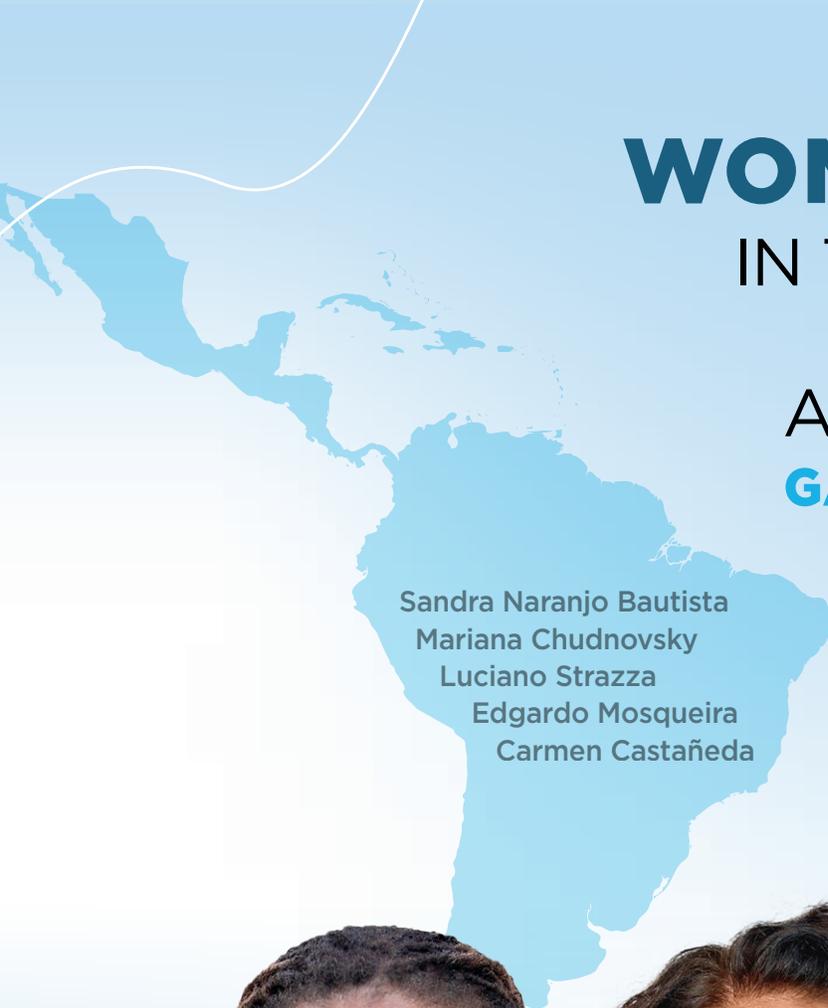


WOMEN LEADERS

IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES



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1 Executive Summary

Women's participation in leadership positions in public administration has multiple benefits beyond equality factors. There is empirical evidence indicating a positive correlation between a greater number of women in public decision-making positions and greater economic growth,¹ gender equality² and greater social spending on education, health and environmental protection.³ The presence of women in leadership positions has made invisible experiences visible, and with it, interests, priorities and perspectives different from those of their male peers. Beyond the objectives of equal participation in public administration, several studies confirm that women's participation in decision-making positions in public policies promotes additional objectives of service coverage, efficiency and effectiveness.⁴

This unprecedented analysis shows that women's presence is still limited at the highest decision-making levels of central public administrations and is concentrated in specific sectors. In public administration as a whole, women represent 52 percent of the workforce; the problem is that they do not reach leadership positions. In the 15 countries analyzed, women occupy only 23.6 percent of Level 1 positions, equivalent to a minister, compared to 44.2 percent that reach Level 4 positions, equivalent to a director. On average, women hold 41.4 percent of leadership positions in the 12 agencies selected for the study. Vertical and horizontal segregation persists, even in those countries where women's participation is higher. The presence of women is higher (45.4 percent) in areas associated with traditional gender stereotypes, such as education and health, and their presence decreases (38.1 percent) in sectors where men have traditionally led, such as finance and defense.

Latin America and the Caribbean require a more ambitious gender agenda in leadership positions in the public sector, which goes from compliance with formality to the true use of female talent in the region. This implies not only a numerical presence but also eliminating the vertical and horizontal segregation that is currently evident in the region. In addition, it is necessary to encourage women's active participation to take advantage of the positive effect they have been shown to generate in public organizations⁵ and in the economy.⁶

1. MGI, 2015.

2. UNDP, 2020.

3. Yañez-Pagans, 2015.

4. Yañez-Pagans, 2015; Jin, 2016.

5. Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Park and Liang, 2021.

6. MGI, 2015.



Most countries have regulations, organizations and public policies for mainstreaming gender policies, although their effect is still uncertain. In theory, the region has complied, but in practice, having these instruments alone does not guarantee the objective for which they were created will be achieved. Of the analyzed countries, 69 percent have some type of regulation related to gender equality, which does not always translate good intentions into concrete instruments and objectives for action. All the countries analyzed have an organization dedicated to gender mainstreaming, but not always with the desired budget and influence. All countries, with the exception of Guyana, have policies to promote gender equality, some even have policies to promote including women in management positions in the public sector, but the results are not tangible.

The public sector could be the benchmark in each country for what it means to close the gender gap. It requires political will and prioritizing concrete, measurable actions that are achievable over time. It is time to measure progress on gender issues based on results, not on the mere adoption of norms, standards and policies that in practice create no change.

This study proposes three concrete lines of action:

- 1. Break down access barriers to achieve formal equality in decision-making positions.** The first challenge is to achieve women's access to leadership positions. We propose (i) establishing gender goals, with clear, quantifiable objectives, with a time limit and sanctions for non-compliance, and (ii) strategically using personnel selection processes.
- 2. Facilitate the conditions to achieve substantive equality.** It is not enough to achieve parity if women are absent from decision-making processes in the public sector. We propose (i) using and strengthening existing instruments for mainstreaming gender policies, for example, with interventions focused on building state capability in the agencies in charge of gender policy. We also propose (ii) implementing human resources management systems from a gender perspective.
- 3. Promote disaggregated and periodic information on the presence of women in leadership positions in the public sector for permanent monitoring and better decision making.**



2 Women's Participation in the Region's Public Sector

2.1 Why is the participation of women in public administration leadership positions important?

Women's participation in public administration is fundamental, not only because of gender equality principles but also because of the wide-ranging benefits their participation generates. Empirical evidence indicates a positive correlation between a greater number of women in public decision-making positions and greater economic growth,⁷ gender equality⁸ and greater social spending on education, health and environmental protection.⁹ A positive effect of women's presence is also observed in the performance of public organizations¹⁰ and in the decrease of corruption levels.¹¹ Gender differences in leadership styles have also been empirically measured at the level of public opinion. For example, a study of perceptions in the U.S. linked women leaders with attributes such as public integrity and empathy, as well as a greater ability to compromise.¹²

The presence of women in leadership positions has made invisible experiences visible, and with it, interests, priorities and perspectives different from those of their male peers. Several studies confirm that women's participation in decision-making positions in public policies promotes additional objectives of coverage, efficiency and effectiveness of public services.¹³ It introduces different perspectives in designing and implementing public policies and programs. Women's participation makes it possible, for example, to understand gender particularities in accessing public services and to design routes to access the service that are adapted to these particularities.

7. MGI, 2015.

8. UNDP, 2020.

9. Yañez-Pagans, 2015.

10. Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Park and Liang, 2021.

11. Jin, 2016.

12. Parker, Horowitz, and Igielnik, 2018.

13. Park, 2013; Dolan, 2002; Keiser et al., 2002; Riccucci and Meyers, 2004; Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Connell, 2006a; Cáceres Rodríguez, 2013; Alkadry et al., 2019.

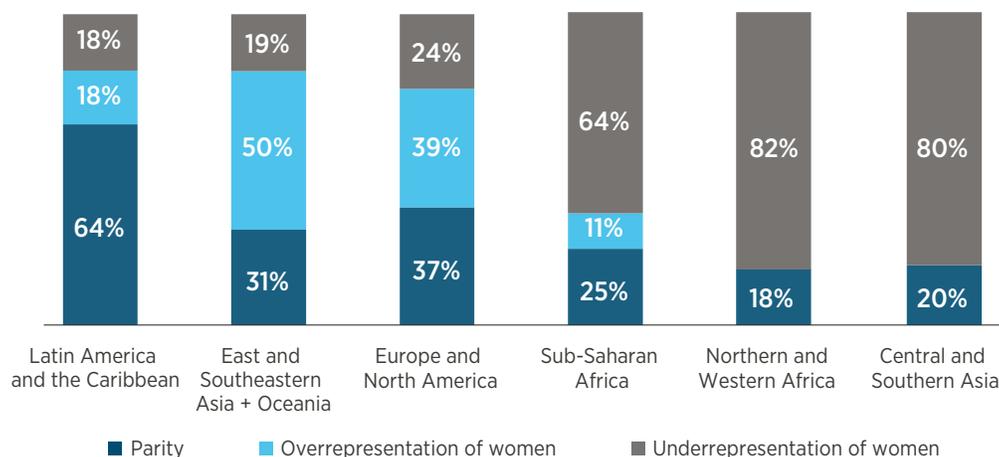


The presence of women in public decision-making processes must be urgent and everyone's responsibility. The COVID-19 crisis will only deepen the already existing inequalities in the region, including gender gaps,¹⁴ so there is no time to lose. The public sector should lead the implementation of gender equality policies by example and promote women's participation, particularly in leadership positions.

