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**MAINSTREAMING+ FOR EQUALITY AND TRANSFORMATION:  
CIM/OAS STRATEGY**

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Strategic Objective 1: Clarify and reinforce the conceptual framework and strategies for gender mainstreaming based on the need to eliminate the barriers that hinder the achievement of equality between women and men.

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5. **The Role of the CIM**

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
IAP	Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality
OAS	Organization of American States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

## 1. Preface

Since the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) incorporated the idea of integrating the gender agenda in the programs of its Platform for Action, the mainstreaming of the gender perspective or perspective<sup>1</sup> has been of relevance in the tools available to put an end to this gap that we have been fighting to close. Although at that time, the idea of incorporating this perspective into social development was raised, today this process has evolved at all sectors and levels, not only in the public sector, but also, in many cases, in the private sector. However, despite the political weight that it entails, and the struggles that are taking place from civil society, women's organizations, and feminist organizations to protect and deepen women's rights, gender mainstreaming has historically and constantly lacked financial, human, and technical resources.

However, and considering the real and important advances that have been achieved in the last 25 years, today mainstreaming carries more weight than ever. The differentiated impacts of the socioeconomic and political crises on women, and the social and economic development of the region require that the needs, realities, and resilience of women be incorporated in each step of the construction of societies to continue positioning gender equality as a good of humanity. Thus, the gender perspective has been expanding from national strategic planning, through the urban development of cities, and even foreign policy and diplomacy. In this construction, the development of an architecture for equality – associated with Virginia Woolf's "room of one's own" (1929) – that institutionalizes a gender entity (unit, division, department) at the top level of decision-making in all sectors becomes essential.

The concept and implementation of gender mainstreaming has undergone a positive evolution in recent years, incorporating women in all their diversity with an intersectional approach that makes it possible to address their specific needs: from the design of inclusive social programs, the allocation of specific budgets, public spaces that are accessible to all, guarantees of universal access to public services, to the visibility and advancement of these issues in multilateralism.

In this context of evolution, and taking into account various requests from member states, the CIM presents this **Mainstreaming + Strategy for Equality and Transformation**, which seeks to strengthen the leading role of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women (National Machineries) in the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in public policy, while seeking to catalyze some elements of mainstreaming, including the articulation of a solid architecture; the deepening of strategic alliances; inter-sectoral, multi-actor and territorial co-responsibility; an intersectional approach that raises the voices of all women; and the allocation of the necessary budget to make mainstreaming effective - all to advance on the transformative path towards equality.

Despite at least 25 years of proposals and strategies to mainstream the gender perspective, the current context of persistent inequality and misogynistic resistance invites us to reflect on the effectiveness of mainstreaming, taking advantage of the transformations in the work of States that demand both responses to the many crises currently being experienced around the world, including the COVID-19 pandemic as well as those caused by the scourge of sexist violence against women, together with those caused by poverty, the deterioration of democracy, transnational organized

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<sup>1</sup> In both academic literature and political commitments, "gender perspective" and "gender perspective" are used. This document understands them as inter-changeable, but uses only "gender perspective" for the sake of clarity.

crime and climate change, among other factors; but also to the transformations in the way of organizing our societies brought about by the digital world.

The analysis presented in this document highlights reflections, challenges and opportunities that must be materialized into clear objectives and activities to generate effective strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective in the region. After consulting the normative framework on equality in the countries of the region, the laws creating the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, the national equality plans and policies, and reference documentation from the CIM, we have developed a strategy that identifies adverse situations and obstacles that hinder mainstreaming, the different actors involved, as well as the causes and effects of these difficulties, as a previous step to the generation of proposals and solutions.

This initial version is intended as a living document that will be fed by the multiple activities that we will continue to carry out and by the voices and experiences of women, institutions, and organizations.

We hope to provide a tool and a concrete strategy so that the actions implemented by the National Women's Machineries have a greater impact on the lives of women and girls on this continent, based on the OAS goal of "More Rights for More People."

**Alejandra Mora Mora**

Executive Secretary

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Organization of American States

## 2. Where Are We Coming From? Background and Evolution of Mainstreaming

### 2.1. International Normative Framework

Since the creation of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1928, the countries of the Americas have been advancing little by little in the legal and political/institutional areas in relation to gender equality and women's human rights. However, these advances have not occurred with the expected or required speed, especially taking into account that for almost half a century all States have assumed the legal obligation to guarantee women their equality with men in the enjoyment of human rights.

#### Legal Instruments

<a href="#"><i>American Convention on the Granting of Civil Rights to Women</i></a> (OAS, 1948)	Grants women the same civil rights enjoyed by men.
<a href="#"><i>Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women</i></a> (OAS, 1948)	Establishes that the right to vote and to be elected to national office should not be denied or restricted on the basis of sex.
<a href="#"><i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i></a> (CEDAW, UN, 1979)	Obliges States to substantive equality between women and men.
<a href="#"><i>Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women</i></a> (Belem Do Pará Convention, OAS, 1994)	Establishes the right of women to live free from violence, both in the public and private spheres.

#### Political Agreements

<a href="#"><i>Declarations of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM</i></a>	<p>The Assembly of Delegates of the CIM brings together the Principal Delegates of the CIM from each of the OAS Member States to examine issues of hemispheric concern regarding women's human rights and gender equality, and to propose and debate political and programmatic solutions.</p> <p>Each of the Declarations adopted during the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM reflect a political commitment of the States to advance these issues.</p> <p>Of particular relevance to this Strategy, in 2008 the <a href="#"><i>Declaration of Santiago</i></a> made a strong call to the States to strengthen the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women for mainstreaming, as the governing bodies on the issue of gender equality.</p>
<a href="#"><i>Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women</i></a> (Beijing, 1995)	<p>Establishes the obligation of all States to mainstream the gender perspective as one of the key measures to achieve equality, as well as the obligation to create institutional structures to ensure compliance with all the commitments assumed around this goal.</p> <p>In its Critical Area of Concern on "Institutional Machineries for the Advancement of Women," the Platform defined the role of National Machineries as "...central government</p>

	<p>policy coordination agencies. Their main task is to support the incorporation of the gender equality perspective in all spheres of policy and at all levels of government” and the Declaration specified the necessary resources for the effective fulfillment of this mandate.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming</u></a> (1997)</p>	<p>Instrument adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) that defined the concept, for the first time in the international arena, and established a series of principles to guide the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality</u></a> (IAP, OAS, 2000)</p>	<p>The objectives of the IAP include: 1) Systematically integrate the gender perspective in all the organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system; and 2) Encourage OAS Member States to formulate public policies, strategies, and proposals aimed at promoting women's human rights and gender equality in all spheres of public and private life, considering their diversity and life cycles.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals</u></a> (SDGs, UN, 2015)</p>	<p>SDG 5 specifies the goal to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” The 2030 Agenda also recognizes the empowerment of women as a condition prior to achieving all of the goals, which requires gender mainstreaming strategies in the rest of the SDGs.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Regional Conferences on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean</u></a></p>	<p>Convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, this is a space for exchange that has served to reinforce the legal and political commitments that all countries have assumed in the international arena. The objective of these conferences is to support governments in the implementation of these commitments through a series of Consensus and Strategies that aim to identify persistent gaps and propose concrete strategies to close them. Like the Declarations of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM, the Consensuses and Strategies adopted by the Regional Conference have opted for the strengthening of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women as a fundamental route towards the implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda.</p>

Even though efforts have been made in all the countries of the region - varying in magnitude, scope and impact - to mainstream the gender perspective in the work of the State, the gender perspective is still not an integral part of the daily activities of the government as a whole. Although all women experience multiple and diverse forms of discrimination and violence in their daily lives, and equality remains a distant goal in almost all areas of life, the gender perspective persists as a sectorized issue, limited in its scope and without the social, political, or financial support to ensure its effective implementation.

## 2.2. Definitions

The term gender mainstreaming refers us to the definitions of international organizations that have conceptualized this work for more than 30 years. The ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions (1997) offer a far-reaching definition, which is later taken up and reaffirmed by the *Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality* (IAP) in 2000:

*Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.*

Paraphrasing this definition, it is possible to dimension the phases, resources, tools and challenges of effective mainstreaming, at all levels, to ensure *that the concerns and experiences of women, in all their diversity, are also an integral element of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs*. The policies, programs, and laws that are considered are aimed at the entire population, when they do not have a gender perspective, they are designed from the concerns and experiences of men. In other words, the mainstreaming of a gender perspective implies preventing any intervention that does not take into account the differentiated effect on women and men from being treated as “neutral.”

