

Inter-Agency Network on
Women and Gender Equality
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Project on tools and indicators

Coordinator: ECLAC

The present is to report on the first year activities of the five-year inter-agency project on data collection and use of gender indicators for policy making coordinated by ECLAC on "Gender Indicators for the Follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action", as approved by the First Session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) (New York, 26 February to 1 March 2002). Even though the Network concluded at that meeting that ECLAC has completed its mandate as manager of the Task-Force on Tools and indicators for gender-impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation, it also recommended that ECLAC remained in the role of coordinator, in terms of information-sharing and taking the lead in contacting potential donors.

As a first step, immediately after the IANWGE first session, ECLAC held a technical workshop with the members of the Task-Force and the Statistics Units of their organizations to define immediate and future tasks, taking into account the quantity of available resources in this frame of time (New York, March 2002).

As for the funding efforts carried out by ECLAC, in May 2002 ECLAC provided IANWGE as well as the other four Regional Commissions with a detailed proposed budget for the inter-agency project for an amount of US\$1,000,000 per region. The Commission also prepared a draft letter to be sent by the IANWGE Secretariat and a listing of potential donors that included Executive officers of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Canadian International Development Research Center, the Ford Foundation, the Governments of Italy, Netherlands and Spain, the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). The letter presented the complete project proposal and sought an exchange on the possibilities that the prospective sponsor be interested in participating to its funding.

To accelerate the process, in the month of August, ECLAC presented on behalf of the five regional commissions a separate proposal to UNFIP, together with other projects of the Commission. A preliminary inquiry was sent to Ms. Bilg  O. Bassani, Director of Programmes of UNFIP, to request advanced commentaries for the proposal idea. A detailed answer was later given by Ms. Ms. Elena Pozdorovkina, Programme Development Officer for UNFIP Population and Women Department, where she recognized its "strong merits", "compelling ideas" and "great potential" "to contribute to gender equity and equality and appreciate(d) (the) strong inter-agency collaboration in important area of developing an integrated system of gender indicators", but regretted "that given the large number of proposals in our pipeline and the relatively limited funding available, we will not be able to consider this proposal for funding and do not encourage you to develop it into a full project document for UNF funding".

After this refusal, taking into account the importance of the project, ECLAC considered the need to take measures at regional level in order to fund its implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which led its Project Committee to support the presentation of a two-years version of the initial proposal to the Italian Government for a total budget of US\$500,000. Final reply should arrived in the first semester of 2003 but funding would be available at the earliest by the end of the year. For the biennium 2002-2003, partial financial support was obtained from UNIFEM and UNFPA and a small project is being presented to the consideration of UNDP.

It was also decided to present the project idea for funding by the United Nations Development Account and, at the request of ECLAC's Executive Secretary, it was reformulated as an interdivisional project for the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration Goals in the region. This new proposal was presented in October 2002 for the approval of the General Assembly and, should it be authorized, would be jointly executed by the Women and Development Unit, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division, the Population Division (CELADE), the Social Development Division and the Environment and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC.

Other progresses in Latin America and the Caribbean

At regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean, interinstitutional agreements have been discussed or signed on the design of gender indicators in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization/Pan-American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO). These agreements set out in detail the scope for collaborating for the development, construction and up-date of an integrated system of gender indicators which will not only highlight the different realities in which the lives of men and women are unfolding, but also unravel gender relations and point out the new areas in which inequities have shown up as a result of the advancement of women.

As mentioned in last year report of the Task-Force on Tools and indicators for gender-impact analysis, monitoring and evaluation, a major achievement for the region was the inclusion of specific activities for promoting the use of gender indicators in the programme of work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, which held its first meeting from 9-11 May 2001 in Santiago, Chile. The Conference accepted Bolivia's proposal to host two technical meetings on statistics and gender indicators and requested ECLAC to provide technical cooperation and assistance in organizing these forums, whose conclusions were expected to be a valuable contribution to future discussions. The first of these meetings on "Statistics and gender indicators for measuring the incidence and patterns of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean" was held in La Paz, Bolivia, from 21-23 November 2001. The second meeting, which is scheduled for the first semester of 2003, will go forward in the exam of emerging issues and look at the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the measurement of poverty. Among other tasks, groundwork includes the preparation of a state of the art bibliography on measuring gender and poverty - which was concluded in the second semester of 2002 - and the elaboration of a position paper, which preparation will be financed with the support of UNIFEM.