2.2 The pending challenges of gender equality in public administration: The gap of women in decision-making positions

The figures on the presence of women in the public sector seem encouraging. According to data from the International Labor Organization, in Latin America and the Caribbean, women represent 52 percent of the workforce in the public sector, with a greater presence than in the private sector (40 percent), and they occupy 41 percent of management positions.¹⁵ Although women's entry into the public sector has slowed,¹⁶ it would appear that the gap is closing. According to the latest UNDP/University of Pittsburgh report on Gender Equality in Public Administration, most countries in the region (82 percent) have achieved gender parity participation (64 percent) in the public sector, and in some, there is even an overrepresentation of women (18 percent)¹⁷ (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 PERCENTAGE OF COUNTRIES WITH GENDER PARITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR



Source: UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

14. OAS, 2020; Pérez-Vincent et al., 2020.

15. ILO, 2022; OECD, 2020. Data on management positions according to ILO ISCO classification includes legislators and senior officials.

16. Marchionni et al., 2018.

17. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.



Is the task then accomplished? Is it enough to have equal participation? This study argues that it is not. Although there has been progress regarding women's participation throughout the public sector, from 43 percent in 2000 to 52 percent in 2022,¹⁸ there is still a long way to go, particularly in leadership positions and traditionally male-dominated sectors.

It is not enough to have equal participation at the general level if women cannot influence public policy decision making. In addition to total numerical presence, it is important that women reach leadership positions from which they influence decision-making processes. This implies they have a presence in more senior positions and that their scope of action is not limited to those that comply with traditional gender stereotypes.

The problem is that we do not have enough disaggregated information to understand in depth what happens with the presence of women in leadership positions in public administration. There is aggregated information on the presence of women in public administration,¹⁹ but without greater detail for the highest management levels. Most of the empirical evidence on women and political leadership focuses on examining the presence of women in the legislative branches²⁰ or at the ministerial level.²¹ Analyses focused on women's access to leadership positions in public administrations are limited.²² The few existing databases aggregate managerial positions, without these necessarily being equivalent between countries, and combine categories for the public and private sector.²³ The existing information reflects the difficulty of standardizing public employment positions between countries.²⁴ Conversely, there is no comparable and disaggregated information at the sectoral level to understand the presence of women in different areas of public policy. Aggregate numbers can hide the reality by telling a partial story.

This study has two objectives. The first is to measure the gap in the presence of women in leadership and decision-making positions in the central public administrations of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The second objective is to propose policy recommendations that generate equal opportunities between genders for access to and promotion within the civil service.

18. ILO, 2022.

19. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; UNDP, 2019; WEF, 2021; OECD, 2018; OECD-IDB, 2020; IPU, 2021; ECLAC, 2019.

20. Schwindt-Bayer and Alles, 2018; Piatti-Crocker, 2019.

21. UN Women, 2020; Gender Equality Observatory, 2022.

22. OECD, 2018; OECD-IDB, 2020; UNDP, 2018, 2019; World Bank, 2019; WEF, 2021; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; UN Women, 2021a; Alkaldry and Tower, 2014; An and Lee, 2021; An et al., 2021; Avendaño et al., 2021; Canelo, 2020; Chudnovsky, 2021; Dumas et al., 2020; Gaete and Álvarez, 2019; Jin, 2016; Keiser et al., 2002; Nasser, 2018; Park and Liang, 2021; Park and Mwiambi, 2022.

23. ILO, 2020.

24. UNDP, 2019.



The analysis fills both an empirical and conceptual gap on the subject. It contributes in at least three ways.

1. It **standardizes the four highest executive management levels** in the region, which makes a comparative analysis feasible.
2. It analyzes the presence of women in leadership positions, **disaggregated by government agency and hierarchical level in order to identify gender gaps in public administrations.**
3. It complements the information on numerical presence in leadership positions with **normative, organizational and policy** variables that influence women's access to these positions. These analytical dimensions have only been studied separately. Incorporating these dimensions into the analysis allows for a more comprehensive study of the factors that influence a greater or lesser presence of women and the way in which they influence public policies.

2.3 Literature review

This section summarizes the main bodies of literature on which we base this analysis. International norms on women's rights are presented, especially on non-discrimination based on gender, in order to identify the existence of guidelines for access to decision-making positions in the public sector. We highlight affirmative action and gender mainstreaming measures as central axes for this study. The notions of diversity and representation are presented and then linked to the central body of literature of this study, representative bureaucracies. Finally, these interventions are linked to a second key body of literature for this study, gender organizations.

There are several international instruments for the defense and recognition of women. They serve as a guide for states to include these advances in their national legislation and to promote the guarantee and vindication of women's rights. *Annex 1* summarizes the eight most relevant instruments on gender issues. Some are general, seeking to address gender inequality in all aspects of the public and private spheres. Others, while not establishing specific measures on women's access to decision-making positions, focus on women's situation in the public sphere. Together, these instruments provide a normative framework for states to adopt measures aimed at achieving substantive equality between men and women in all aspects. It is worth mentioning that none of them outline specific measures for women's access to management positions in public administrations.

There are two significant international milestones, binding on signatory countries, with respect to gender discrimination in the public administrations of the executive branches. The



first is the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which the United Nations organized, and is considered the Women's Bill of Rights. The states that signed the CEDAW committed themselves to developing a series of measures to put an end to discrimination against women in all its forms. For example, mainstreaming policies, affirmative action, funding for gender equality and producing gender-sensitive data and statistics.²⁵ The second instrument is the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Its objective was to accelerate strategies aimed at the advancement of women and to eliminate all obstacles that hinder their participation in all spheres of public and private life, in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres.

Two lines of action emerged from the Beijing Platform: affirmative actions and gender mainstreaming. Affirmative actions are temporary interventions that seek to guarantee access to resources or rights for different vulnerable groups to counteract situations of discrimination.²⁶ There are direct actions, such as the gender quotas implemented in LAC in elective decision-making positions²⁷ but scarce in the civil service;²⁸ and indirect measures, such as reorganizing job positions to facilitate promoting women to positions of greater responsibility.²⁹ As part of the mainstreaming policies, various strategies exist to promote organizational changes. Two of the best known are the national machineries for the advancement of women (MAW)³⁰ and the national action plans that promote gender equality as a priority and transversally throughout public administration.³¹ An example of the latter is the gender equality plan (GEP). These two lines of action are mirrored by two bodies of academic literature, representative bureaucracies and gender organizations.

There are two key notions underlying the research program on representative bureaucracies: diversity and representation. *Diversity* refers to the existence of organizations that reflect the composition of the population and provide a working space where all ideas are respected and represented.³² The notion of *representation* is linked to the fact that the legitimacy of public administrations does not rest on mechanisms of electoral political representation, for example, as in the case of legislatures. However, there is a strong argument that bureaucracies should

25. UN Women, 2016.

26. O'Neill, 2021; Piscopo and Wylie, 2020; PNUD, 2018; Gürtler and Gürtler, 2019.

27. Rodríguez Gustá, 2008; Freidenberg, 2020; Schwindt-Bayer and Senk, 2020.

28. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

29. Rodríguez Gustá, 2008.

30. These are all those instances, established by the state and distributed at the national, regional and local levels, that seek to mainstream the gender perspective in public policies, and that carry out concrete actions to promote the human rights of women and girls, as well as to eradicate violence against them. The best known is the Ministry of Women's Affairs (ECLAC, 2020).

31. Bustelo et al., 2021; UN Women, 2021b; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

32. Alkadry and Tower, 2014.



represent the societies in which they operate.³³ In this way, representation is linked to diversity. In the face of a diverse society, there must be a public administration that represents it, and consequently, it is also diverse.

Public administrations play a central role in formulating public policies, both in their role as rule makers and implementers. Evidence shows that the representativeness of bureaucracies has important advantages.^{34,35} However, for a representative bureaucracy to promote gender equality through its influence on policy design and implementation, this numerical representation must have significant influence in leadership position.³⁶ Without participation in decision-making processes, assumptions about how women's presence leads to a more gender-just society are disrupted by the "black box"³⁷ of what happens within public administrations.

The concept of representative bureaucracies, common in developed countries, is not yet evident in LAC. The debate about the characteristics and role that bureaucracies must have to be representative, as well as the importance of their being so, has been going on for a long time in developed countries;³⁸ however, it has not permeated LAC.³⁹ Bureaucracies have a responsibility to society and therefore, must represent and reflect the population they serve, beyond their representation in electoral terms.⁴⁰ Talking about representative bureaucracies implies distinguishing between passive bureaucracies, those that share the same demographic origin as the general population; and active bureaucracies, those that, in addition, produce policy outcomes that benefit the passively represented citizens.⁴¹

Representative bureaucracies hold relevance because evidence shows that the demographic composition of the public sector influences both the nature of governments and the policy outcomes.⁴² Regarding gender, in order to be representative, they must have 50 percent women. However, to keep the chain of representation intact, it is important that women have, in addition to numerical presence, equal influence with men in political decision-making positions.⁴³ Parity

33. Kingsley, 1944; Meier and Nigro, 1976; Meier and Stewart, 1992; Keiser et al., 2002; Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Bradbury and Kellough, 2011; Lewis and Pitts, 2011; Atkins and Wilkins, 2013.

34. There is evidence that public servants hold attitudes and advocate for policies that are consistent with the identifiable interests of certain groups (such as women). Consequently, they produce changes in policy purposes, processes, outputs and outcomes (Bowling and Beehr, 2006).

35. Mosher, 1968; Meier, 1993; Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Krislov, 2012.

36. Alkadry and Tower, 2014.

37. A metaphor used to describe a system for which we can only observe the inputs and outputs, but not the internal workings.

38. Atkins and Wilkins, 2013; Bradbury and Kellough, 2011; Keiser et al., 2002; Kingsley, 1944; Lewis and Pitts, 2011; Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Meier and Nigro, 1976; Meier and Stewart, 1992.