In this way, mainstreaming a gender perspective in a State, an institution or organization, a ministry or a company consists of integrating this approach in all policies, strategies, programs, administrative and economic activities and even in the institutional culture, to truly contribute to a change in the situation of gender inequality.

## 2.3. Acquired Knowledge: Indispensable Tools for the Effectiveness of Mainstreaming

The ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions also established a series of key “principles” for the effectiveness of mainstreaming efforts, including the diagnosis of gender differences; accountability at the highest level; institutionalization through concrete measures, mechanisms and processes; the need to adopt policies and programs aimed specifically at women as a complement to mainstreaming efforts; and the political will and the allocation of sufficient human and financial resources for the implementation of these processes. These were the initial starting points for gender mainstreaming.

There are as many paths as there are experiences in the countries of the region in efforts to mainstream a gender perspective; however, it is possible to identify some activities that over time have been established as lessons learned:

### a) Use of inclusive language

Texts and discourses that refer to the lived realities of all people – women, men and people with diverse gender identities – make them all visible. This applies to all formats, documents, directories and institutional communication, including any advertising of events, activities and any material used for external communication and public relations.



**b) Collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age, gender identity and other aspects of human identity**

Information disaggregated by sex - and when possible, also by the variables of age, ethnic origin, income, and educational level, among others, has made it possible to identify gaps in the development of multiple topics, and the analysis of this information has been a fundamental input in decision-making processes regarding the design of public policies, in all areas. Without data disaggregated by sex, it is not possible to identify the inequalities between men and women that cause, and at the same time are a consequence of, discrimination in the fields of human activity. Although more and more information is beginning to be collected, analyzed and presented disaggregated by sex, the indicators that include variables of age, ethnic origin, income and educational level are still non-existent or insufficient in most cases.

**c) Use of gender analysis to identify differences in access to and use of policies/programs/services or in their impact on different populations**

Like data disaggregated by sex and other aspects of identity, accurate gender analysis has made it possible to identify and document inequalities, knowing the roles of women and men, detecting differences in the exercise of power and established norms, their access and control over material and non-material resources, their responsibilities, priorities, practical needs and strategic. There are frameworks and methodologies developed to integrate gender analysis, based on the objectives and levels to be investigated. These analyses have gone hand in hand with indicators that measure the evolution of changes related to gender status and position, necessary to measure the results of actions to incorporate a gender perspective. Gender indicators have also made it possible to measure women's unpaid work, such as care, reproductive and community work.

**d) Involvement of women and men in decision-making processes**

Women have contributed different information, new perspectives, approaches and even ways of working in terms of their participation in decision-making and the formulation of policies and programs. Although the governments of the Member States and their different administrations are increasingly making efforts to balance the participation of women and men in decision-making and representation positions, the pending challenge for most administrations is still to ensure equality at all levels of decision-making, including the designation of working groups, commissions and advisory councils, as well as dialogue tables and events, even when representatives, delegates and speakers are selected.

**e) Integration of equal treatment and a gender perspective in management, monitoring and evaluation processes and instruments**

These have included results-based management, strategic planning, quality management and budgeting with a gender perspective, among others. It is important to keep in mind that:

- Paying attention to the different circumstances of women, men in their diversity has allowed for improved success rates, efficiency and getting the most out of staff and resources.
- Monitoring and accountability mechanisms that have included as a norm the evaluation of results by sex and a systematic review of the proportion of people in the development and implementation of objectives, strategies and measures have provided better results against which to check, adjust and/or continue the policies and programs aimed.

**f) Capacity-strengthening and the formation of specialized teams**

Beyond the sensitivity of the National Mechanism or the personnel in charge of incorporating the gender perspective, specialized teams have had the capacity to propose, plan and evaluate the actions and programs to know the differentiated effect of the policies/programs/services, to interpret the gaps that may exist and to identify when a service or program perpetuates traditional gender roles and inequality.

**g) Establishment of gender units**

Gradually, a significant increase in gender units established throughout public administrations has been observed, although these persist with important limitations in terms of their authority, resources and capacity. They have been conceived as specialized bodies within public and private organizations to ensure that gender equality and human rights are fundamental pillars in decision-making and administrative and substantive actions of each institution.

**3. Where Are We? Mainstreaming 25 years After Beijing: Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Opportunities**

**3.1. Principal Obstacles to Mainstreaming**

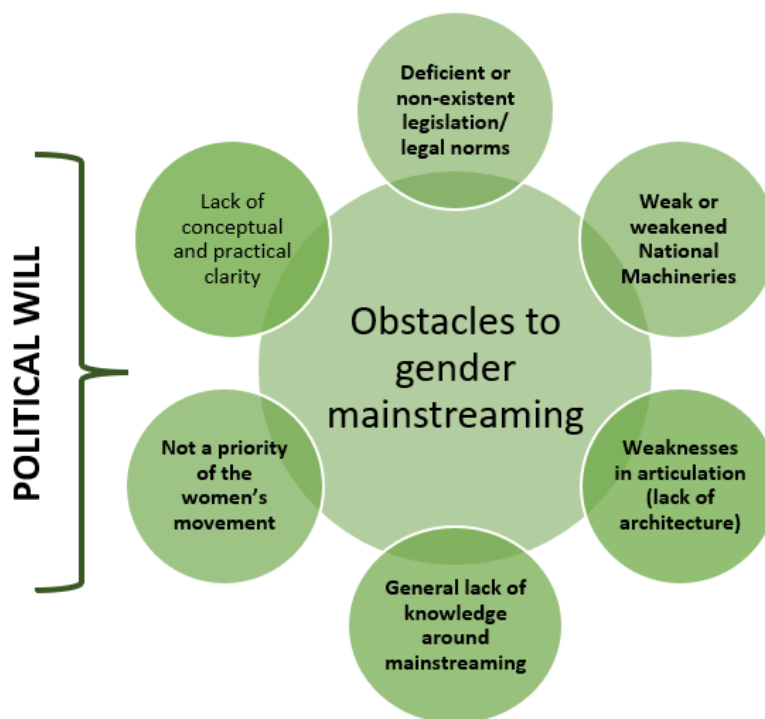


Fig. 1: Principal obstacles to mainstreaming in the Americas

**Political will** is a structural and determining axis for the availability of financial and human resources for mainstreaming, including expertise in the subject. The absence of political will brings to light the historical devaluation of the specific needs of women and their conditions and, therefore, the lack of interest in achieving gender equality. Since the objective of mainstreaming is to integrate gender

equality as a goal throughout the state structure, its implementation has not really been a priority for decision makers (see Figure 1).

Precisely because of the low value assigned to mainstreaming activities, it has not been reflected in the fact that, although in the long-term mainstreaming will be an inherent aspect of all State activities rather than additional task, while this is being achieved, it does require additional human and financial resources. As these resources have not materialized in almost any State -even though their absence has been denounced since States began to implement this strategy-, the cultural, attitudinal and organizational change that is required has not been achieved. Allocating sufficient financial and human resources to facilitate the change process are crucial factors for the success of mainstreaming.

#### **a) Conceptual and Practical Clarity: What Are We Talking About?**

Historically, there has been confusion between policies and programs on the autonomy, empowerment or rights of women, and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. Gender is a cultural, social and historical construction that conditions asymmetric social value for men and women and establishes a power relationship between them (IAP, 2000). Therefore, a gender perspective is an analytical approach to unequal power relations, and the mainstreaming of this approach seeks to incorporate this analysis in the planning and execution of policies and programs.

On the one hand, there is historical resistance to mainstreaming because it is associated with the advancement of women's rights, including those rights that are not yet universally agreed upon, and with the entry of women into spaces of power and decision-making. This is exacerbated by the reconceptualization and expansion of gender to recognize new identities.

On the other hand, is a perception that, with assistance programs for women, parity laws, events commemorating International Women's Day (March 8th), lactation centers and other activities of this nature, mainstreaming is being achieved. The heading of "mainstreaming" has even been used to encompass motivational conferences for women and activities that have used image elements or colors that allude to the feminist struggle, but that do not add value to a real transformation of the social order.

The policies and programs for the empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective are, in both cases, strategies to advance towards the goal of equality, but they are complementary instead of synonymous, and the two paths must go in parallel towards equality.

