothers, and
240 actively participate in the workforce as they please. They would also allow children to
241 experience school-like institutions from an early age and lead to higher graduation rates

242 along the road.

243

244 The Commission's research suggests that the lack of transparency in the process of the
245 hiring of government workers detracts from the integrity of governments. Without
246 measures to ensure that applicants/potential workers are screened without bias towards
247 one particular gender, these governments (both local and federal) may severely limit the
248 potential of said applicants as well as the States themselves. The percentage of
249 government workers who are female is disproportionately low, and while it could be
250 argued that this is due to factors other than gender bias (such as a lower percentage of
251 educated women in comparison to educated men, which is addressed elsewhere in this
252 report), the Commission persists in its stance that it is still important to bring attention to
253 the process by which these workers are selected. An essential step in the process of
254 bringing the proportion of genders holding these positions to a more desirable level
255 would be to ensure transparency in the methods of selection for these positions.

256

257 Unless States in Latin America and the Caribbean regulate wages across genders for their
258 citizens, they are at risk of ostracizing half of their population. It is for this reason that the
259 Commission stresses the importance of equal pay across genders. The Commission
260 discussed the controversy surrounding these issues, including whether men should get
261 paid paternity leave if women are allowed paid maternity leave, or if both leaves should
262 simply be left unpaid. At any rate, some form of regulation on this matter would be
263 extremely beneficial, as the fact that the existence of these differences in pay
264 disincentivizes women to become educated and could potentially legitimize the
265 patronization/disregard of women in the workplace in the eyes of their male counterparts.
266 While it is not within the purview of this Commission to wage a culture war, gender
267 equality is a large part of the social issues at hand today.

268

269 C. Education

270

271 In addition to the aforementioned sex education, it is vital for the health of the Latin
272 American and Caribbean region that women receive vocational and higher education. Not
273 only will this enable them to obtain higher-paying jobs and be less dependent on the male
274 members of their household, but they will feed back into the economy. Aside from social
275 benefits, this economic improvement alone is hopefully enough cause for members of
276 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the
277 institution of programs to make possible and encourage women to achieve these higher
278 levels of education. Such programs have, in the past, included conditional cash transfers
279 to families with daughters in schools past the level mandated by government.

280

281 Vocational programs that already exist within States may be expanded to provide equal
282 enrolment opportunities for women. To the extent that States have available funds—
283 noting that the costs will be reimbursed through their reinvestment in the economy—they
284 may also wish to expand such programs into currently underserved rural areas. Such
285 vocational programs include technical schools, and agricultural programs.

286

287 The Commission discussed the benefits of creating workshops educating women on the

288 election process in their country and on civic engagement. Furthermore, the advantages
289 of creating scholarships for women specifically in public policy would not only decrease
290 gender inequality, but also allow for women from emerging professional opportunities in
291 the long-term.

292

293 D. Physical Autonomy

294

295 Wishing to ensure that Latin American and Caribbean women remain secure in the
296 region, it is the general consensus of The Economic Commission for Latin America and
297 the Caribbean that its members would be benefited if they carried out print, visual, and
298 social media campaigns to raise awareness among all citizens, male and female,
299 regarding gender violence and ways in which women can protect themselves. This
300 includes self-defense classes, how to obtain restraining orders, and the location of
301 women's shelters.

302 This is coupled with The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's
303 stress of the need for anti-domestic violence legislation, removing allowances within the
304 legal code that often give perpetrators of gender-based violence committed in the name of
305 honor or within the home to receive lighter sentences. Legislation ought to ensure that
306 perpetrators are treated equally under the law with no regard to motive or relation to the
307 victim.

308

309 The Commission additionally analyzed the beneficial creation of a Sexual Based Offense
310 Task Force concerned with addressing the issues in the private sector of girls and women
311 through a public-private partnership between local governments and local non-
312 governmental organizations.

