Normative framework for gender equality
A. Normative framework

The inequalities existing between women and men have been of concern to the United Nations since its founding. Ever since the first meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women was held in February 1947, the legal basis for the struggle for gender equality and for efforts to combat discrimination against women\(^2\) has been expounded in international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women\(^3\) (United Nations, 1979) and its optional protocol (United Nations, 1999), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 1996) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015).

There are also regional instruments such as the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (commonly known as the Convention of Belém do Pará) of the Organization of American States (OAS, 1994) and the Regional Gender Agenda (ECLAC, 2017a) adopted by the member governments at the Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean,\(^4\) a subsidiary organ of ECLAC.

The Regional Gender Agenda identifies multiple dimensions of the discrimination experienced by women and sets out the human rights commitments assumed by signatory governments with a view to promoting gender quality and guaranteeing the rights of women in all their diversity (ECLAC, 2017a).

The Montevideo Strategy adopted at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is a regional accord that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also a technical policy instrument for the implementation and reinforcement of cross-cutting and sectoral public policies designed to guarantee human rights and women's autonomy.

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\(^2\) The Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women defines discrimination against women as: “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (United Nations, 1979).

\(^3\) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is a milestone international agreement because it proposes concrete action and is the only universally recognized instrument in the struggle to uphold women’s rights and freedoms. Furthermore, pursuant to its optional protocol, the Convention is legally binding upon the States that sign and ratify it.

\(^4\) The Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean is charged with identifying the situation with respect to women’s autonomy and rights at the regional and subregional levels, presenting public policy recommendations for gender equality, undertaking periodic assessments of the activities carried out in fulfilment of regional and international plans and agreements on the subject, and serving as a forum for debates on gender equality. For further information, see [online] https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/14/en.
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