#### **b) The Normative Framework around Mainstreaming: What Are Our Goals?**

Despite the existence of international and regional regulations (CEDAW, Beijing, IAP, etc.), few countries in the region have specific laws or policies on mainstreaming. Of the 34 OAS Member States, 23<sup>2</sup> have National Plans or Strategies for Equality, but they do not necessarily include an architecture, a route, or specific goals for gender mainstreaming throughout the government beyond highlighting the "guiding role" of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women.

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<sup>2</sup>ECLAC. (2019). *Gender equality plans in Latin America and the Caribbean: Road maps for development*. <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/41015-gender-equality-plans-latin-america-and-caribbean-road-maps-development>

The mainstreaming process must be associated with the identification of comprehensive plans with goals, responsibilities, deadlines, indicators, budget allocation, and accountability

### **c) The National Machineries as Leaders of Mainstreaming: Where Do We Begin?**

It is widely recognized in existing regulations that the National Machineries have the leading role and responsibility for the implementation of the National Equality Policies. It is equally recognized, however, that these National Machineries, in most cases, do not have the political support, the hierarchical level, the human and financial resources, or the technical capacity to make this implementation effective. Of the 34 Member States of the OAS, 14<sup>3</sup> given their National Machinery ministerial rank, 4<sup>4</sup> do not give it ministerial rank but the head of the National Machinery is directly responsible to the Head of State/Government, and 16<sup>5</sup> have a Department or other entity accountable to a ministry (this point is dealt with in greater detail in Section G).

### **d) Inter-institutional, Inter-sectoral and Multi-level Government Articulation: How Do We Achieve It?**

While it is true that achieving gender equality is a legal obligation of the State as a whole, the responsibility for mainstreaming cannot be borne equally by all civil servants. One barrier to gender mainstreaming revolves around who is responsible for initiating and sustaining it. Although all civil servants have the minimal duty to not hinder mainstreaming, to achieve effective mainstreaming, it is necessary to have civil servants with expertise in the subject who are explicitly designated to do so and who work in coordination with the National Machinery as the governing body of the process.

Of the main challenges highlighted by the National Machineries in their gender mainstreaming efforts are:

- The limited possibility to work in an inter-sectoral way with other key sectors of the government, particularly beyond “social” issues (social development, health, education, etc.).
- The limited capacity to work in a territorial way, operationalizing mainstreaming at the provincial and municipal levels.

A strong normative framework around gender mainstreaming is based on the concepts of co-responsibility and articulation: although the National Machinery is the rector of the National Equality Policy, its implementation is the responsibility of all sectors and levels of government, working in an articulated manner with the National Machinery, and based on a solid architecture for mainstreaming.

### **e) The Women's/Feminist Movements: Who Supports Us?**

The issue of mainstreaming has historically not been a priority in the agendas of the women's movement. Although mainstreaming is a responsibility of the State (as a whole), the feminist and broader women's movement could play a stronger role in terms of demanding mainstreaming, on

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<sup>3</sup>Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

<sup>4</sup>Colombia, Ecuador, United States and Guatemala.

<sup>5</sup>Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Uruguay.

the one hand, and monitoring its results, on the other, through the use of citizen audits based on existing norms.

#### **f) Public Opinion on Mainstreaming: Who Are We Working For?**

The general public - public opinion - is unaware of the importance of mainstreaming and therefore demanding compliance is not part of their agenda. Women's movements, for their part, show weaknesses in carrying out citizen audits on these issues. In this context, accountability and transparency become unilateral processes of good will, without a demanding and vigilant counterpart of compliance with commitments and obligations in terms of equality. The gender perspective becomes a "technicality" and not an enforceable commitment.

Related to the two previous points, the lack of effective accountability mechanisms on the part of public institutions is another impediment to the effective implementation of commitments to gender equality – and this process is perhaps more complex for mainstreaming than for other issues such as political participation or the employment of women. It is the governments themselves that determine the parameters of participation and political intervention of citizens in the decisions that affect their lives, access to resources, the possibility of engaging in dialogue and placing their demands on accountability. Talking about governability hardly includes contributing to gender equality among its attributes.

### **3.2. Snapshot of the Architecture for Gender Equality in the Americas: The The National Machineries**

The institutional framework dedicated to gender issues – at the international, regional, national and local levels – responds to the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action (Sphere of Concern H), among other agreements. At the national level, compliance with these agreements began with the establishment or strengthening of National Machineries between the 1980s and the late 1990s. Since then, in the countries of the region and the world, entities with varying degrees of institutional strength, hierarchy, authority, resources and incidence have been created, which generally reflect the priority and resources dedicated to policies and programs for the incorporation of a gender perspective in government functions.

Thus, it is possible to find agencies at the level of ministries or secretariats, offices with another rank and entities dependent on another ministry, that are not linked and organized around national strategic objectives and spaces for articulation. The hierarchy occupied by the National Machineries within the government apparatus and the political system of each country is important in terms of their articulation with other sectors and levels of government. The agreements and commitments that must be reached in favor of gender mainstreaming have a different weight depending on the level of decision of the participants of those agreements.

#### **Table 1. Hierarchical level of the National Machineries and existence of national equality plans or plans/strategies on mainstreaming<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> Source(s): Own elaboration, based on: ECLAC. Gender Equality Observatory, "Level within governmental hierarchy of national Machineries for the Advancement of Women", <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/level-within-governmental-hierarchy-national-machineries->

Country	Name of the National Machinery (Instrument of establishment)	National Gender Equality Policy Plan/Strategy on Mainstreaming
<b>High (ministerial or equivalent)</b>		
<b>Argentina</b>	Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad ( <a href="#">Ley de Ministerios Decreto 7/2019</a> )	- <a href="#">Plan Nacional de Igualdad en la Diversidad 2021-2023</a> - <a href="#">Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades y Derechos 2018-2020</a>
<b>Brazil</b>	Ministério da Mulher, Família e Direitos Humanos ( <a href="#">Ley Nº 13.844, de 18 de junio de 2019</a> )	- <a href="#">Plano Nacional de Políticas para as Mulheres</a>
<b>Canada</b>	Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) ( <a href="#">Department for Women and Gender Equality Act</a> )	- <a href="#">Gender Results Framework (GRF)</a> - <a href="#">Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan</a>
<b>Chile</b>	Ministerio de la Mujer y la Equidad de Género ( <a href="#">Ley 20820 por la que se crea el Ministerio de la Mujer y la Equidad de Género</a> )	- <a href="#">Cuarto Plan Nacional de Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres 2018 - 2030</a> - <a href="#">Agenda Mujer</a>
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres ( <a href="#">Ley 7801 de creación del Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres</a> )	- <a href="#">Política Nacional para la igualdad efectiva entre mujeres y hombres 2018-2030</a>
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Ministerio de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Ley Núm. 86-99 que crea la Secretaría de Estado de la Mujer y el decreto 56-10, que 19 secretarías de Estado pasen a denominarse ministerios</a> )	- <a href="#">Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equidad de Género III 2020-2030</a>
<b>Haiti</b>	Ministère à la Condition Féminine et aux Droits des Femmes (MCFDF) ( <a href="#">Decreto del 22 de diciembre 2005</a> )	- <a href="#">La Politique d'égalité femmes hommes 2014-2034</a>
<b>Honduras</b>	Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (INAM) ( <a href="#">Decreto No.232-98, del 30 de septiembre de 1998</a> )	- <a href="#">II Plan de Igualdad y Equidad de Género de Honduras 2010-2022</a>
<b>Mexico</b>	Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres	- <a href="#">Programa Nacional para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres 2020-2024</a>

[advancement-women](#), CEPALStat (consulted on September 20, 2022), [https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/databank/index.html?lang=es&indicator\\_id=2243&area\\_id=&lang=en](https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/databank/index.html?lang=es&indicator_id=2243&area_id=&lang=en), and ECLAC (2017). Gender Equality Plans in Latin America and the Caribbean: Road Maps for Development, <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/41015-gender-equality-plans-latin-america-and-caribbean-road-maps-development>

