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Nonetheless, the various areas of the Platform for Action have progressed at different speeds, and some areas have been relatively neglected, such as the relationship between women and the environment and between women and the communications media. The areas advancing most strongly include the growing presence of women in decision-making positions, poverty reduction and policies to eradicate violence. The increasing participation of women in the economically active population (EAP) has not been supported by policies aimed at eradicating discrimination in the labour market, while social security, access to health services — including reproductive health — and the quality of education remain pending issues.

The challenges posed in Beijing have been joined by others such as those arising from the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Millennium Development Goals (New York, 2000); and the interaction between them has produced major synergies.

Lastly, as noted above, an additional difficulty arises when measuring progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, owing to the still deficient systems of gender indicators and statistics.

perspective in public policies and initiatives for exchanging experiences undertaken mainly through mechanisms for the advancement of women.

that one third of urban households headed by women are living in poverty.[4] The persistent gender gap in terms of labour income in Latin America improved somewhat between 1994 and 2007: while in 1994, women received the equivalent of 65% of the income earned by men, in 2007 the situation had

for many women achieving a higher level of education than men does not lead to quality jobs or better pay. Although women's access to higher education is growing, they still tend to enter courses associated with health and education, thus prolonging domestic roles of caring for others, which are less valued in the labour market. A key challenge is to encourage women into non-traditional careers such as the scientific professions and technical occupations. In this regard, Jamaica reports a significant increase in women's access to technological careers and other non-traditional areas. In Mexico since 2007, women have been admitted to careers

Belize: *Over the last few years the Women's Department in Belize has provided training for women in non-traditional areas such as automotive mechanics or ceramic tile fitting. In some communities, the supply of training raised doubts among women, and efforts were made to raise awareness and overcome gender prejudices and stereotypes, to encourage them to participate.*

Trinidad and Tobago*: Training programmes for women aim to improve their employability in*

of lessons learned in previous stages, including the criminalization of new offences that recognize situations that occur both inside and outside the home, such as femicide. For example, Brazil today has the María da Penha Law, one of the three most advanced in the region, along with the law in Spain. In both Costa Rica and Guatemala femicide and sexual violence are recognized as crimes; Argentina and Mexico have adopted comprehensive laws to prevent, punish and eradicate violence. In the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign "UNite to End Violence against Women", awareness-raising has been boosted in countries in many cases led by the country's high-level authorities, or even the President, as in the case of Brazil.

Challenges: The

making it possible to institute legal proceedings in cases of female genital mutilation perpetrated outside its own territory.

***El Salvador**: The Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women has trained over 8,000 members of the National Civil Police, Magistrates Court and Family Proceedings Court, the Offices of the Attorney General and Prosecutor General of the Republic (Fiscalía General de la República, Procuraduría General de la República respectively). Education is provided on gender, domestic violence, sexual aggression, and the contents of the law against domestic violence, among other issues. The Programme to Improve Family Relations provides psychological assistance to men who perpetrate domestic violence and voluntarily attend the programme's support groups, or when they are sentenced to psychological therapy by the family proceedings courts and Magistrates Court. Since 2005, a total of 13,257 men who have perpetrated acts of violence have been attended by the programme.*

***Panama**: The National Police Office of Services against Family Violence, created in 2005, provides information to victims on the legal benefits to which they are entitled and the services they can access. It also processes complaints filed with the competent authority and implements the relevant protection measures. The aim of the service is to care for victims and reduce the number of cases of family violence. It provides psychological and social assistance, disseminates information and conducts campaigns to eradicate domestic violence.*

***Portugal**: In 2007, the Penal Code was amended to punish the crime of genital mutilation. Following this, the National Action Plan to Eradicate Female Genital Mutilation began in early 2009, with four areas of action: (a) awareness-raising, prevention and support; (b) training; (c) research; and (d) advocacy.*

E. Women and armed conflicts

6.

sector. In this regard, Belize, Costa Rica and Peru have developed specific proposals to cushion the impact on jobs. In Belize, the Women's Department is promoting development opportunities through the economic empowerment of women.

2. The cutback in lending will particularly affect women entrepreneurs, who already find it hard to obtain financing, even under stable economic conditions. Despite this, women's access to credit has become easier over the last few years in countries such as Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala.

3. The pay differential between women and men – which exceeds 30% in many countries – means that women earn less even when they perform the same tasks and have the same training. Legislation has been introduced to eliminate this type of discrimination in some countries, including Chile, Cuba, Portugal and Spain.

4. The situation of women workers in private homes has improved over the last few years in some countries. In Argentina, amendment of the autonomous workers regime through Decree 1454 (2005) enabled 1,250,000 women (housewives, domestic or informal employees) to enter the pension system from which they were previously excluded owing to their lack of contributions. Similar reforms on a smaller scale have been introduced in Chile and Costa Rica. In other cases, such as Guatemala, this remains a pending issue as noted above.