313

314 The Commission, based on its research and deliberations, is of the opinion that women
315 should also have access to protective measures if they believe themselves to be
316 threatened by a family member, acquaintance, or unknown person. These protective
317 measures include restraining orders, police escorts where necessary, and the opening and
318 maintenance of women and children's shelters. To elaborate on these shelters, States
319 would work with United Nations bodies and relevant Non Governmental Organizations
320 (NGOs) not only to provide the physical building and amenities necessary to temporarily
321 maintain women and children away from their homes, but to also provide trained staff to
322 counsel the women and children in issues both psychological and legal. Job training and
323 placement services may also be offered. Rape counseling, STI testing and pregnancy
324 testing would also be provided. If this is not possible in the majority of shelters due to
325 funds or a lack of personnel, the States might consider creating a few additional large,
326 central shelters where these counselors would be available along with transportation to
327 the central shelters for women in peripheral shelters.

328

329 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's research further
330 supports the creation of an international reporting center with a toll-free hotline. All
331 interactions with the center, both on the phone and online would be as anonymous as the
332 user wishes. The center would be created and maintained by Member States who wish to
333 contribute, along with relevant NGOs. Women who had questions about, or were

334 concerned for, their safety would be able to call the number or visit the website and
335 receive information in their native tongue regarding their country’s policies and advice on
336 how to proceed. They would also be able to report any perceived gender-based
337 disadvantages they experience or witness to receive advice. If these women wished, their
338 governments could be made aware of these complaints so that they might determine if
339 legislation is necessary to prevent similar future abuses.

340
341 The Commission did not deliberate at length on the subject of human trafficking and
342 migration, for the purposes of sexual and more conventional labor. The Commission
343 believes that many United Nations programs already exist to combat this international
344 and regional problem and notes that it is up to Member States to continue to fund, and
345 perhaps enhance the level of funding directed towards these programs.

347 E. Governmental Participation

348
349 This Commission has found that the participation of women in all levels and capacities of
350 government serves not only to better ensure that laws passed appropriately take women
351 into account, but also to provide role models for young girls to empower them from an
352 early age. The Commission would also like to take the time to acknowledge and support
353 feminist movements within the region. Participation of women in the decision-making
354 process is essential to ensure that the social and economic changes desired and the quest
355 for gender-equality and female empowerment is sufficiently achieved. In the last few
356 years, the region has experienced an increase in women’s participation in political and
357 public life as a whole. In this, Latin American and the Caribbean States have become
358 leaders, with a total of 24% of women actively participating in politics. However, there is
359 a gap in women’s participation at the federal, state, and local levels, where women only
360 have 10.6% overall participation. Even when women do obtain powerful positions in
361 ministerial cabinets, an average of 56% of them are in sociocultural capacities,
362 reaffirming gender roles on the national level.

363
364 The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean further discussed the
365 topic of gender parity legislation at the federal and provincial levels. The Commission
366 found that problems with attempts to implement such legislation in the past came
367 primarily in the form of a lack of enforcement mechanisms. To this end, The Commission
368 believes that continued research in this field as well as potential monetary mechanisms
369 such as fining political parties that fail to field the requisite percentage of female
370 candidates may be useful. This method may be the most effective and appropriately
371 targeted as, according to the majority of opinion leaders in the region, 66%, think that the
372 greatest opposition to gender parity in politics comes from “within the main political
373 parties.”

374
375 The Commission also discussed the matter of harassment targeting women in politics and
376 emerged with the opinion that members would do well to form special protective
377 legislation for such women to set aside such harassment—either verbal, psychological, or
378 physical—as a special category of hate crime and thus eligible for a more severe
379 sentence.

Action taken by the Commission

381

382 Also at this meeting, the Commission debated and approved draft resolution II/1
383 beginning with the preambular phrase, "Noting that of the world's...", sponsored by
384 Argentina, Bahamas, Republic of Korea, Haiti, Venezuela, Portugal, El Salvador, Mexico,
385 Japan and Germany. The final resolution passed by consensus with Guyana abstaining.

386

387 Also at this meeting, the Commission debated and approved draft resolution II/2
388 beginning with the preambular phrase, "Guided by the principles...", sponsored by
389 Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Republic of Korea, Venezuela, Bolivia, Chile, Brazil,
390 Ecuador, Spain, Portugal, Haiti and Colombia. The final resolution passed by consensus
391 with Argentina, Jamaica, Guyana, Portugal and El Salvador abstaining.

392

393

Adoption of the Report

394 At its 24th meeting, on 26 November 2013, the draft report of the Commission was made
395 available for consideration. The Commission considered the report, and with no
396 amendments, adopted the report by consensus.