Country	Name of the National Machinery (Instrument of establishment)	National Gender Equality Policy Plan/Strategy on Mainstreaming
	<a href="#">(Ley del Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres)</a>	
Nicaragua	Ministerio de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Ley N° 832</a> elevó al Instituto Nicaragüense de la Mujer INIM a rango ministerial).	- <a href="#">Programa Nacional de Equidad de Género 2006-2010</a>
Paraguay	Ministerio de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Decreto No. 1147</a> y <a href="#">la Ley No. 34/1992</a> )	- <a href="#">Plan Nacional de Igualdad 2018-2024</a>
Peru	Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables ( <a href="#">Decreto Legislativo N° 1098</a> )	- <a href="#">Política Nacional de Igualdad de Género de 2019</a> - <a href="#">Plan Estratégico Multisectorial de Igualdad de Género</a>
Trinidad & Tobago	Office of the Prime Minister: Gender and Child Affairs	- <a href="#">National Policy on Gender and Development 2018</a>
Venezuela	Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Mujer y la Igualdad de Género ( <a href="#">Decreto Presidencial N° 6.663</a> )	- <a href="#">Agenda Programática de las Mujeres y la Igualdad de Género – Plan de la Patria 2025</a> - <a href="#">Plan para la Igualdad y Equidad de Género “Mamá Rosa” 2013-2019</a>
<b>Medium</b> <b>(entity attached to the office of the President or machinery whose head is directly responsible to the President)</b>		
Colombia	Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Decreto 2200 de 1999</a> )	- <a href="#">CONPES Social 161 de 2013 – Equidad de género para las mujeres</a> - presenta la Política Pública Nacional de Equidad de Género y precisa el Plan de acción indicativo para el periodo 2013-2016.
Ecuador	Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Género (El Consejo está previsto en <a href="#">la Constitución de la República del Ecuador</a> )	- <a href="#">Agenda Nacional de las Mujeres y personas LGBTI 2018-2021</a> - <a href="#">Agenda Nacional de las Mujeres y la Igualdad de Género 2014-2017</a>
Guatemala	Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Acuerdo Gubernativo 200-2000</a> )	- <a href="#">Política Nacional de Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres y Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades 2008-2023</a>
United States	Gender Policy Council ( <a href="#">Orden ejecutiva</a> 8 de marzo de 2021)	- <a href="#">National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality</a>
<b>Low</b> <b>(Entity accountable to a ministry)</b>		
Antigua & Barbuda	Directorate of Gender Affairs, division of the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Blue Economy	N/A
Bahamas	Bureau of Women’s Affairs, division of the Ministry of Social	N/A

Country	Name of the National Machinery (Instrument of establishment)	National Gender Equality Policy Plan/Strategy on Mainstreaming
	Services and Urban Development	
<b>Barbados</b>	Bureau of Gender Affairs	N/A
<b>Belize</b>	National Women's Commission	- <a href="#">The Revised National Gender Policy 2013</a>
<b>Bolivia</b>	El Servicio Plurinacional de la Mujer y de la Despatriarcalización (DS N° 3774)	- <a href="#">Plan Nacional Para la Igualdad de Oportunidades "Mujeres Construyendo la Nueva Bolivia, Para Vivir Bien 2008</a>
<b>Dominica</b>	Bureau of Gender Affairs, of the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs	N/A
<b>El Salvador</b>	Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (ISDEMU) ( <a href="#">Decreto Legislativo No. 644</a> )	- <a href="#">Plan Nacional de Igualdad. Período 2016-2020.</a>
<b>Grenada</b>	Division of Gender and Family Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Housing (MoSDH)	- <a href="#">Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP) 2014–2024</a>
<b>Guyana</b>	Women and Gender Equality Commission (section 212G of the <a href="#">Constitution of Guyana</a> )	- National Gender and Social Inclusion Policy 2018
<b>Jamaica</b>	The Bureau of Women's Affairs (Gender Affairs)	- <a href="#">National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) 2011</a>
<b>Panama</b>	Instituto Nacional de la Mujer ( <a href="#">Ley N°71 de 2008</a> )	- <a href="#">Plan de Acción de Igualdad de oportunidades para las Mujeres 2016-2019</a>
<b>Saint Kitts &amp; Nevis</b>	Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs	- National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan 2022-2027
<b>Saint Lucia</b>	Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labour and Gender Affairs	N/A
<b>Saint Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</b>	Gender Affairs, división de ministerio de movilización nacional, desarrollo social, familia, asuntos de género, juventud, vivienda y asentamientos humanos informales	N/A
<b>Suriname</b>	Gender Affairs Office, Ministry of Interior	- <a href="#">Gender Vision Policy Document 2021-2035</a> (not adopted yet)
<b>Uruguay</b>	Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, sectorizado al Ministerio de Desarrollo social ( <a href="#">Ley N° 17.866, art. 6</a> )	- <a href="#">Estrategia Nacional para la Igualdad de Género al 2030</a>

These National Machineries are responsible for promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all sectors, such as education, justice, health, economic development and the



eradication of violence. They are also in charge of articulating actions and monitoring gender gaps in each context.

The aforementioned functions are often more complex in the contexts in which they operate, with leadership challenges to exercise their stewardship, with the absence of precise assessments that identify the gaps and the most significant challenges to achieving equality, without a clear strategy, instruments and methodologies to evaluate and follow up on gender mainstreaming interventions, and without the support of the executive branch.<sup>7</sup>

Another weakness is the lack of articulation with other state and local government institutions for mainstreaming, and the limited incidence in key institutions such as the ministries of finance or the treasury. The lack of appropriation of the gender agenda in central, cross-cutting, and daily institutional activities tends to relegate this responsibility to a marginalized and peripheral sphere of institutions specialized in women's issues. There are even experiences in which within the National Machineries the staff is not familiar with the National Equality Policy and its mainstreaming strategies, which marginalizes them even more.

The linkage of the National Machineries with organizations and social movements to support, complement and demand mainstreaming strategies is also generally scarce or absent. In some countries of the region, figures have been institutionalized to incorporate their voices and positions in the decisions of the mechanisms, through advisory councils, instances of social control or representatives in sessions and outstanding events; however, it seems that there is no great motivation to follow up on efforts to mainstream a gender perspective, or there is a lack of knowledge about its importance and the strength of women's networks and organizations in the legitimization or disapproval of these actions.

Some additional challenges that can weaken their management and possibilities for action:

- **The allocation of all activities and programs designed to benefit women.** In some cases, the creation of ministries or secretariats for women, with large teams of personnel and greater budget allocation, have become "universal" entities, which are responsible for managing and administering all public programs in which the beneficiary population is women. In this model, the objective of mainstreaming the gender perspective is dissolved, and the impact of the National Machineries is limited compared to other peer ministries that relegate part of their service offerings.
- **The operation of services for attention to violence.** Although gender-based violence is a major obstacle to achieving equality and the full development of women, care services should not fall exclusively to the National Machineries. Mainstreaming refers to incorporating the gender perspective also in these services, which are mostly linked to the administration of justice and the protection of victims. The fact that the instances dedicated to mainstreaming are the ones in charge of serving women directly subsidizes the obligations of other specialized agencies, diverts resources and attention in that direction (often for political purposes) and displaces the strategic work to comply with to assistance work of legal, psychological, social work, and shelters, among others.

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<sup>7</sup> ECLAC (2019). *Gender equality plans in Latin America and the Caribbean Road maps for development*, <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/41015-gender-equality-plans-latin-america-and-caribbean-road-maps-development>

- **The inclusion of other populations.** Neither women nor men are homogenous groups, and any mainstreaming strategy should approach power relations from an intersectional perspective, to analyze not only gender inequalities but also the multiple forms of discrimination that come from the intersection of gender with other aspects of identity. This, however, does not mean that the National Machinery must deal with all populations in situations of vulnerability, or with other issues such as the family or human rights. This dilutes the focus of the National Machinery and requires a distribution of scarce resources among even more people and demands.

The National Machineries are spaces that have historically been won to represent the interests of women and promote their incorporation in all development sectors under equal conditions, through mainstreaming among other strategies. They are conceived as technical-political entities in charge of leading the gender perspective mainstreaming processes, not of assuming them in their entirety. This implies the clear assignment of responsibilities to other government agencies in coordination with the National Machinery and within a framework of transparency and accountability, the generation of tools for the design, evaluation of programs, creation and provision of disaggregated information by sex, specialized technical advice and its impact on decision-making to ensure that each government action contributes to transforming the system that perpetuates gender inequalities between men and women.

### **3.3. Experiences and Lessons Learned From the CIM**

Through the program "Strengthening the capacities of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women to advance in the mainstreaming of the gender perspective," the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) has been working with the Member States to strengthen their capacity to work on the effective mainstreaming of a gender and rights approach in the public institutions of their countries. Throughout the implementation of this program, which has had challenges in its permanence due to lack of sufficient funds for its implementation, the CIM has been able to document certain experiences and lessons learned that serve as the basis for advancing in the Mainstreaming+ Strategy for the equality and transformation.