39. Chudnovsky, 2021.

40. An et al., 2021; Guul, 2018.

41. Park and Mwiambi, 2022; Park and Liang, 2021.

42. Ding et al., 2021; Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; An and Lee, 2021.

43. Chudnovsky, 2021; Kennedy et al., 2020.



is not enough if there is vertical and horizontal segregation. In other words, the distribution of these numbers is also key.⁴⁴

There is important academic production on representative bureaucracies. A first group of studies measures passive representation and provides information on the changing composition of bureaucratic agencies.⁴⁵ Although the findings suggest that women and minorities are represented, they also highlight that these groups tend to be underrepresented at the higher levels of leadership.⁴⁶ In LAC, on average, women's participation in the public sector is parity (51 percent), although lower than the OECD average (60 percent). However, when looking at the higher levels, women occupy only 30 percent of ministries (31 percent OECD countries) and 41 percent of managerial positions in LAC.⁴⁷ At the general level, the representation of women may vary according to the type of organization. Women are concentrated in redistributive agencies (social welfare) and their presence is lower in distributive (public education or agriculture) and regulatory agencies.⁴⁸ At the global level, evidence shows that in central agencies, such as ministries of finance (41 percent) or planning (38 percent), women's presence in these agencies does not exceed 40 percent.⁴⁹

A second group of studies seeks to analyze the effects of representation on public policy outcomes. Gender diversity in leadership positions has a positive effect in several areas.⁵⁰ Empirical evidence indicates a positive correlation between a greater number of women in public decision-making positions and greater economic growth,⁵¹ gender equality⁵² and greater social spending on education, health and environmental protection.⁵³ Similarly, their presence has a positive effect on organizations' finances⁵⁴ and on controlling corruption.⁵⁵ The increase in the representation of minorities and women also relates to substantial changes in the results of policies that favor these groups.⁵⁶ Women's presence in bureaucracies has positive effects for

44. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; Gaete and Álvarez, 2019; Canelo, 2020; Bishu and Headley, 2020; Alkadry and Tower, 2014.

45. Rodríguez Gustá, 2002; Park, 2013; Kennedy, 2012; Otero et al., 2013; Chudnovsky, 2021.

46. Selden, 1997; Park and Mwihambi, 2022; Park and Liang, 2021.

47. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; ILO, 2022. Data on management positions according to ILO ISCO classification includes legislators and senior officials.

48. Lowi, 1964; Newman, 1994; Blackburn et al., 2002; Sneed, 2007; Alkadry and Tower, 2014; Bishu and Headley, 2020; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

49. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

50. Riccucci and Saidel, 1997; Alkadry and Tower, 2014; Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Jin, 2016.

51. MGI, 2015.

52. UNDP, 2020.

53. Yañez-Pagans, 2015.

54. Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015.

55. Jin, 2016.

56. Keiser et al., 2002; Childs and Withey, 2006; Atkeson and Carrillo, 2007; Andrews and Johnston, 2014; Andrews et al., 2014; Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Agyapong, 2018; Park and Liang, 2021; Ding et al., 2021; An and Lee, 2021; Park and Mwihambi, 2022.



women in society. For example, there is a correlation between a greater presence of women in public administrations and an increase in media coverage of issues affecting this group, which in turn influences public perception of social problems.⁵⁷ Likewise, in some cases, women's presence affects the way in which the government spends resources. For example, greater representation of women in the organization increases the social welfare budget.⁵⁸ Evidence shows that women have different perspectives than men do on social assistance and welfare programs that benefit minorities or the socially disadvantaged⁵⁹ because of their experiences as a historically discriminated group.

The shift from passive to active bureaucracies is essential to improve women's situation in leadership positions in the public sector. Moving from passive bureaucracies, which numerically and demographically reflect society, to active bureaucracies, which seek to outline public policies to improve these social groups' situation, is key to expanding women's presence in leadership positions in administrations.^{60,61} An active bureaucracy should improve the situation of not only the social groups they represent but also the public servants that comprise it. To achieve this, it is essential to design interventions within the state apparatus that increase the numerical presence of women and improve their distribution in the different hierarchical levels so that they have equal influence with men in decision-making processes within the organization.

The combination of representation and equality issues leads to the agenda of women's leadership in public bureaucracies. However, some works⁶² point out that the only way to achieve this is to examine state apparatuses from a gender perspective. The argument they propose is that organizations are not gender neutral.⁶³ This analysis perspective argues that a masculine culture has dominated state apparatuses.⁶⁴ Within state apparatuses, reproducing gender inequality manifests itself through the same mechanisms that operate in society. This refers to the roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. It does not refer to persons but to roles. For example,

57. Jones and Baumgartner, 2005; Park, 2013.

58. Park, 2013.

59. Dolan, 2002; Keiser et al., 2002; Riccucci and Meyers, 2004.

60. Wilkins and Keiser, 2006; Park and Mwiambi, 2022.

61. On the one hand, Wilkins and Keiser show that a greater presence of women leads to women's active representation in gendered policy areas such as child support. However, this link only exists when the distributional consequences of the policy directly benefit women as a class. Conversely, Park and Mwiambi show that gender representation at the top level of government plays a primary role in poverty reduction, but its effect on women's socioeconomic status—that is, women's education and unemployment rate—is limited.

62. Acker, 2000; Keiser et al., 2002.

63. Acker, 1990; Gaete and Álvarez, 2019; Canelo, 2020; Kennedy et al., 2020.

64. Guy, 1993; Stivers, 2010; Hutchinson, 2002, 2005.



men are providers, and women are caregivers.⁶⁵ Under this perspective, there is an unequal picture of experiences and opportunities for men and women in the workforce. For example, women cannot access leadership positions due to how the career path of public servants is organized within state apparatuses, such as the police. In addition, women have greater family and caregiving responsibilities than men do. Consequently, they do not manage to reconcile their work and personal lives as well as their male counterparts. Often, this means lower pay, part-time work and no promotion opportunities, among other situations.⁶⁶ To change this logic of inequality, it is essential to issue regulations and develop appropriate organizational policies.

65. UNDP, 2014; OECD, 2016; UNICEF, 2017.

66. Cáceres Rodríguez, 2013.



3 Women in Leadership Positions in the Region's Central Public Administrations

3.1 Methodology

This study combines a quantitative and qualitative analysis that analyzes the numerical presence of women in leadership positions in the public sector, and complements it with normative, organizational and public policy variables. The objective was to go beyond numbers and their distribution within the state apparatus to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the gender gap in senior government in LAC and to propose policy recommendations to help close this gap.

The study covers 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and analyzes 15 of them in depth. In this group, it was possible to cross-check the presence of women in hierarchical positions with regulatory, organizational and public policy variables. The sample of countries for which it was possible to obtain specific information on the presence of women in leadership positions represents 58 percent of the total number of countries in the region and 86 percent of the population.⁶⁷ Likewise, these are countries with varying degrees of development in the Civil Service Index the IDB prepared.⁶⁸ All this ensures that the panorama and trends observed are illustrative of the regional reality without losing sight of the nuances between countries.

67. The 15 countries total 562.9 million people, out of a total of 652.3 million for all of Latin America and the Caribbean. See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

68. According to the latest available measurements, the countries that make up the sample of this study have the following degree of development: Argentina 41 (2004), Brazil 65 (2013), Chile 67 (2015), Colombia 52 (2013), Costa Rica 54 (2012), Dominican Republic 41 (2020), Ecuador 41 (2015), El Salvador 34 (2012), Guatemala 24 (2012), Mexico 41 (2013), Panama 29 (2012), Paraguay 40 (2017), Peru 41 (2015), Uruguay 51 (2004). Trinidad and Tobago is the only country in the sample that does not measure this index.



FIGURE 2 COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

For the analysis of women's presence, disaggregated information was obtained for 12 government agencies. We used three selection criteria. First, their presence in the cabinets of all the selected countries in order to have comparable results. Second, they are agencies that encompass the largest number of civilian public servants and government decisions. Finally, they are representative of the sectoral variety of governments, which makes it possible to analyze the differences in women's access to leadership positions according to the area of public policy.



TABLE 1 MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES IN THE STUDY

• Planning	• Treasury and Finance
• Industry/Commerce/Production	• Public Works
• Education	• Health
• Labor	• Social Development
• National Defense	• Internal Security
• Foreign Affairs	• Environment

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

We collected information for the first four hierarchical levels for the 15 countries and their respective 12 ministries. These positions have the highest institutional responsibility—excluding elected positions—and therefore, the greatest effect on the quality of public management. In addition, men traditionally hold these positions. To determine exactly what these four levels of posts are in each country, the national regulations creating the organizational structures and the institutional organization charts and ministerial regulations were analyzed to verify the dependency relationships of those specific cases of posts with names that differed from the standard.

These first four hierarchical levels have five attributes that explain their selection in this study.

- 1. Strategic decision making.** These positions define the ministries' strategies and their main initiatives. In this sense, they have great institutional weight in selecting objectives and designing mechanisms to achieve them.
- 2. High-level political linkage.** These positions involve a high degree of political linkage, both with their peers and with popularly elected authorities, which is a basic input for structural and binding decisions.
- 3. Ability to issue regulations.** Beyond the legislation that the legislative branch approves, they are positions with high powers to define norms, that is, the rules of the game that govern public policies (programs, projects and activities).
- 4. Budget management.** The strategic direction and the instruments to achieve it are materialized through budget management. These four hierarchical levels, as the highest institu-



tional authorities, are responsible for budget execution, whose effectiveness and efficiency is required for implementing public policies.

5. Human resources management. The leadership of work teams is a key function for the quality of public management. The four highest levels of public organizations have a high incidence in the leadership of staffing, especially in the more technical segments and those at the intermediate level more directly involved in policy implementation.

