

A. PARITY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

1. Identification of new subjects for research

At the subregional preparatory meetings for the tenth session of the Regional Conference and during preparation of this document, questions were raised concerning the way the gender system operates within political parties and the way women exercise leadership as well as on the correlation between political participation, representation and access to power, and poverty, ethnicity, age, the exercise of reproductive rights, levels and forms of violence and other variables that have a bearing on the exercise of citizenship, social and political participation and access to positions of power.

2. Policy or strategy objectives

The objectives pursued by the research proposal are:

- (i) To identify the most successful and sustainable strategies for promoting and maintaining women's political participation;
- (ii) To document the contribution of women in leadership positions in parliament, the executive, local government and other decision-making bodies, such as the judiciary, the business sector and social organizations;
- (iii) To analyse the links between participation and decision-making by women, on the one hand, and poverty, unpaid work and the exercise of their rights, especially reproductive rights, on the other;
- (iv) To recognize the contribution of unpaid work carried out by women within political parties;
- (v) To report on regional experiences underway, identifying the specific characteristics of parity in the region.

These prospective research studies will be directed towards decision-making. Most of them will be confined to the national sphere; a more limited number will have a regional comparative scope.

3. Instruments to be developed

Bearing in mind the current status of research, priority must be given to strengthening institutional capacities in order to:

- (i) Compile data on women's political participation and representation;
- (ii) Optimize the use of available sources, such as the database of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which provides up-to-date information on women's participation in parliaments;

- (iii) Contribute to the maintenance of the ECLAC database on participation in the executive, in order to analyse long-term processes and trends relating to the presence of women in cabinet posts;
- (iv) Analyse available information with a view to providing arguments and solid grounds for the formulation of public policies—including legislative reforms—which will enable women to move forward towards parity as an attainable goal;
- (v) Prepare qualitative studies on the relationship between the cultural dimension of the sex-gender system and obstacles to women's political participation.

B. THE IMPACT OF UNPAID CAREGIVING ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. The identification of new research issues

One of the research areas that rallied the highest degree of consensus was that concerning the need to strengthen and refine the conceptual framework of caregiving, determining the scope of the concepts of reproductive work, the care economy, unpaid work, time reengineering and reconciling family life and work, among others, in order to obtain a clearer conceptual definition of the analytical field covered by these terms.

It was also suggested that public policies should be categorized to differentiate between those designed to promote child care, those designed to enable women to work outside the home and those that encourage the sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

2. Objectives of the policy or strategy

This research proposal includes the following objectives:

- (i) To evaluate the costs of universal social protection for all women (including domestic workers, housewives and agricultural workers) irrespective of their employment status. This study could be undertaken in countries where reforms are already underway;
- (ii) To document the legal status and the effective fulfilment of the rights of domestic workers in order to bring their rights in line with those of other workers;
- (iii) To assess the impact of child-care programmes on women and men's time;
- (iv) To carry out in-depth studies on issues that are increasingly important in the sphere of care giving: the additional burden of work for women caring for family members with HIV/AIDS; the transnationalization of care and the contribution of female migrant domestic workers to remittance flows;
- (v) To assess the impact of family law on women's economic independence.

3. Instruments to be developed

Given the current status of research, priority must be given to strengthening institutional capacities in order to:

- (i) Obtain appropriate and timely information on the labour market, including the informal sector and agriculture;
- (ii) Obtain sex-disaggregated information on social security;
- (iii) Carry out time-use surveys;
- (iv) Establish satellite accounts on unpaid work.