Institutionalization emerges as a fundamental tool to preserving the progress made in the medium and long term. An adequate institutionalization of gender allows mainstreaming actions to be given the permanence required so that they do not depend entirely on the will of individuals or on government political agendas.

A highly relevant issue that frequently arises in the assessments that are carried out to work with the National Machineries is the importance of training and awareness, as this is a fundamental need for incorporating a gender perspective in institutional work. To advance in the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all State activities, it is imperative that it be understood and appropriated by officials with sufficient expertise in gender mainstreaming, as well as in the issue they are working to mainstream.

It is also important to highlight the specific needs that were identified in dialogues with the National Machineries regarding the current context. First, the need for greater support in terms of advocacy for gender mainstreaming is identified in order to advance from both political and technical points of view and to reach all those working in public administration so that they understand the importance of gender mainstreaming in public policies.

Additionally, the need for greater support for budget planning and formulation is identified in order to carry out mainstreaming effectively and sustainably, with the aim of clarifying and detailing what it really implies in terms of time and human/financial resources.

Finally, the need for greater support for the "specialization" of mainstreaming is identified to deepen the work by themes/sectors with training that goes beyond the basic concepts of gender and women's human rights and delves into the different issues of public policy implementation. This is in line with the importance of doing mainstreaming work in an articulated and inter-sectoral manner.

### **3.4. COVID-19 Context: What Happened to Mainstreaming?**

*“The challenge of governments and international organizations to implement policies that seek equality in the mitigation and recovery of this crisis may create opportunities for these policies to be more appropriate and effective, insofar as they respond to the needs of the whole population, including women. The region has an opportunity to establish new pacts, new alliances and new perspectives that compensate for the certainties that tumble in the advance towards the paradigm of equality.” - Alejandra Mora Mora<sup>8</sup>*

COVID-19 made it very clear that gender mainstreaming is still an unfinished project. The pandemic has caused specific and differentiated impacts on the lives of women, deepening existing gender inequalities, and has revealed an imminent risk of regression in the rights already achieved. Faced with this challenge, the CIM has been clear and emphatic in insisting that there are no gender-neutral policies and that women's leadership and a gender, diversity, and rights approach must be at the center of the response to the pandemic and any other crisis. Similarly, ECLAC warned of the possibility that the repercussion of the emergency measures applied in the different countries could have a negative impact on women's employment and personal situation if they were not implemented with a gender perspective.

The differentiated impacts of the pandemic highlighted that mainstreaming is not yet universally or consistently applied in the public sector. The widened gaps showed a lack of preparation, and responses did not automatically incorporate the differentiated priorities and needs of women, despite more than 25 years of experience in mainstreaming. In fact, some of the measures to contain the pandemic increased the number of women in poverty, affected the formal work they performed and their health coverage, among other factors of their economic and social well-being. The impact of confinement public policies, quarantine and transit restrictions affected sectors such as social services, wholesale and retail commerce, business services and transportation, storage and communications, sectors in which, according to ECLAC, 78% of the region's employed women are concentrated.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>CIM. (2020). *COVID-19 in Women's Lives: Reasons to Recognize the Differential Impacts*. <https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/ArgumentarioCOVID19-EN.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>ECLAC. (2020). *In Light of Women's Greater Exposure, ECLAC Calls on States to Guarantee their Rights in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/light-womens-greater-exposure-eclac-calls-states-guarantee-their-rights-context-covid>

At the beginning of the pandemic, the MESECVI Committee of Experts warned that the confinement and restriction of the right to transit, the limitation of some essential services to care for women victims of violence, and decisions to grant conditional release in various detention centers, among other measures, would have a disproportionate effect in relation to women and girls, and in some cases, could exacerbate violence against them.

The pandemic and the effects of the measures taken have caused a significant setback in women's lives. However, they have allowed for greater clarity on the benefits of gender mainstreaming processes, and the negative effects of the lack of implementation of these, particularly on priority issues for women such as care or the digital world, which became turning points during the pandemic.

### Care Work

The CIM has recognized the issue of caregiving as a structural barrier to the full autonomy of women and their active and equal participation in the productive world and in public life. Before the pandemic, and despite being the most important barrier to women's economic autonomy, caregiving was not an issue on the political agenda, and very few countries had worked on the issue comprehensively.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the already existing care crisis escalated into a global care emergency, highlighting the importance of placing this issue on the agenda regarding policies and measures for recovery and sustainable economic growth.

Through actions to address the care crisis, the aim is to restore the balance between men and women by recognizing the historical contribution of women to unpaid care work and the effects this has had on their opportunities for development and the full enjoyment of their rights. In this respect, we are moving towards gender equality, women's formal labor participation, their access to decent work and their economic empowerment, and establishing the link between guaranteeing the full enjoyment of their rights, sustainable economic development, and social well-being.

To this effect, the aim is to make progress on some critical issues to face the care crisis:

- The **right** of people to be cared for, recognizing the right to care in its three dimensions: the right to be cared for, the right to give care and the right to self-care.
- Care as a pillar in the **social protection system**, recognizing the importance of universality in a progressive framework.
- The importance of establishing measures of family and social **co-responsibility** for care.
- Care as **the basis of the economic system** and a key instrument for economic recovery.
- Care as **a transversal axis** within the framework of governance committed to respecting human rights and gender equality.

Approaching care from a transversal perspective is imperative to move towards achieving equality and transformation with co-responsibility. In addition, the mainstreaming of care work becomes an imperative on the national agenda when women are part of inter-institutional and decision-making cabinets at the national and local levels.

## The Digital World

Despite some encouraging progress in recent years, including the closing of the digital gender gap between 16- to 24-year-olds, the COVID-19 pandemic made visible and deepened the gender gap in the digital world, by evidencing reduced access of women and girls to health information, essential services such as health care, online education and telecommuting.

In the technology sector, women still represent only 26% of the global workforce, demonstrating that, although more and more women are enrolling in universities, a gender bias persists in relation to the careers they choose, and they continue to be underrepresented in STEM areas.

As women face additional barriers in their access to the digital world, increasingly more surveys show that a significant proportion of women and girls – in some cases, more than 70 percent (OEA/CICTE/CIM/MESECVI, 2021<sup>10</sup>) – have experienced some type of violence or harassment in digital environments, a reality that constitutes a significant barrier to their equal participation in these spaces.

These persistent gaps point to how little progress had been made in terms of gender mainstreaming in the digital world before the pandemic, but the changes brought about by COVID-19 in our ways of studying, working, shopping, and even socializing, also represent an opportunity to move forward, based on the gender perspective as a priority.

### 3.5. Opportunities for Mainstreaming: The New Agendas

Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, the current context, which marks a situation of profound changes and transformations, recognizing the obstacles and crises, represents a challenge for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and the positioning of the women's agenda at the center of decisions. However, this constitutes an opportunity to focus on new agendas and tools for mainstreaming that advance towards equality and transformation.

#### a. Strengthening Political Commitment: Crosscutting in the 2030 Agenda and Other Multilateral Agreements

In the international and multilateral sphere, political commitments have continued to materialize, strengthening the international normative framework in relation to women's rights and therefore the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda refers to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. There is a certain consensus that this is an excellent opportunity to promote greater international coherence with new alliances between actors and greater momentum within the framework of the different recent multilateral processes. In the Declaration adopting the 2030 Agenda, the leaders of 193 countries around the world expressed their commitment to work “for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and

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<sup>10</sup> OAS. (2021). *Online gender-based violence against women and girls : Practical self-protection handbook: digital security tools and response strategies*, <https://www.oas.org/en/sms/cicte/docs/Manual-Online-gender-based-violence-against-women-and-girls.pdf>

strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels” and affirmed that “the systematic incorporation of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.”<sup>11</sup>

At the regional level, the CIM has also continued to advance its policy commitments through the CIM Assemblies of Delegates. Recently, the Declaration of Panama "Building Bridges for a New Social and Economic Pact Led by Women," recognizes that political and budgetary readjustments have a profound impact and weaken public institutions dedicated to gender issues and their ability to expand strategies for equality and to position gender mainstreaming in public affairs at the national and subnational levels. In this context, the Delegates of the CIM have encouraged gender equality mainstreaming processes to permeate the entire structure of the State, through the creation and allocation of sufficient budget for the functioning of permanent government bodies for intersectoral and interinstitutional coordination, with specific mandates, with provision of human, technical and political resources, and especially with the participation of planning units in the design and execution of development plans and public budgets, as appropriate, to incorporate the gender perspective in the national, sub-national and local planning and budgeting.