Regarding the four hierarchical levels, this study differentiates the type of post according to its nature and the way it is accessed. The post by its nature can be political, which is generally accessed by criteria of trust, or it can be part of the civil service, which is accessed by criteria of merit according to the rules, although not necessarily in practice. Although these four levels are not equivalent in relation to the form of entry into the state apparatus, they are comparable in relation to the five functions mentioned.

To make the data comparable, the positions were standardized. The different names for these positions in different countries and even between agencies in the same country can generate comparability problems. This occurs, for example, when posts that are called by the same name but do not have the same hierarchical level in all countries are considered equivalent. Given the scarcity of data and the difficulties in standardizing posts among the region's public administrations, using the first four hierarchical levels provides sufficiently illustrative and, simultaneously, methodologically robust data.

The study standardized the positions using two criteria. First, it considers the hierarchy of the position and not the position's name. This implies that the benchmark for comparing positions is their level in the organizational structure, regardless of the name adopted in each country (*Table 2*). For example, all the first levels of a ministry or agency are considered equivalent, whether it is called "Minister," as is the case in most countries, or "Secretary," as is the case in Mexico. Second, the denomination of origin is respected. In other words, the official name in each country is maintained for the analysis. For example, it is possible to find Level 3 positions with different names such as "Undersecretary" (Argentina, Ecuador), "Deputy Secretary" (Brazil) and "Director General" (Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay), among others.



**TABLE 2 EXAMPLES OF JOB TITLES IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OF THE SAMPLE
(COMPLETE LIST IN ANNEX 2)**

LEVEL	1	2	3	4
ARGENTINA	Minister	Secretary	Undersecretary	National or General Director
BRAZIL	Minister	Special Secretary Executive Secretary	Special Assistant Secretary Deputy Executive Secretary Secretary	Assistant Secretary Undersecretary
COLOMBIA	Minister	Vice Minister	General Secretary	Technical Director
MEXICO	Secretary	Undersecretary	Unit Head	Head of Unit
PARAGUAY	Minister	General Coordinating Vice Minister	Secretary General National or General Director	Director
PERU	Minister	Vice Minister	General Manager	Director

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

To complement the analysis, we designed a survey to cover the regulatory, organizational and public policy dimensions. The database resulting from the survey includes 56 variables grouped into three dimensions:

- 1. Regulatory dimension:** analyzes the regulatory framework on gender quotas in the public administration and on gender components in public employment legislation.
- 2. Organizational dimension:** reviews organizational aspects, such as the existence of machineries for the advancement of women (MAWs) and internal guidelines regarding the promotion of women in management or decision-making positions.
- 3. Public policy dimension:** considers the existence of policies and best practices to promote including women in management positions, for example, gender equality plans (GEPs).

We collected information for constructing the database based on a combination of primary and secondary sources and consultations with experts to validate the information. Of the 26 countries that make up the study, data on the presence of women in leadership positions was obtained for 15 countries, in four of them from secondary sources. Regarding the surveys, information was obtained for all countries, 10 of them directly. The data were collected between December 2021 and March 2022 (details in *Annex 2*). The data analysis is at the country level and is based on a combination of direct responses from the countries, research from secondary sources and consultations with experts, especially regarding budget. Weighted averages, rather than simple averages, were used for the data analysis to avoid possible biases in the information.



3.2 Why do we need disaggregated information?

The data collected show that women's presence is still limited at the highest decision-making levels and is concentrated in specific sectors.

3.2.1 A panoramic view of the region

In the 15 countries analyzed, women occupy 41.5 percent of the leadership positions in the 12 selected agencies. Trinidad and Tobago stands out for the high presence of women in the four highest levels of public management. In addition, along with Honduras, it is one of the two countries, out of the 26 that are part of the study, whose head of state is a woman. Costa Rica is the other country where women occupy the majority of leadership positions (53.5 percent).

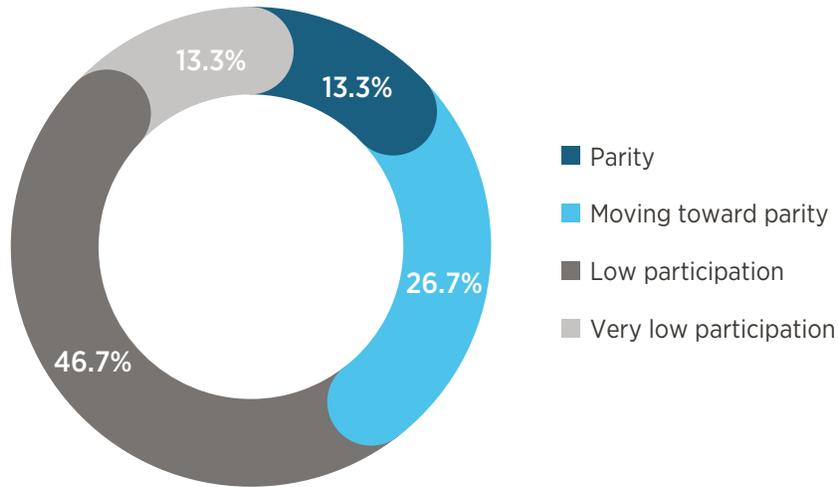
Countries were grouped into four categories according to the percentage of women in leadership positions (**Figure 3**). In the category of *parity participation* (greater than 50 percent) are Trinidad and Tobago and Costa Rica with women's participation at 56 percent. Four countries are *moving toward parity* (participation above the study average, 41.5 percent, but below 50 percent) with women's participation at 46 percent. Seven countries have *low participation* (below average, but above 30 percent⁶⁹). In this group, leadership positions women occupy represent 36.7 percent. Finally, two countries, representing 13 percent of the total number of countries, are in the *very low participation* category (less than 30 percent⁷⁰) with a participation of 19.8 percent.

69. We adopted 30 percent as the minimum limit because the literature review shows this as the consensus of the minimum target to be reached. In the case of the countries in the study, the only three countries with gender quotas set it at that value and something similar occurs in countries with quotas in the legislature.

70. Idem.

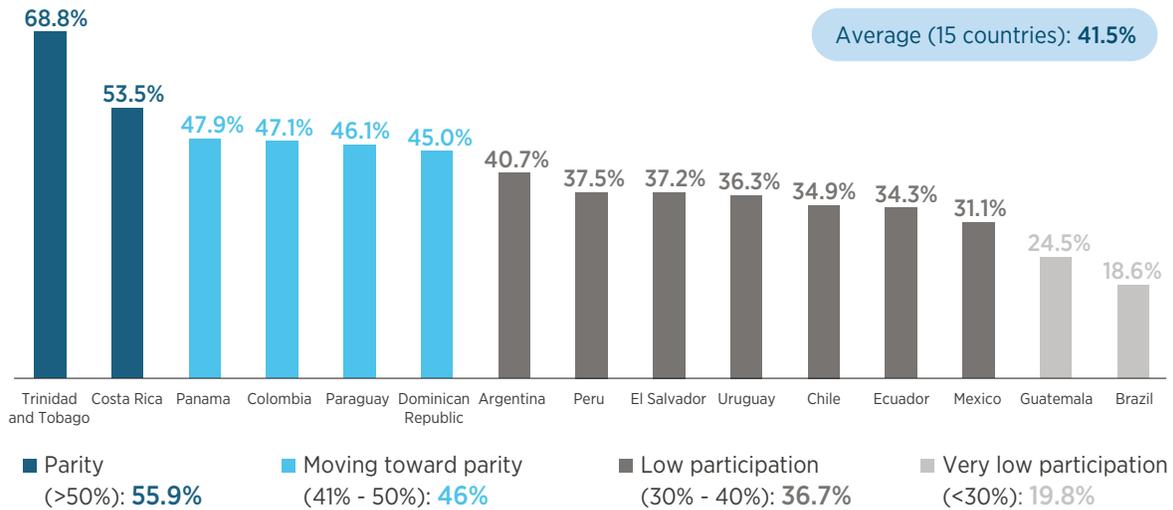


FIGURE 3 COUNTRIES BY WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP ROLES



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



3.2.2 Vertical segregation

Vertical segregation in the labor market occurs when men tend to occupy the highest hierarchical positions. In contrast, women tend to occupy and concentrate in lower-ranking positions within an organization.⁷¹ This type of segregation alludes to structural barriers in organizations that prevent women's access to high hierarchical positions, the metaphor of the glass ceiling.⁷² The importance of women's access to managerial and executive positions within the public administration is an increasingly studied topic.⁷³ Although evidence points to the effect of bureaucratic representation regarding gender and the evolution of women's presence in public administrations,⁷⁴ women have not yet managed to break the glass ceiling⁷⁵ and reach leadership positions. If men have much greater influence in political decision making, the passive representation of women does not result in an active representation that effectively influences the design of public policies. In addition to the structural barriers that impede women's access to leadership positions, there are other conditions that make it difficult for women to move up the hierarchical ladder. The metaphor of the *sticky floor* refers to the discriminatory employment pattern that keeps workers, mainly women, on the lower rungs of the labor ladder, with low mobility and invisible barriers to professional advancement.⁷⁶

Although the aggregate numbers seem encouraging for LAC, when analyzed in detail, vertical segregation persists in the central public administration. If we analyze the four highest hierarchical levels in each institution, we observe that women's presence decreases as the hierarchy of the position increases. Their representation goes from 44.2 percent at Level 4 to 23.6 percent at Level 1 (*Figure 5*). This confirms that, despite the numerical progress, the glass ceiling and the sticky floor remain in place for women in central public administrations.

71. Gaete and Álvarez, 2019; Canelo, 2020; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; Cáceres Rodríguez, 2013; Alkadry and Tower, 2014.