To confront the necessity of governments and civil society in the region to have access to gender indicators both to formulate and follow-up public policies, importance was given to technical cooperation activities to improve the quality of data as well as to give training on the use of and demand for indicators. At national level, technical assistance in designing a system of gender indicators was provided in 2002 to the national mechanisms for the advancement of women and the national statistical institutes of Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay. Similarly, assistance was also provided for the design of gender indicators in sectorial institutions, as it has been the case in Ecuador - where ECLAC answered a request for

technical cooperation from the National Council for Women, the National Statistics and Census Institute together with the Interministerial Committee for Employment with a view to identifying a set of economic indicators that would be useful for diagnosis as well as the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the formulation of work and employment public policies.

The growing requests of technical cooperation received from the countries of the region is actually generating the necessity of harmonizing the methodologies used by the various organisms of the United Nations system when providing such assistance. With this purpose in mind, ECLAC organized in Santiago, Chile, from 7 to 10 October 2002 an Interagency Meeting on Gender Indicators to coordinate the conceptual and methodological aspects of the technical cooperation given to the countries of the region¹. Participants contributed to the preparation of a common guide for technical assistance on the methodological aspects of the construction and definition of gender indicators in each thematic area of the Beijing Platform for Action - which preliminary version was prepared in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) - and agreed that the interagency effort should be oriented toward the consolidation of an integrated system of indicators for the follow-up of the World Conferences of Cairo, Beijing, Johannesburg and the Millennium Assembly.

In this perspective, it is worth underlining the effort developed with the financial support of UNFPA by ECLAC's Women and Development Unit and Population Division (CELADE) to render compatible the Cairo's objectives on population and development (ICPD, 1994) with those of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) through a joint system of indicators for the follow-up of these instruments and regional activities of dissemination and training. As a first product of this work, CELADE has dedicated the No. 70 of its *Demographic Bulletin* to the circulation of sociodemographic indicators from a gender perspective. In addition, a First Workshop on the System of Indicators for the Follow-Up of International Conferences to elaborate a prototype of a National System of Indicators that would be programmable in Redatam for each country was held on in Santiago, Chile, on 27 November to 5 December 2002. Participants included technical staff and statistic experts of national statistical institutes, statistic experts of women's national offices and governmental representants from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. A second workshop will be held in the first semester of 2003 with participants of 10 other countries from Central America and the Caribbean.

Situation in the other regional commissions

Aside from its collaboration with the preparation of the common guide for technical assistance, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) launched a gender statistics

¹ Participants included, in addition to ECLAC, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO-PAHO).

website that links gender issues to statistical indicators developed by the UNECE/UNDP gender statistics Task Force, which was created in May 2001. In addition to statistics, the site elaborates on some of the main gender issues relevant to the UNECE region, and provides examples of policies and other initiatives within that context. The database of gender statistics helps to monitor the situation of women and men in all UNECE member countries, and to evaluate the effectiveness of policies. ECE is currently collecting new data that shall become available at any time in January 2003 (<http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/web/welcome1.htm>).

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has dedicated much effort in 2002 to go forward in the theoretical framework on gender indicators that would be useful for the region. An Expert Group Meeting was held in Bangkok on 2-4 December 2002 to develop such a framework to facilitate the production of an effective national system of gender indicators on the basis the Beijing Platform for Action, the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly and the Millennium Development Goals, as well regional instruments such as the Jakarta Declaration and Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Asian and the Pacific. During the Meeting, were developed and adopted a set of guidelines for developing gender-based indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) in the ESCAP region, taking into consideration ease of application and relative availability of statistics in most of participating countries, as well as a first set of indicators. This framework for gender indicators will soon be disseminated on the website of the Commission (<http://www.unescap.org/wid/index.htm>).

For its part, the Women and Development Unit of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has initiated the elaboration of country profiles and the first ones for Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar and Syria are currently available on the Commission website (<http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/social/women.html>). The profiles include data on population, health and family, education, women and economy, political participation, national mechanisms for the advancement of women, civil society, national legislation and women's rights, violence against women and recent breakthroughs for women; some of the profiles are also completed with information on women and poverty, technologies, the media and the environment.

The Economic Commission for Africa is preparing a book that will consolidated the series of 53 country profiles on the socio-economic status of women published earlier in 2000. Meanwhile, the information has been published in a CD-ROM and is being disseminated in ECA website (http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/cdroms/status_of_african_women/default0.htm). The information was compiled from diverse sources and covers the 1970-1998 period. Its contains selected indicators in some areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action - among them, women in decision-making, education, health, economic contribution of women, and the rights of women and the girl-child. The brochures are intended to serve as information, sensitization and advocacy tools. Surveys were also undertaken in Eastern and Western Africa on women's access to land and agricultural technology (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Kenya, Uganda and Senegal) and "women and family law" (Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda). The results are not available on-line yet.