Advancing on these issues requires a transition towards concrete facts, with political will and the inclusion of women in all decision-making processes being essential to be able to take theoretical approaches into specific actions to close gaps and mainstream gender in all the spaces of the State's work.

#### **b. New Agendas, New Resistance**

These advances, however, occur in a context of new and growing resistance to gender issues and women's rights. In the last decade, currents of thought, de facto powers, positions and expressions from biased religious, political and/or social points of view have emerged, threatening the centrality and consensus achieved both at the regional and international levels on the gender equality agenda. Such arguments, which are manifested to varying degrees in all the countries of the region, constitute clear expressions against the comprehensive conception of human rights as indivisible, universal and inalienable. In these ideological positions, gender mainstreaming has been pointed out as a particular evil which seeks to subvert the "natural social order" and the "traditional family".

In 2017, the Principal Delegates of the CIM expressed their concern at the growing incidence and political influence of this movement – which in several countries has reached the government and, at the regional level, the debates, and spaces of the OAS. Many of the Delegates face daily actors and speeches against human rights and gender equality, which among other objectives seek to eliminate National Machineries or turn them into Ministries of the Family. Faced with these threats, the need arose to have arguments and evidence to highlight the benefits – social, cultural, economic, political, civic, and environmental, among others – of equality between men and women, from the political to the technical, and from the international and regional levels to the community.

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<sup>11</sup> Resolution 70/1 of the General Assembly, 21 October 2015, [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_70\\_1\\_E.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf)

#### 4. Where Are We Going? A New Comprehensive Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in Times of Change

Taking as a starting point the key principles for the effectiveness of mainstreaming efforts established in the Agreed Conclusions, the challenges and opportunities outlined for gender mainstreaming, the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on women and the new context in which we position ourselves, the CIM seeks to move towards **Mainstreaming + for equality and transformation**, strengthening the leading role of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the mainstreaming of gender perspective in public policy, while seeking to catalyze some elements of mainstreaming, including **intersectionality**, the **articulation of a solid architecture**, the **deepening of strategic alliances**, **inter-sectoral, multi-actor and territorial co-responsibility**, and the **allocation of the budget needed to make mainstreaming effective**.

Mainstreaming + for equality and transformation:

- intersectionality
- articulation of a solid architecture
- deepening of strategic alliances
- intersectoral co-responsibility
- budget to make mainstreaming effective

The goal is to achieve transformation through the strengthening of a state architecture for gender equality, with the National Machineries at the center, while recognizing the importance of the participation of gender instances within other sectoral ministries, of constant coordination with the territorial governments (provincial/state and local/municipal), of political and technical support from the regional and international spheres and of the commitment and participation of the feminist and broad women's movement.

##### 4.1. Premises and Principles for Mainstreaming+

Through multilateralism we seek to give continuity to the processes, build bridges between different actors and support the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the implementation of strategies and concrete actions to make effective gender mainstreaming throughout the country task of the State, bringing the differentiated needs and realities of the entire population to the table.

The mainstreaming of gender equality in the States must start from certain essential premises:

- The logic of mainstreaming is framed in **human rights and States' obligations**: it is a legal obligation that results from the signing of international law instruments and the adoption of political commitments and, furthermore, it is a matter of human rights, which is even incorporated into the national constitutions of most countries in the region.
- Mainstreaming is achieved through **multiple strategies**. It is not about the design and implementation of a single strategy, but of several that permeate the different orders and powers of government, that include social actors and the private sector, and ensure that no public intervention assumes that gender mainstreaming is not necessary.
- The need for **coordination between these strategies, actors, resources, plans and programs** based on a normative and institutional scaffolding that enable dialogue spaces at the highest level, through commissions or systems in charge of monitoring and evaluating these strategies both at the national level as well as in the territories of the countries, and in coordination with the social and private sectors.

- The need to have a **solid architecture** to be able to advance in a coordinated manner in all State instances, and with clear responsibilities for the institutions.
- The need to **coordinate strategies at the territorial level**, recognizing the importance of bringing mainstreaming to the territories and in alliances with local governments, to advance concrete actions in the population.
- The importance of **multilateralism**, as a motor of change that relaunches transversality, bringing multiple experiences and as a catalyst for transformation processes
- The need to have **strategic alliances** that advance the interests of mainstreaming for equality, in a coordinated manner and with multiple actors that contribute in a co-responsible manner.
- The importance of having **budgets** to make mainstreaming effective and to be able to launch concrete actions.

### **The Intersectional Approach: An Opportunity to Enrich the Gender Perspective**

In the 1980s, some Afro-American theorists began to question and denounce the use of the category "woman" as a homogeneous subject. This category, as well as the women's movement that advocated for inclusion, did not highlight diversity and especially the aggravation of multiple discrimination when two or more aspects of human identity intersect. That is why the intersectionality approach makes it possible to introduce the diversity of co-existing realities more accurately in terms of discrimination, for example, based on sex, race/ethnicity, disability, social class, rurality or education, gender identity and sexual orientation, among other factors.<sup>12</sup>

At the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) the concept of multiple discrimination was incorporated for the first time at the international level, which refers to discrimination that occurs due to the intersection of two or more factors. For its part, the anti-discriminatory approach became part of European law with the Racial Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43/EC), which included the term "multiple discrimination" in recital 14. In the Inter-American sphere, the Inter-American Conventions against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance (2013), and against all forms of Discrimination and Intolerance (2013) deepened and gave legal force to the concept of multiple discrimination, while the Inter-American Conventions on Persons with Disabilities (1999) and the Elderly (2015) strengthened protections for some of the populations facing this multiple discrimination.

Intersectionality regains greater importance today, as it allows an analysis that incorporates multiple social categories, identities, and privileges or forms of oppression that are interconnected and that cannot be addressed individually. An analysis with an intersectional approach allows greater inclusion of the realities of the entire population.

An intersectional analytical process for gender mainstreaming ensures that all needs of women and aspects of diversity are considered when mainstreaming occurs and aligns initiatives with governments' commitment to inclusion. To make progress in this area, it is important to keep in mind several factors in relation to intersectionality. First, it is necessary to identify the multiple and diverse aspects of identity that impact people's experiences. Next, it is necessary to analyze their

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<sup>12</sup>Alvarez Ramirez, Gloria. (2014). *Gender mainstreaming in public disability policies*. Volume I. Agustín Huete García (Director). Martha Yolanda Quezada (Coordinator). Madrid. Available at: <http://riberdis.cedid.es/bitstream/handle/11181/3906/La%20transversalidad%20de%20g%C3%A9nero.pdf?sequence=1&rd=0031244587278385>



position and perspective in relation to the issue or initiative being mainstreamed, and to recognize that there are several factors that contribute to an experience or an outcome, therefore, it is necessary to consider all these factors when working on mainstreaming a gender perspective. In addition, other factors, including externalities that shape experiences intersectionally need to be identified.

Working with an intersectionality approach makes it possible to recognize that personal prejudices and biases –conscious and unconscious– can affect the ability to effectively identify barriers to equality. Therefore, the importance of working on gender mainstreaming with an intersectional perspective allows us to advance more effectively towards equality and transformation, fundamental premises of mainstreaming +.

### **The Legislative Agenda to Facilitate Gender Mainstreaming**

The legal framework to promote gender equality in the countries of the region has evolved significantly through different instruments such as decrees, national laws, agreements and of course, their adoption at the constitutional level. However, despite all the regulations, it has not been enough because equality does not happen by legal mandate.

The legislative framework is an important tool to support mainstreaming processes. Legal systems function as mandates, especially in coercive provisions in which sanctions are provided for in case of non-compliance. Even though sometimes the law alone is not enough to motivate actions to mainstream the gender perspective, the inclusion of the issue in all regulations is important to place mainstreaming on the agenda of all sectors: health, poverty eradication, education, economic development, trade, and international relations, among others.

In this regard, it is strategic to work as a triad in the legislative teams of national and local congresses or assemblies dedicated to equality and mainstreaming, with the intention of generating alliances and advancing in legislative control mechanisms for the execution of laws, plans and programs for gender mainstreaming established in the regulatory and institutional framework of each country. This triad is made up of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women, the parliamentary women's caucus, and the sectoral gender units, to advance legislation that integrates an architecture of equality.