72. Gaete and Alvarez, 2019; Canelo, 2020; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

73. Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Connell, 2006b; Cáceres Rodríguez, 2013; Alkadry et al., 2019.

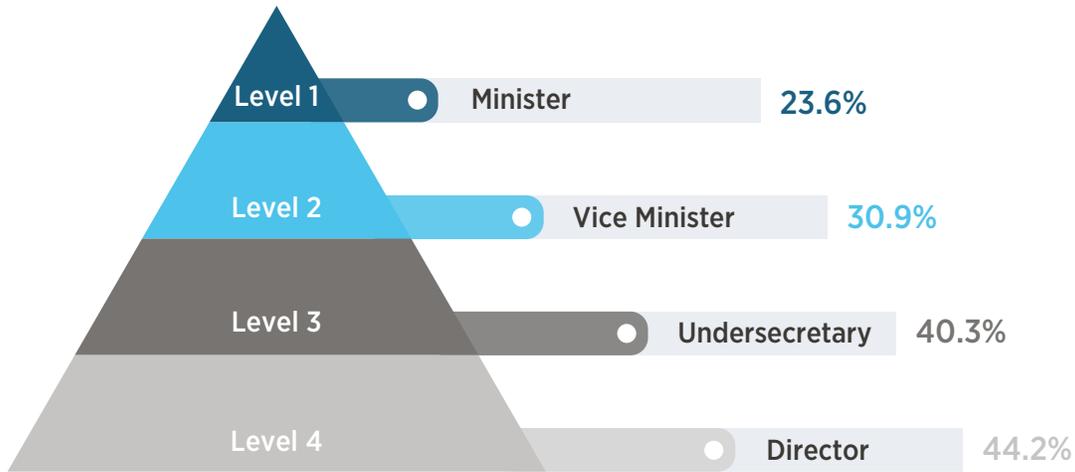
74. Riccucci and Saidel, 1997; Bowling and Beehr, 2006; Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Selden, 2006; Wilkins, 2007; Fernández et al., 2013; Park, 2013.

75. The glass ceiling is a metaphor that alludes to the structural barriers that exist within organizations (Alkadry and Tower, 2014; Cáceres Rodríguez, 2013; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; Gaete and Álvarez, 2019; Canelo, 2020). The concept is used to describe situations in which women are successful in their working careers up to a certain point, where there is a limit to continue to high levels of hierarchy and leadership. Breaking the glass ceiling implies overcoming those barriers that prevent women's access to leadership positions, which would be reflected in a greater presence of women in higher positions.

76. Berheide et al., 2013; Calsy and D'Agostino, 2021; Lasna Kabir, 2020.



FIGURE 5 **PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LAC, BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT POSITION**

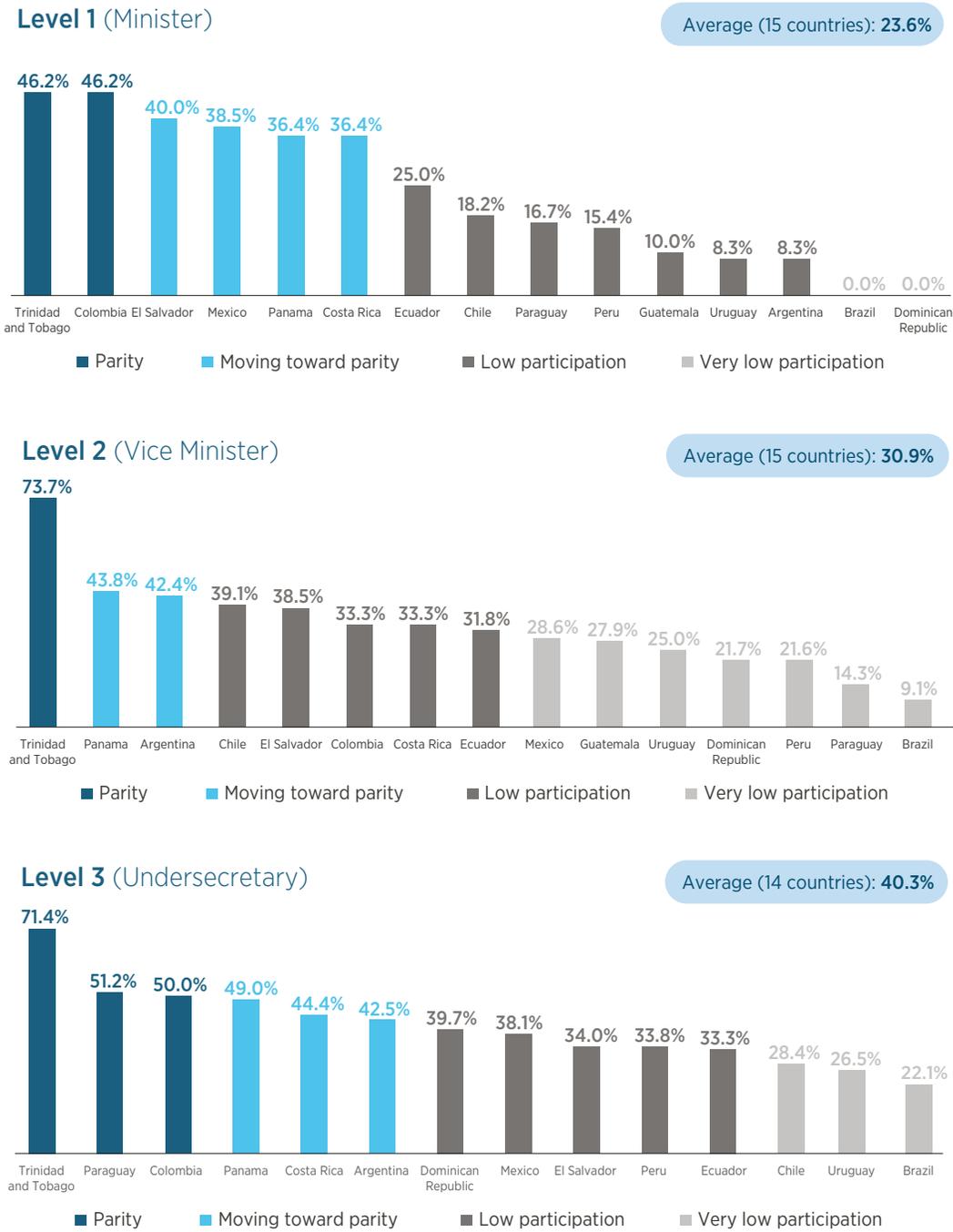


Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

The data disaggregated by level show how women's participation changes in the region's different countries. *Figure 6* shows the region's countries according to the percentage of women who are part of that level and groups them according to their level of participation. In Level 1, for example, nine countries (60 percent of the total number of countries in the study) have a participation of less than 30 percent, and on average, in these countries, women occupy only 13 percent of Level 1 positions. Although women's participation increases as the hierarchical level decreases, most countries (53 percent) have low or very low participation, less than 40 percent, even at Level 3.



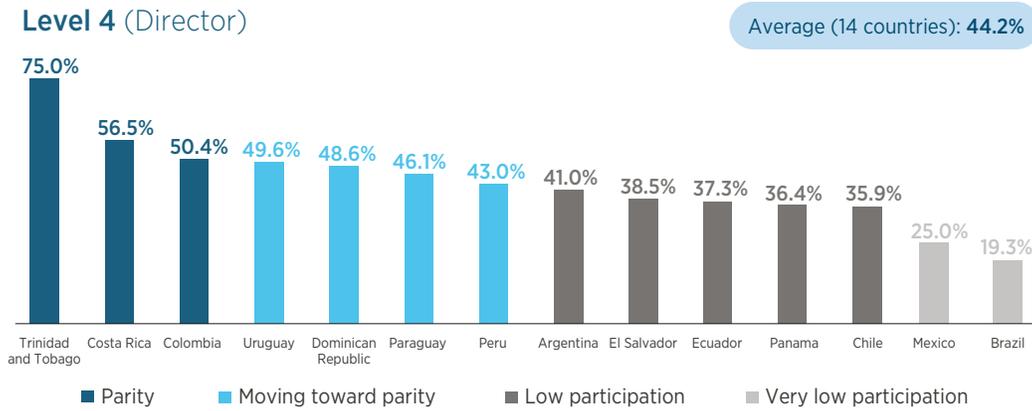
FIGURE 6 **PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP**



(continued on next page)



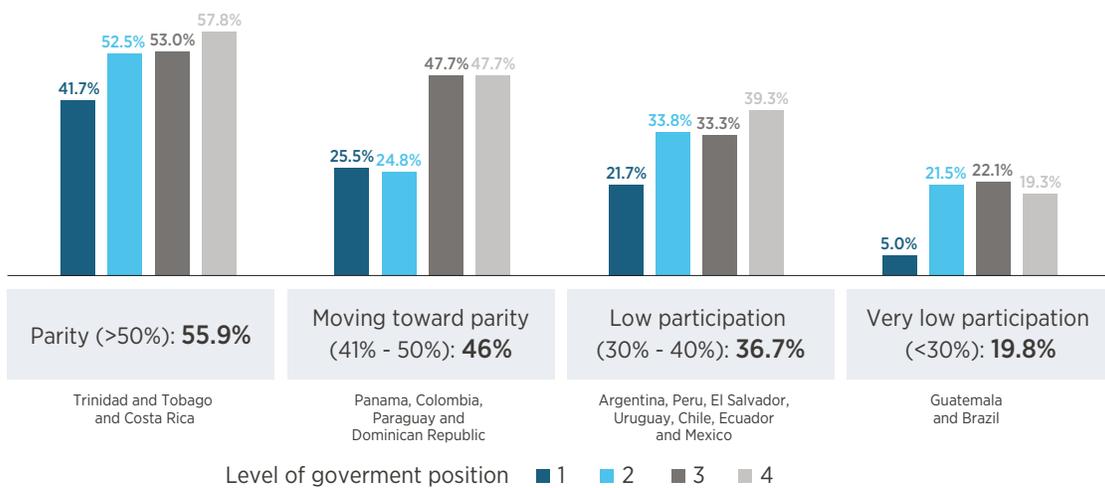
FIGURE 6 **PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP (Cont.)**



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

Even in countries where there is parity, vertical segregation exists. Although in countries with parity, Levels 2, 3 and 4 exceed 50 percent regarding women's presence, the higher the hierarchical level, the lower women's participation in decision making. Vertical segregation is even more marked for countries moving towards parity, low and very low participation (*Figure 7*).