5. Over the last few years, certification and good gender practice initiatives have been undertaken in public and private enterprises, in Brazil and Mexico particularly.

6. One of the problems facing women who work outside the home is how to look after their children who have not reached compulsory school age. In response to this need, Mexico has developed a programme entitled "Child Care Centre and Nursery Programme to Support Working Mothers" and the Plurinational State of Bolivia is proposing a redistribution of care tasks in families through its public policy on equal opportunities.

Chile *passed a Law 20.255 (2008) reforming the pension system and recognizing the historical gender inequalities of the previous system. It grants a basic solidarity pension to those who previously did not have access; and it also recognizes the value of ma*

1. Women's participation in decision-making mechanisms has increased in the region throughout the last five years; and for the first time three women have been elected presidents of their countries: in Argentina, Chile and Jamaica.

2. In most of the region's countries, women's participation in government is greater the lower the hierarchical level of the posts in question. Chile and Ecuador have implemented a gender parity policy in the government cabinet, by presidential decision. In other countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador, women have attained ministerial rank in non-traditional areas such as defence and the economy.

3. Women's participation in the lower houses of parliament is growing thanks to implementation of quotas mechanisms. Nonetheless, they have not yet attained parity, or even a 30% share, as indicated in the legislation on quotas in force in several countries (Brazil, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Uruguay). Cuba is one of the world leaders in terms of women's representation in parliament, which stands at 43.32%.

4.

Challenges: The main challenges are to strengthen social and political networks and alliances to give the mechanisms political, technical and financial sustainability. Steps must be taken to increase the level of budgetary appropriations and strengthen the capacity of mechanisms for the advancement of women to interact with other government areas, and technical-political capacities in order to achieve gender mainstreaming.

1. In the 15 years since the Beijing Conference, mechanisms for the advancement of women have achieved significant progress. The process of institutionalizing such mechanisms, which occurred both before and after Beijing, has gathered pace over the years in Latin America. In Caribbean countries, the process has been slower and is still a pending issue characterized by the turnover in responsibility for women's issues within the Government. In the case of Jamaica, the mechanism has come under seven different ministries. The Government of the Cayman Islands is negotiating a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to enable it to deepen its knowledge of the mechanisms, to strengthen the institution. According to data from the Latin Americas and Caribbean Observatory on Gender Equality,[9] at the present time 40% of mechanisms have ministerial rank, another 20% are entities attached to the Office of the President, and 40% depend on another ministry, in most cases associated with social policies.[10]

2. In some Central American countries, mechanisms for the advancement of women to some extent share agendas and activities with the Offices of the First Lady. This causes problems

8. Over the last few years, thematic observatories with a gender perspective have also been

J. Women and the media

Challenges:

ANNEX

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	public education. - Women take better advantage of educational opportunities. Education is compulsory for both sexes until 16 years of age, and women account for 70% of university enrolments.	

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	Niño-Niña Juana Azurduy" mother-child bonus, to help reduce maternal and infant mortality and chronic malnutrition among children under two years of age. The bonus is paid following a medical check-up. - Passing of Law 4021 (2009) on the Transitory Electoral Regime, establishing equitable citizen participation under equal conditions between men and women. - Passing of Law 3791 (2007) establishing universal income for older persons.	to improve procedures for obtaining and disseminating data, and ensure that they reflect the gender dimension more transparently and sensitively. - Increase mechanisms for access, permanency and equal opportunities for women in education. - Address the problem of naturalization of violence against women, due to the impunity enjoyed by gender violence. - Strengthen the institutional framework of public mechanisms to facilitate the promotion of gender equality, continuity and sustainability of public policies, and full compliance with national and international commitments.
Brazil		
• **Advancement mechanisms** • **Violence** • **Poverty** • **Health** • **Indicators**	- The Special Secretariat on Policies for Women will be promoted to ministerial rank, according to an announcement by the President in 2009. - The gender and race perspective was incorporated into the Multiyear Plan (PPA) 2008-2011 as a result of intervention by the Special Secretariat on Policies for Women. - Second National Conference on Policies for Women in which 300,000 women participated throughout the country; this served to prepare principles and guidelines for the national policy for women. - Passing of the "Maria da Penha" Law No. 11340 (2006) to address the problem of domestic and family violence. This is one of the three most advanced in the world, and its presentation coincided with the launch of the National Pact	

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Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	are either black or mixed-race families. The amount of the transfer is indexed to increases in the minimum wage. As a result of implementation of Bolsa Familia — the world's largest transfer programme — and other programmes, poverty fell by 10 percentage points between 2002 and 2007. - As a joint venture the Special Secretariat on Policies for Women and the Ministry of Health, progress has been made in providing specific health care solutions for specific groups: indigenous, black, lesbian and bisexuals, adolescents, young people and the elderly, women in prison, women in rural zones or situations of violence, and	

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
Chile		
• **Poverty** • **Exercise of power** • **Legislation** • **Education** • **Health** • **Violence**	-	