### **Territorialization of Gender Mainstreaming**

The roadmap established in the international framework of rights and the agenda of goals for the countries are essential to recognize where we want to be, what we want to achieve and how we want to see ourselves as nations and as a region around global challenges. However, such challenges are manifested in different ways in the territories, while each context: cultural, social, political, economic, environmental, etc., will determine responsiveness.

Where we want to be is a goal that will only be achieved if we are able to recognize where we are and what we have to change to achieve it. For this it is key that such wishes are internalized by local communities as engines of transformation.

This is where the territorialization -or localization- of gender mainstreaming goals takes on meaning: Gender mainstreaming is a method/strategy aimed at achieving equality in results that should permeate all areas, levels and jurisdictions of the powers of the State and its public administrations for this purpose.

One of the frequent errors by which public policies for equality have not managed to have the desired impact is due to the general view of women. However, as we already know, women are not all the same, nor are the territories and local contexts in which we live. Therefore, for the effective and sustained progress of the agenda towards equality, greater and better articulation and dialogue between National Machineries and local governments is essential.

The CIM, as a hemispheric mechanism for political dialogue between the National Machineries, is aware of this challenge and it is our purpose to facilitate spaces for dialogue between ministers, mayors, and municipal teams that are responsible for the implementation of actions that come from the top down or are driven from the local level and contribute to substantial movements towards the global level, as numerous evidence can attest.

For the National Machineries, the dialogue and articulation with the municipalities provides them with the opportunity to diagnose the different territorial contexts in a more pertinent way and to act in a coherent manner based on this, in addition to having executing arms that make effective action possible at the local level.

For local governments, this dialogue with the National Machineries provides them with an overall perspective of collective aspirational goals from which not only collaborative processes can emerge, but also the possibility of making the distribution of national resources to the territories more efficient.

Between the two, there are women's and feminist social organizations, who tend to turn to local governments for their daily demands that arise as a result of life in cities (security, public services, work, and equality). It is in the local space where this dialogue with CSOs can best be fostered and sustained, and local governments are the channels that could facilitate the capillarity of their voices towards national and regional agendas. This is not a minor challenge, but a necessary one to ensure that no woman or girl is left behind.

## **5. Comprehensive Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in the Countries of the Region**

The analysis presented in this document highlights reflections, challenges and opportunities that need to be materialized into clear objectives and activities to generate effective strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective in the region. It is important to clarify that the agenda presented below is of a generic nature, and that it serves as an initial input for the design of strategies according to the context of each country or entity.

- ***Strategic objective 1: Clarify and reinforce the conceptual framework, and the strategies for gender mainstreaming from the need to eliminate the barriers that hinder the achievement of equality between women and men.***

The conceptual framework on the gender perspective and the achievement of equality between men and women requires strengthening and articulation work in terms of clarifying the concepts that govern the mainstreaming work. To do this, this strategy proposes five specific actions that respond to this strategic objective:

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|---|--|
| <p><b>1. Strengthen and clarify the feminist theories and the principles that underpin the conceptual framework for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a conceptual framework on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Identify the regional principles and values that support the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2. Systematize and socialize the international regulatory framework that supports the mainstreaming of the gender perspective, including through training</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify relevant legal and political agreements at the international and Inter-American level.</li> <li>- Systematize the relevant regulations at the national level and identify the gaps to be filled.</li> <li>- Carry out dissemination and training campaigns on the conceptual framework on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Establish an observatory on women's human rights.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>3. Define the objectives that are expected to be achieved with the strategies for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</b></p>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a “logical framework” for mainstreaming with clear goals, deadlines, responsibilities and indicators.</li> <li>- Socialize this logical framework to clarify commitments and generate a demand for accountability.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4. Establish priority and strategic issues for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and publish good practices to mainstream the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Detail and make visible the costs and benefits of strategies to mainstream the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Make recommendations for the use of technology in the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>5. Integrate and/or strengthen the intersectional approach within the conceptual framework for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the intersectional approach for mainstreaming the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Develop a strategy to integrate the intersectional approach in mainstreaming processes.</li> </ul>  |

➤ **Strategic objective 2:** *Strengthen National Machineries to effectively lead in gender mainstreaming based on a solid architecture.*

The Beijing Platform for Action prioritized the incorporation of the gender perspective as a fundamental element to achieve gender equality commitments. To this end, the National Women's Machineries play the role of guiding the national gender equality policy at the State level, and therefore it is fundamental to strengthen them to be able to lead gender mainstreaming and gender equality processes in all State activities. For this purpose, this strategy proposes five concrete actions that respond to this strategic objective:

**1. Carry out assessments:**

**a. that make it possible to identify how the National or subnational (territorial, local) Women's Machineries and gender are consolidated in terms of their functioning and operation, what is the normative and budgetary institutional structure that governs each one of them**

- Carry out a participatory diagnosis on the capacity of the National Machinery to comply with its mandates regarding the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.
- Identify pending needs (regulatory, financial, operational, administrative, technical, etc.).
- Prepare a strengthening action plan.

**b. on the strategies/good practices of the National Women's Machineries to mainstream the gender perspective based on the concepts of mainstreaming + for equality and transformation**

- Carry out status reports on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.
- Establish a bank of good practices of National Women's Machineries to mainstream the gender perspective.
- Develop and disseminate strategies for mainstreaming the gender perspective

**c. on the capacities of other sectors and levels of government to carry out mainstreaming, which end in the identification of needs and concrete action plans**

- Reach working agreements with other sectors and levels of government to apply participatory gender assessments, with the support of National Machineries.
- Work on participatory diagnoses and institutional action plans to advance the gender perspective in the different sectors and levels of government

**2. Coordinate, under the auspices of the Presidency, a national plan, program or strategy to mainstream the gender perspective, based on the principles of Mainstreaming +, which includes as a priority**

**a. Objectives, actions, time frames, indicators, and specific responsibilities for the National Machinery and all sectors**

- Update public policies for gender equality.
- Prepare the national plan or strategy, within the framework of the national equality policy or plan for a given period (4-5 years).
- Develop annual operational plans that ground the National Plan in the National Machinery and in other sectors/levels of government.

<p><b>and levels of government involved</b></p>	
<p><b>b. training in Mainstreaming + for equality and transformation for all public officials responsible for carrying it out</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the Participatory Gender Diagnostics (previous point), develop a training plan for public officials in the principles and methodologies of Mainstreaming +, by sectors and levels of government.</li> <li>- Develop the curriculum and teaching material to mainstream the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Teach face-to-face and/or virtual courses on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Carry out evaluations of the training processes in mainstreaming the gender perspective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>c. a labeled budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine annual earmarked budgets for implementation, including the National Machinery and other sectors/levels of government</li> </ul>
<p><b>d. a monitoring and evaluation system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish monitoring and evaluation instruments, and accountability mechanisms based on the specific objectives and indicators of the plan or strategy.</li> <li>- Identify indicators to measure the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Strengthen the planning and formulation of gender-sensitive budgets aimed at closing gaps for the generation of equal conditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct training on earmarked budgets for gender mainstreaming</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Carry out institutional reengineering to strengthen gender mainstreaming actions and consolidate an architecture for equality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a proposal for institutional reengineering to improve work to mainstream the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Carrying out a job manual includes functions for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.</li> <li>- Carry out performance evaluations for civil servants with evaluation categories to mainstream the gender perspective</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Design and implement research to diagnose and disseminate the situation of women's rights and mainstream the gender perspective</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify priority groups of women for the series of investigations (i.e. rural women, Afro-descendants, indigenous, young, elderly, LGBTI+, disabled, etc.).</li> <li>- Incorporate the results into the national, sectoral and territorial mainstreaming plans, with specific actions as appropriate, oriented to the needs of each population</li> </ul>

➤ **Strategic objective 3:** *Strengthen and improve coordination at all levels towards a co-responsible architecture for equality.*

Actions for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and the strengthening of institutions for equality between men and women require an active and coordinated interinstitutional, inter-

sectoral, and territorial articulation, with responsibilities in all sectors. This is one of the greatest challenges for the National Machineries to carry out an effective State policy committed to equality. In order to make progress in this direction, this strategy proposes three specific actions that respond to this strategic objective:

- 1. Coordinate, under the auspices of the Presidency, the institutional reengineering to consolidate an architecture for equality and strengthen the mainstreaming of the gender perspective, based on the principles of Transversality +:**

  - a. Build strategies, mechanisms, and spaces for interinstitutional, intersectoral, and territorial articulation that allow the definition of roles and responsibilities, the socialization of good practices and lessons learned, the identification of challenges, and the collective construction of solutions**