FIGURE 7 **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION BY HIERARCHICAL LEVEL AND TYPE OF COUNTRY**



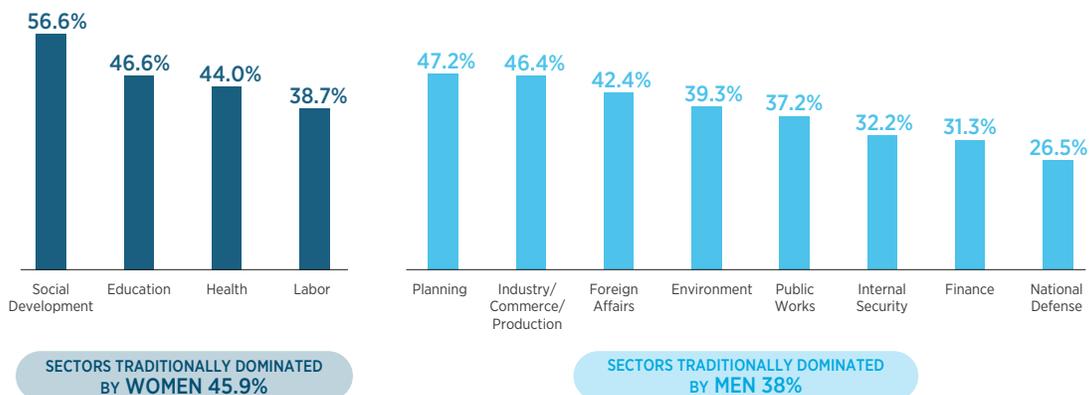
Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



3.2.3 Horizontal segregation

At the sectoral level, women have a great presence in areas associated with traditional gender stereotypes,⁷⁷ confirming horizontal segregation. Women tend to be overrepresented in agencies associated with social services, such as education or care, which are more associated with stereotypes of women's skills and interests. In contrast, they are underrepresented in sectors such as finance, defense or justice, which are traditionally male sectors.⁷⁸ The data from this study coincide with figures collected worldwide.⁷⁹ The highest number of women in leadership positions (45.9 percent) exists in the areas of social development, education, health and labor, where the role of traditional women is dominant. In agencies related to infrastructure, security, economy, planning or foreign affairs, women have a lower presence (38 percent).

FIGURE 8 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY SECTOR



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

This horizontal segregation is maintained even in countries where women's participation is equal. Although women hold 56 percent of leadership positions in this group, the reality is different when broken down by sector. In those sectors where women have traditionally dominated, participation reaches 62 percent, but drops to 45 percent in sectors associated with male leaders (*Figure 9*).

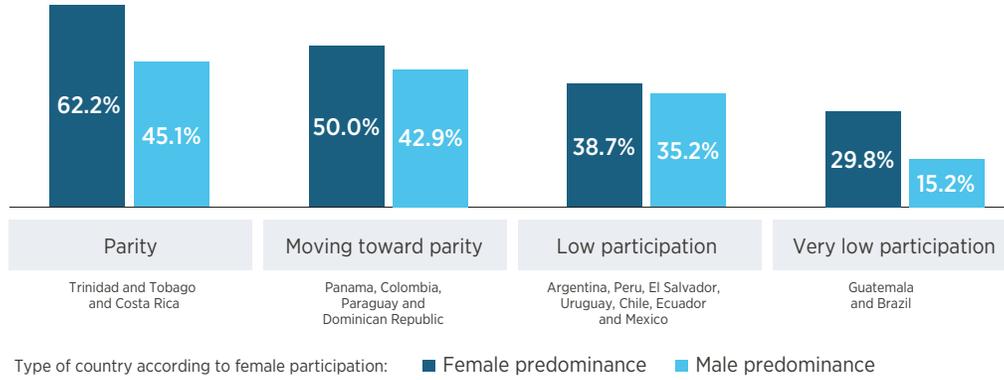
77. Sneed, 2007; Alkady and Tower, 2014; Bishu and Headley, 2020; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

78. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; Bishu and Headley, 2020.

79. Evidence from 66 countries shows that, on average, agencies that perform health, education, social affairs, employment, family, culture or sports functions have the highest proportion of women (43 percent) in leadership positions. In comparison, in agencies related to foreign and domestic affairs, defense and justice, women occupy only 34 percent of leadership positions. The study considers top leaders in 41 countries, top managers in eight countries and managers in five countries (UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021).



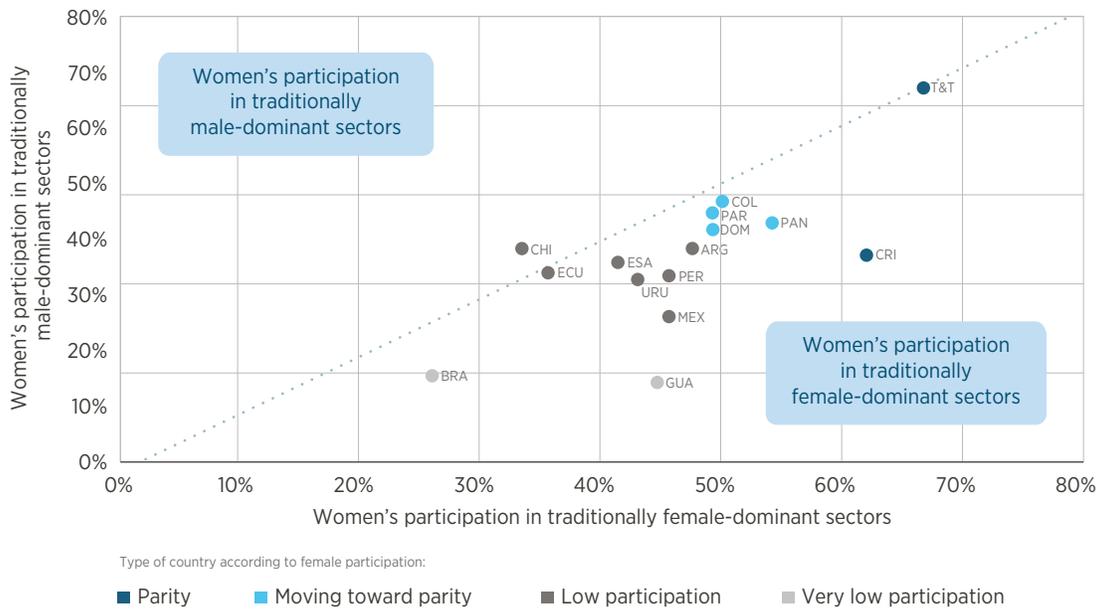
FIGURE 9 **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION BY SECTOR AND TYPE OF COUNTRY**



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

Horizontal segregation is maintained in almost all countries with the exception of Chile and Trinidad and Tobago. Chile is the only country in the region where female participation is higher in sectors where men traditionally lead (37.9 percent) compared to those where women traditionally lead (33.5 percent). In Trinidad and Tobago, women's participation is equal in both sectors. Interestingly, in both countries, Level 3 and Level 4 positions are part of the civil service. In Ecuador and Colombia, the gap in women's participation between traditionally male and female sectors is less than 5 percent. El Salvador and Paraguay closely follow them (*Figure 10*).

FIGURE 10 **PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN BY SECTOR AND BY COUNTRY**



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



3.2.4 Leadership positions in the public sector

Improving women’s representation in leadership positions in the region’s public sector requires political will; to institutionalize those changes requires designing appropriate interventions.

Most of the top hierarchical positions in the region are political staff positions that are usually freely appointed and removable. *Table 3* summarizes the situation in the 15 countries for which updated data were obtained. Only four countries in the region have a combination of political staff positions and positions that are part of the civil service, whose access is theoretically by merit, within the first four levels of government: Trinidad and Tobago (Levels 2 to 4), Chile (Levels 3 and 4), Dominican Republic and Uruguay (Level 4). Chile is a particular case. The country has a ministerial hierarchical line, whose officials are political staff, and a service line, whose officials are part of the civil service that the Senior Public Management leads, which is equivalent to Levels 3 and 4 in other countries.

