

Latin America and the Caribbean Adopt an Inter-American Model Law to Address Gender-based Digital Violence against Women

- *The new regional tool, developed by the MESECVI, establishes provisions to expand protection for women, adolescents, and girls.*
- *Adopted in Fortaleza, Brazil, during the regional meeting of the MESECVI with authorities from States Parties, the Committee of Experts, and civil society organizations.*
- *The Model Law sets out obligations for States, duties for internet intermediaries, and principles for digital governance to ensure safe and violence-free online environments*

Fortaleza, Brazil – December 10, 2025. In a global context marked by the steady rise of gender-based digital violence against women and the urgent need for comprehensive responses, the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) has finalized the adoption of the *Inter-American Model Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Gender-based Digital Violence against Women*. This new instrument places the region at the forefront of efforts to confront a form of violence that disproportionately affects women, adolescents, and girls.

The adoption of the Model Law takes place during the MESECVI's regional gathering in Fortaleza, Brazil, which brings together Ministers for Women and national authorities from Latin America and the Caribbean, members of the Committee of Experts, and representatives from civil society, as part of the XXII Meeting of the Committee of Experts (CEVI) and the X Conference of States Parties (CEP) to the Mechanism, a body of the Organization of American States (OAS).

The accelerated digitalization of public and private life has expanded the spaces where gender-based violence occurs, amplifying its reach, frequency, and severity. Threats, harassment, surveillance, identity theft, hate speech, deepfakes, non-consensual sharing of intimate content, digital extortion, and gender-biased disinformation campaigns are among the forms of violence that generate serious physical, psychological, economic, social, and symbolic harm to the integrity, autonomy, and rights of women, adolescents, and girls in all their diversity.

In response to this scenario, the Model Law stands as a high-level technical and political tool to guide legislative reforms, strengthen institutional capacities, and promote a comprehensive, rights-based, and multi-stakeholder response to one of the most pressing challenges of the digital age. Developed based on the standards of the Belém do Pará Convention and other human rights instruments, the Model Law is directed at government

entities, legislatures, justice systems, digital platforms, civil society, multilateral organizations, cooperation agencies, and feminist movements.

The path to the Inter-American Model Law was initiated by the CEVI, which agreed to its development during its XIX Meeting in Buenos Aires in 2022. Over more than two years, twenty in-person and virtual consultations were held across eight countries, with the active participation of around one thousand individuals and organizations from various sectors. This broad and inclusive regional process was made possible thanks to the support of the Italian Republic, the *ACT to End Violence against Women program*, an alliance between UN Women and the European Union, Equality Now, and a wide coalition of governments, civil society organizations, academia, digital rights specialists, and international partners.

Grounded in a human rights, gender, and intersectional approach, the Model Law defines digital violence as any act, conduct, or omission based on gender that causes death, harm, or suffering—whether physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or political—and is committed or aggravated through digital technologies. It also recognizes the differentiated impacts on women and girls historically marginalized on the basis of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or disability.

The Model Law proposes a comprehensive legal framework, including guidelines on prevention, gender-sensitive digital literacy, urgent protection measures, full reparation, and the development of safe, democratic digital environments. Its guiding principles include equality and non-discrimination, reinforced due diligence, non-revictimization, intersectionality, and shared digital governance.

One of its most innovative components is the establishment of clear obligations for digital platforms and internet intermediaries, including transparency measures, evidence preservation, cooperation with authorities, and timely removal of violent or non-consensual content. It also promotes bridging the gender digital divide, mandatory training for justice system operators, and inter-institutional coordination to ensure effective, stigma-free access to justice.

In the preamble to the Model Law, the Committee of Experts underscores the key role played by women's and feminist organizations in naming, documenting, and addressing digital violence—efforts that have been crucial to advancing legal frameworks in several countries. The new inter-American instrument seeks to support and build on this regional momentum, responding to the urgent need for comprehensive normative responses that recognize the magnitude of harm, the need for protection and timely content removal, proper sanctions, and full reparations.

The adoption of the Model Law in Fortaleza, on the occasion of Human Rights Day, reaffirms the hemispheric political and institutional commitment to upholding women's right to live free from violence—also in digital spaces. This milestone marks the beginning of a new phase of collective work to strengthen legal frameworks, access to justice, protection mechanisms, and comprehensive public policies with a gender, intersectional, and culturally relevant approach.

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