    - Establish a "table" or other coordination space for mainstreaming, coordinated by the National Machinery, which meets regularly with:
      - o The different government sectors with mainstreaming responsibilities
      - o The different levels of government with mainstreaming responsibilities
    - Guide the activities of the roundtable around the national mainstreaming plan or strategy, its objectives and follow-up.
    - Organize awareness/training activities, as well as reflection/brainstorming for the table on how to advance mainstreaming.
  - b. Specify these commitments through agreements of understanding**

    - With each relevant sector (Ministry or other relevant) and level (provincial and/or territorial government), sign specific and detailed agreements based on the national mainstreaming plan or strategy, its objectives and follow-up.
  - c. Articulate these spaces with international and regional entities and networks to strengthen evaluation, technical assistance and the exchange of good practices**

    - Organize meetings/exchange spaces between the table and relevant international entities to socialize advances and good practices, guide technical assistance.
    - Organize meetings between national tables from different countries to systematize knowledge and good practices, exchange ideas and information and build solutions collectively.
  - d. Articulate these spaces with the feminist and broad women's movement to strengthen**

    - Organize meetings/exchange spaces between the table and feminist and women's organizations to share agendas and priorities, socialize commitments.

<b>transparency, citizen auditing and accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop training for these organizations on gender mainstreaming and citizen auditing.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Promote feminist leadership in all spaces for the articulation of architecture for equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop the curriculum and teaching material to promote feminist leadership.</li> <li>- Train the leaders of the articulation spaces and the officials responsible for the coordination of mainstreaming in the different sectors and levels of government.</li> <li>- Design and implement campaigns on sorority.</li> <li>- Carry out an impact measurement of campaigns and training.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Recognize the advances and achievements of public and private entities with the achievement of gender equality through the mainstreaming of the gender perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish an annual National Award on concrete results in gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Award a sector prize, another territorial, another to civil society.</li> </ul>

➤ **Strategic objective 4:** *Strengthen the agency of feminist and women's organizations and social movements so that they can contribute to the processes of mainstreaming the gender perspective and the articulation of strategic alliances.*

Feminist and women's organizations play a very important role in advancing the gender equality agenda in the countries, as well as those concrete actions that seek to mainstream the gender perspective in programs and actions at the community level. Its strengthening, agency and active participation in actions that promote the incorporation of the gender perspective in the work of the State contributes to the effective implementation and accountability. To do this, this strategy proposes five specific actions that respond to this strategic objective:

<b>1. Create participation mechanisms and spaces for women's organizations and networks in their differences and diversity and according to their particular needs, as key actors in the implementation of gender mainstreaming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a body for permanent and continuous coordination of feminist and women's organizations in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the national mainstreaming plan or strategy.</li> <li>- Invite feminist and women's organizations, from an intersectional approach, to participate in this instance.</li> <li>- Provide spaces and tools for awareness and training on mainstreaming.</li> <li>- Promote masculinity movements with a gender equality approach.</li> <li>- Promote human rights movements valuing the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in their work.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Promote strategic alliances between national and local governments and women's organizations for the effective mainstreaming of the gender perspective, which allows monitoring the</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reach agreements of strategic alliances between the different actors to advance in the implementation of the plans.</li> <li>- Promote spaces for articulation and dialogue between actors and government agencies to advance in the monitoring and accountability of the implementation of strategies and action plans.</li> </ul>

**implementation of the national plan or strategy, incorporating their demands and priorities**

**3. Empower women's organizations to carry out citizen audits to promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective based on the definition of instances and institutional mechanisms such as accountability, as well as information and communication systems that account for the value generated public**

- Train people from civil society in carrying out citizen audits.
- Establish networks of NGOs by thematic axes to promote citizen auditing of the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.
- Establish citizen audit mechanisms of civil society.

**4. Support feminist leadership as a key factor in the exercises of governance, modernization of the State and territorial autonomy by women in the Member States**

- Train women from civil society organizations on feminist leadership.
- Develop and implement sorority campaigns.

**5. Promote participatory budgeting exercises with gender and differential approaches in the territories, with equal participation of women**

- Train people from civil society in the preparation of budgets with a gender perspective.
- Include budget issues in coordination instances with civil society.

➤ **Strategic objective 5:** *Create alliances to facilitate the process of creating regulations that require all State instances to implement and evaluate actions to mainstream the gender perspective.*

Legislative advances are a fundamental part of the strengthening of the State architecture for the achievement of equality. Through the strengthening of national regulations, States can close gaps in the exercise of women's rights, and move towards an effective equality policy. The role of the national legislative bodies is of great importance to achieve the implementation of the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the work of the State. To do this, this strategy proposes two specific actions that respond to this strategic objective:

**1. Establish a legislative triad on gender, including the National Women's Machinery, the women's**

- Identify women parliamentarians, from sororal relationships and feminist leadership.
- Establish a legislative triad in all countries.



**parliamentary group, and sectoral gender units, with structured participation from the feminist and women's movement.**

**2. Promote the development of laws, decrees, agreements, and in general legislation and regulations against the mainstreaming of the gender perspective**

- Promote the establishment of legislative control mechanisms for the execution and implementation of laws and mainstreaming plans with a gender perspective.
- Promote the establishment of legislative mechanisms for the accountability of the legislative triad.
- Provide awareness/training to the members of the triad on mainstreaming (principles, objectives, methodology).
- Promote adequate legislation to regulate the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and establish a control and accountability framework.
- Have earmarked budgets to mainstream the gender perspective.

➤ **Strategic objective 6:** *Develop an awareness strategy aimed at key audiences to advance in gender mainstreaming processes.*

To achieve the desired progress, all the work carried out by the National Women's Machineries to strengthen the processes of mainstreaming the gender perspective in state activities must be accompanied by a strategy to raise awareness of the importance of these processes and the need to count on the effective dissemination of the work carried out. To do this, this strategy proposes three specific actions that respond to this strategic objective:

**1. Develop national and subnational pedagogical and communication campaigns to raise awareness of the importance and expected results of gender mainstreaming**

- Develop national campaigns that highlight: i) what mainstreaming is; and ii) its benefits (for the entire population).
- Establish mechanisms for measuring the impact of national campaigns.

**2. Establish a network of Communicators, editorialists and journalists who promote gender mainstreaming for the socialization of good practices, as well as the achievements, challenges and proposals that incorporate gender mainstreaming at the institutional level and from women's organizations**

- Compile and manage a network list of communicators, editorialists and journalists.
- Prepare a series of technical notes on different aspects of mainstreaming, to support communicators/journalists in the production of media pieces.
- Develop a plan to strengthen the networks of communicators and journalists.

**3. Train communicators, editorialists and journalists**

- Develop a training curriculum and teaching material.
- Train communicators, journalists and editorialists.

## **6. The Role of the CIM**

The work of the CIM is based on existing mandates, derived from the IAP,<sup>13</sup> specific declarations and resolutions of the Assembly of Delegates of the CIM and the OAS General Assembly, agreements adopted by the Executive Committee of the CIM and commitments agreed upon at the Summits of the Americas.

In the year 2000, the OAS Member States adopted the IAP in order to i) systematically integrate the gender perspective in all organs, agencies, and entities of the Inter-American system and ii) encourage OAS member states to formulate public policies, strategies, and proposals aimed at promoting the human rights of women and gender equality in all spheres of life. The IAP laid the foundations for sustained, ongoing, and strategic work by the entire Organization, led politically by the OAS General Secretariat (GS/OAS) and technically and strategically by the CIM. The IAP opted for the gender perspective as a transversal tool to address the identities of men and women, power relations and asymmetries that are marked in this context, and that negatively impact women and girls' access to opportunities and rights.

In this regard, and in compliance with its mandates, the CIM will advance in supporting the National Women's Machineries in their role as leaders of national gender equality policies and in implementing this strategy for the mainstreaming of the gender, rights and diversity in all the work of the State. Additionally, the CIM will support the generation of spaces and alliances to elevate the gender agenda to strategic political spaces at all levels.

The CIM will also work to publicize and promote the need to mainstream the gender perspective in all State activities, based on the principles set forth in this Strategy, reinforcing the role of multilateralism as an engine of change towards a transformation strategy that feeds on the experience and good practices of the countries of the region.

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<sup>13</sup>Available at: <https://www.oas.org/en/cim/docs/PIA-En.pdf>