TABLE 3 NATURE OF POSITION AND FORM OF ENTRY INTO THE PUBLIC SECTOR BY COUNTRY

COUNTRY	TYPE OF POSITION				TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT			
	LEVEL				LEVEL			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
ARGENTINA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
BRAZIL	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CHILE	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
COLOMBIA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
COSTA RICA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
ECUADOR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
EL SALVADOR	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
GUATEMALA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
HONDURAS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
PANAMA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
PARAGUAY	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
PERU	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
URUGUAY	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

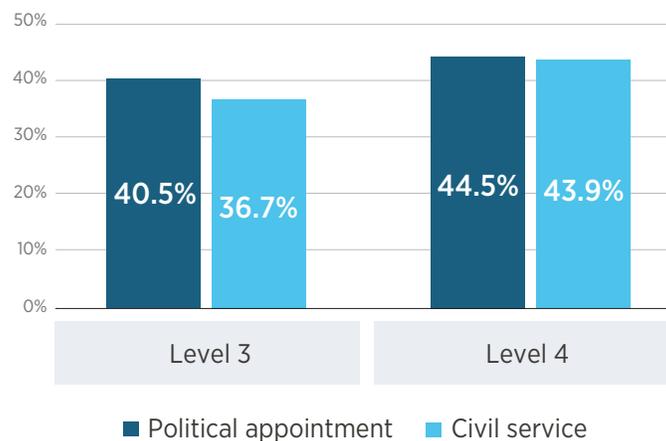
■ Political appointment ■ Civil service ■ Free appointment and removal ■ Merit

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



The available information does not make possible differentiating with certainty whether the nature of the post has any effect on women's presence in leadership positions. Given the small number of countries with civil service positions among the four higher hierarchical levels, it is not possible to analyze in detail whether differences exist in the presence of women between political and civil service positions. The available data show a greater presence of women for Levels 3 and 4 in political staff compared to those in the civil service (*Figure 11*), but it is necessary to determine whether this difference is significant. Regarding the presence of women by agency (*Figure 11*), it is interesting that Chile and Trinidad and Tobago, the only countries where women have equal or greater participation in areas where the traditional dominance is male, are also countries with civil service positions for Levels 3 and 4.

FIGURE 11 PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN LEVELS 3 AND 4

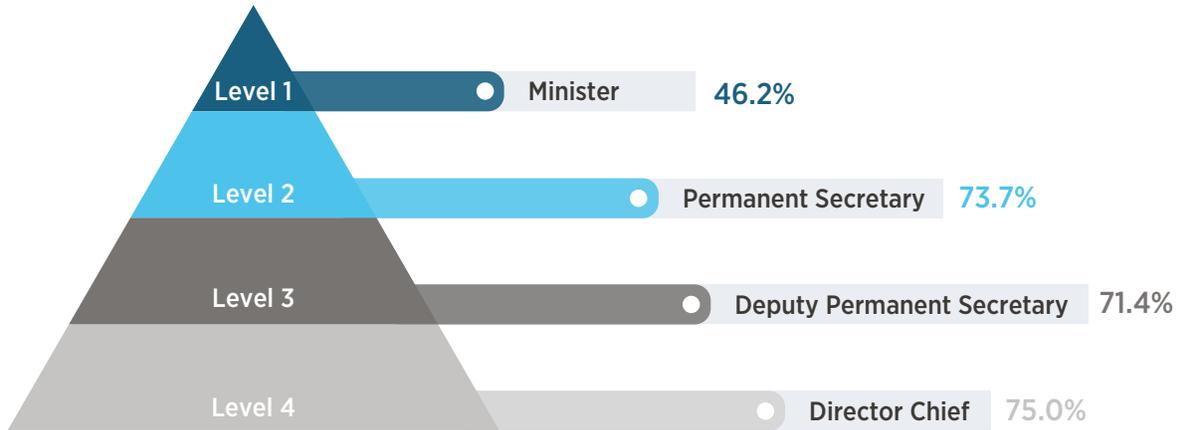


Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

Trinidad and Tobago is an interesting case to analyze in depth. The Caribbean country stands out for women's high participation in leadership positions (68.8 percent). Interestingly, at Levels 2 to 4, women occupy more than 70 percent of the positions. These are civil service positions accessed through competition. Participation drops to 46.2 percent at Level 1 for the highest authority of the agencies (*Figure 12*). In addition, Trinidad and Tobago does not show horizontal segregation because women have equal participation in all sectors (*Figure 13*). Although it cannot be assured that the high participation is a product of the nature of the position, it is certainly a case to review in more detail.

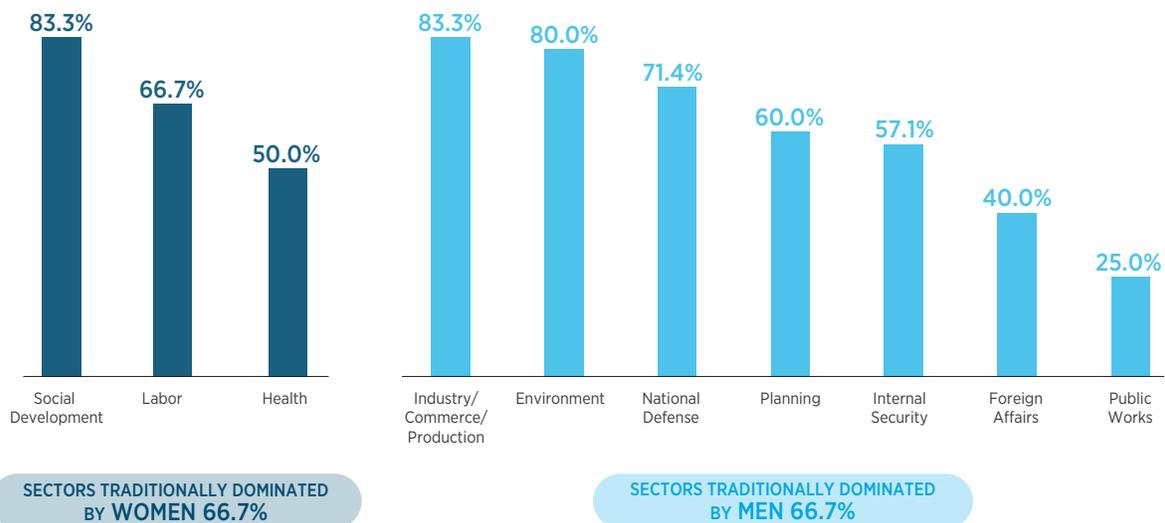


FIGURE 12 PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, BY HIERARCHICAL LEVEL



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

FIGURE 13 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BY SECTOR



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

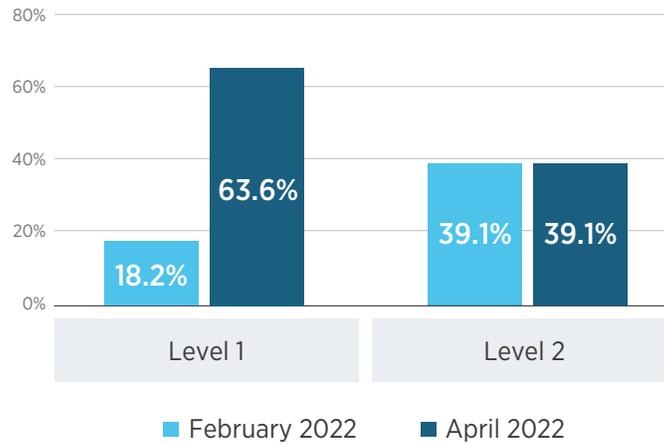


Given the nature of the positions and the form of appointment—discretionary—of high-level positions in the public sector, it would seem that the political will for change would be sufficient. In most countries of the region, leadership positions in the public sector are those of trust whose appointment is a political decision. This reality has two implications. First, it should be considered when designing policies to reduce barriers to women’s access to leadership positions, for example, in the form of recruitment for these positions. Second, it shows that, without changing any regulations, it would be possible to increase women’s presence in management positions in the public sector because most countries have standard policies for equal access. Their effective implementation would require the political will to comply with them. The example of Chile confirms this hypothesis: The recent government transition raised women’s participation in Level 1 from 18 percent to 64 percent. Women’s participation rose at the aggregate level but also for areas where men traditionally lead, from 25 percent to 40 percent. (*Figure 14*). Conversely, the volatility of political positions is also a reminder that gains in women’s presence in leadership positions are not assured. In contrast to the case of Chile, the examples of Peru and Brazil are where the opposite happened, with the change of government, the presence of women in Level 1, Ministers, decreased (*Figure 15*).

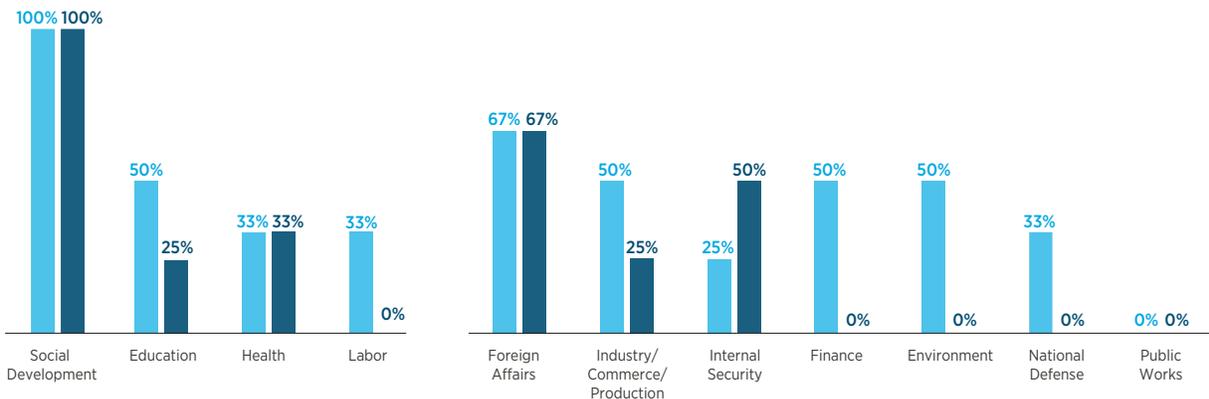


FIGURE 14 THE CHILEAN CASE

**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES BY LEVEL IN CHILE
(FEBRUARY AND APRIL 2022)**



**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES BY SECTOR IN CHILE
(FEBRUARY AND APRIL 2022)**



SECTORS TRADITIONALLY DOMINATED BY WOMEN
Feb-2022 42.9% / Apr-2022 57.1%

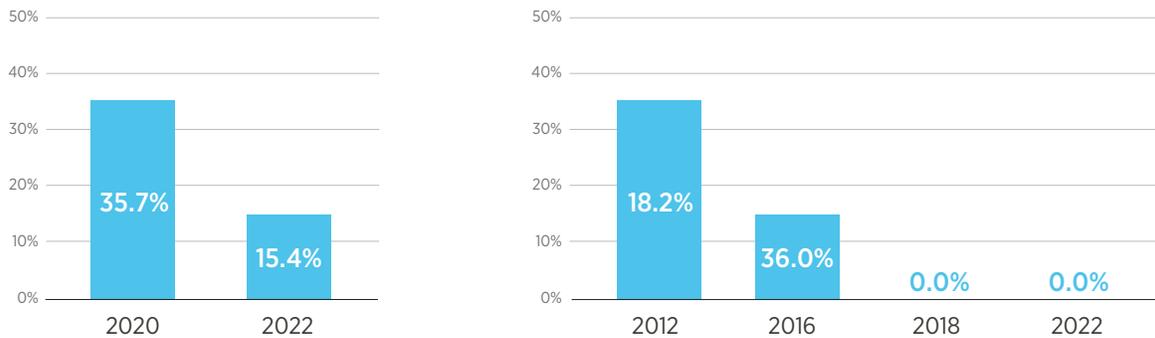
SECTORS TRADITIONALLY DOMINATED BY MEN
Feb-2022 25% / Apr-2022 40%