Priority issues[11]

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	- National Strategic Plan for Maternal and Perinatal Mortality Reduction in El Salvador, 2004-2009. Strengthening of reproductive health programmes and detection of cervical cancer.	
Spain		
• **Advancement mechanisms** • **Decision-making power** • **Legislation** • **Violence**	- Creation of the Ministry of Equality (2008) and design of the Strategic Equal Opportunities Plan, 2008-2011. - Appointment of the first gender-balanced cabinet in the history of Spain (2004). - Two laws represent a historical landmark, Organic Law 1 (2004) on Integral Protection Measures against Gender Violence, and Organic Law 3 (2003) on Effective Inequality Between Women and Men. - Approval of the National Sensitization and Gender Violence Prevention Plan (2006). - The Spanish State has developed gender indicators and created observatories to monitor issues within the brief of the Ministry of Equality. - Spain considers female genital mutilation as a crime, and passed legislation allowing for prosecution of the practice of female genital mutilation outside its own territory (2005).	- In 2008, the Government appointed an Inter-Ministerial Commission of Experts, consisting of individuals from the domains of justice, health and equality to reform the law on abortion. The Commission's preliminary report suggests enacting new legislation with sufficient measures, which would involve a qualitative improvement in the sexual and reproductive rights of women in Spain.
Guatemala		
• **Advancement mechanisms** • **Violence** • **Legislation**	- National Policy for Promotion and Integral Advancement of Women in 2001-2006, extension 2008-2023, and Equal Opportunities Plan 2001-2006 and 2008-2023. - Preliminary diagnostic assessment of execution of the gender budgetary classifier. - Passing of the Law against Femicide and Other Forms of Violence against Women (2008). This provides protection measures for women who are the subject of physical, psychological, sexual and financial violence. - Declaration on non-tolerance of violence against women and inter-institutional agreement to strengthen the National Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (2008). Implementation of the National Plan for the Prevention	- Institutionalizing the National Policy for Integral Advancement and Development of Women, and obtaining greater budgetary support. - Dissemination of the Law against Femicide and other forms of Violence against Women among the population at large and among justice operators specifically. Doubts remain over its interpretation and mode of application. Statistical records of murders of women are not centralized, and each organization follows its own methods. - One of the outstanding commitments of the Peace Accords is promulgation of legislation to protect the labour rights of female workers in private houses, given the constant violation of their rights and the

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	Women and Men, coordinated by the National Women's Institute, and preparation of the National Programme for Equality between Women and Men 2008-2012. - The *Oportunidades* human development programme pays conditional transfers to five million families and has helped to reduce poverty. To avoid school dropout by girls, it was decided that from the first grade of secondary school, they would be awarded higher educational scholarships than boys. - In 2008, the Ministry of Health implemented a programme for the prevention of cervical-uterine cancer. It increased the number of preventive examinations and inoculations against human papilloma virus for teenagers. - Progress in the reproductive health area, and incorporation of emergency hormonal contraception, and family planning for adolescents. In the Federal District, abortion up to 12 weeks of gestation has been decriminalized. - The right of men to take paternity leave was established in 2008.	actions, programmes or projects.
Panama		
• **Advancement mechanisms** • **Human rights** • **Violence** • **Legislation**	- Creation of the National Women's Institute, raising the profile and rank of the mechanism for the advancement of women, Law 71 (2008). - Women's Equal Opportunities Plan 2002-2006. - Adoption in 2007 of reforms to the Penal Code in relation to sexual crimes, homicide and domestic violence, and in 2008, approval of Law 63 on the Penal Code, which increases prison terms for the crime of domestic violence. Protection measures for victims were also strengthened. - Formulation and implementation of the National Plan to Combat Domestic Violence and Promote Civic Coexistence Policies for 2004-2014. - Creation of the Justice Access and Gender Unit in response to the difficulties experienced by women in exercising their rights. Its aim is to facilitate effective access to justice for women in situations of vulnerability.	- The ethnic factor, together with their status as women, generates discrimination. Indigenous and Afro-descendant women are discriminated against because of their appearance. There is also cultural discrimination in access to bilingual intercultural education. - A larger proportion of women remain in and graduate from the education system than men, at the secondary and higher levels. Nonetheless, this advantage does not lead to higher income, and the income gap between men and women remains at 15%. - Women continue to suffer from a lack of education on sexual and reproductive health. The prevalence of cultural myths and prejudices helps to increase sexually transmitted diseases.

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	- The *Opportunities* network programme consists of conditional transfers provided to mothers living in poverty. - The Women's Economic Agenda seeks to promote a	

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
	opening of the first "temporary shelter" for victims of this crime.	
Peru		
• **Human rights** • **Legislation** • **Violence** • **Health**	- Passing of Law 28 983 (2007) on equal opportunities	

Priority issues[11]

Priority issues[11]	Main achievements	Main challenges
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