■ February 2022 ■ April 2022

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



FIGURE 15 **PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE MINISTERS IN PERU AND BRAZIL**



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

Although political will is necessary, it is not sufficient to institutionalize and sustain women's presence in leadership positions over the long term. Its demonstrative effect should be formalized through different instruments, several of which are detailed in *Section 4.2*. Gender inequality in public administrations is often diluted behind the idea of bureaucratic neutrality.

The rules of civil service careers are assumed to be designed on the basis of a meritocratic component and that, when they fail, it is due to political meddling. However, there is evidence of gender discrimination, particularly in women's access to managerial and executive positions. For example, female health care workers are concentrated in lower status occupations, such as nurses and midwives, while men still outnumber women among physicians and medical specialists.⁸⁰ These areas are at the sides of the pyramid and do not usually lead to the top positions of CEOs and managers. Thus, women face *glass walls*, invisible barriers or structures that prevent women from moving laterally into management positions.⁸¹ Bureaucratic organizations are not only not neutral⁸² but also play a key role in reproducing gender inequalities. Bureaucracies, for example, reinforce rather than modify the sexual division of labor.⁸³

The approval and mandate for executing standard policies on equal access to public positions is not enough if the capacities of public agencies and the environmental conditions necessary to implement them are not present. As several studies on state capacities to implement public policies have explained and evidenced, many of them, even if they contain manda-

80. World Bank, 2021.

81. ILO, 2016; Nasser, 2018; McCue and Roman, 2017.

82. Acker, 1990; Stivers, 2010.

83. Lerner, 1968; Ferguson, 2013.



tory provisions, fail to materialize in reality due to obstacles and limitations in state capacities that prevent their implementation (more in *Section 4.3*). The supply of female candidates interested in accepting an appointment or applying for high-level positions may be restricted by factors that the mere existence of equality policies cannot resolve. Thus, a greater number of women might be interested in such positions if services were available to facilitate the combination of their work and family responsibilities, for example. The supply of female candidates would also increase if training programs in managerial functions were implemented to close the gap in experience and knowledge that exists regarding male candidates (*Section 4.2*).

The ultimate goal is to move from passive to active bureaucracies. *Section 2.2* emphasized the importance of moving from passive bureaucracies, achieving parity in the public sector, to active bureaucracies, which influence public policies that affect women's situation, including their presence in leadership positions in public administrations.⁸⁴ To achieve this, interventions must be designed within the state apparatus to create the necessary conditions and capacities to implement equal access policies, and advantage should be taken of women's presence in positions where they can influence the design of such policies. In this way, a virtuous circle is generated in which policies that positively affect women are amplified in the search for substantive equality.

84. Wilkins and Keiser, 2006; Park and Mwihambi, 2022.



3.3 Regulations, organizational elements and public policies in the region

Most countries have regulations, organizations and public policies to mainstream gender policies. In theory, the region has complied, but in practice, having these instruments alone does not guarantee that the objective for which they were created will be achieved.



Most countries have some type of regulation related to gender equality. The type of regulation differs between countries, in some cases it is specific, such as gender quotas, and in others it is of a general nature, such as equality laws (*Table 4*). Although not all of these regulatory considerations directly influence the increase of women's presence in decision-making positions, they do indicate the institutionalization of the gender perspective in each country.



TABLE 4 REGULATIONS RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY BY COUNTRY

Country	Parity in the constitution	Gender quotas in public administration	Measures in public employment regulations	Laws or decrees on gender equality
ARGENTINA				✓
BAHAMAS				
BARBADOS				
BELIZE				
BOLIVIA	✓			
BRAZIL				
CHILE			✓	✓
COLOMBIA		✓		
COSTA RICA			✓	✓
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC			✓	
ECUADOR	✓		✓	
EL SALVADOR				✓
GUATEMALA				
GUYANA				
HAITI		✓		
HONDURAS				✓
JAMAICA				
MEXICO	✓		✓	✓
NICARAGUA				✓
PANAMA		✓	✓	✓
PARAGUAY			✓	
PERU				✓
SURINAME				
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO				✓
URUGUAY				✓
VENEZUELA				✓

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico are the only countries in the region that have gender parity for public administration at the constitutional level. Although the constitution is a country's highest legal body, its mandate is not accompanied by mechanisms that translate these provisions into concrete actions or measures to verify compliance. In other words, in practice, it is not possible to identify if there is any effect. Women's participation in leadership positions in public administration in both Ecuador (34.3 percent) and Mexico (31.1 percent) is below the regional average and far from the aspired 50 percent.

More concrete measures, such as gender quotas, have been effective in the legislative function, but in the executive branch, only Haiti, Panama and Colombia have them in force in the region. During the 1990s, different Latin American governments established gender quotas in the legislative branch and obtained some positive results.⁸⁵ These measures were not adopted with the same enthusiasm in the executive branch, often even within the same country. As of 2022, 19 countries in the region have gender quotas for the legislative branch that vary between 30 percent and 50 percent⁸⁶ (*Annex 3*). Although, only three countries have quotas for the executive branch. Through a constitutional amendment in 2012, Haiti sets a minimum participation of women for all levels of 30 percent; Panama with Law No. 4 on Equal Opportunities for Women of 1999 mandates a participation of at least 30 percent of women as ministers, vice ministers, and directors; and Colombia with its Quota Law of 2000 imposes a minimum participation of 30 percent for all administrative positions. The latest available data for Haiti showed women's participation at 36 percent for managerial positions⁸⁷ and 33.3 percent at ministerial level.⁸⁸ Panama and Colombia lead the group of countries on the road to parity participation, with 47.9 percent and 47.1 percent, respectively. All three countries respect the established quotas. Of the countries analyzed, Colombia, unlike Panama, shows no horizontal or vertical segregation (*Box 1*). Brazil implemented quotas for women, people of African descent and people with disabilities⁸⁹ in 2002. However, through Decree No. 10,087, it repealed the gender quota in 2019.

In seven countries, gender measures in public employment regulations exist, with varying degrees of inclusion. The Chilean regulation⁹⁰ establishes equal representation between men and women in leadership positions and managerial responsibility; it also provides guidelines

85. Rodríguez Gustá, 2008; Freidenberg, 2020; Schwindt-Bayer and Senk, 2020.

86. Chudnovsky et al., forthcoming.

87. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021. (Data as of 2017.)

88. Gender Equality Observatory, 2022.

89. UNDP, 2019.

90. Code of good labor practices on nondiscrimination for the central state administration (2006).

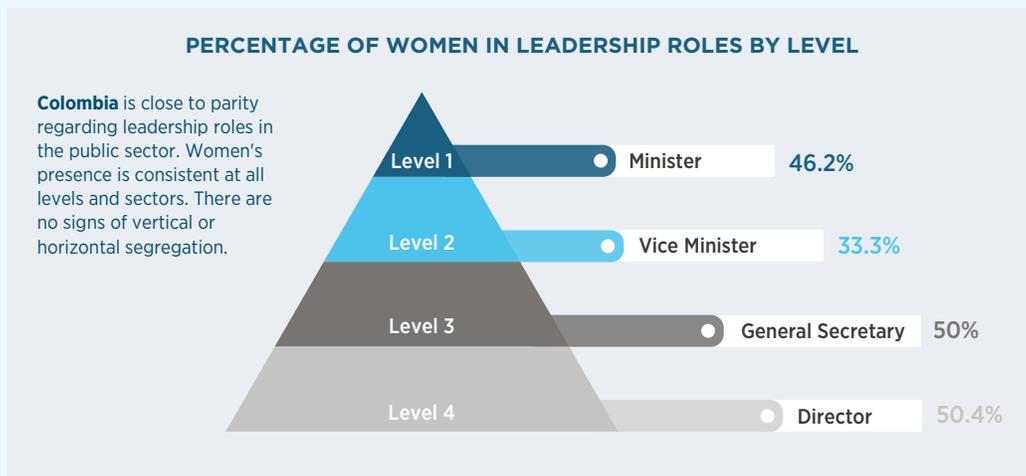


that seek to reconcile work responsibilities with family obligations. Panama, with Law No. 56 of 2017, established a minimum participation of women at 30 percent in state boards of directors. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Mexico have gender equality as an aspirational goal and as a principle in selection processes, but do not ground it in more concrete regulations. Paraguay is even less explicit and speaks of promoting women's access to decision-making positions in the civil service.



BOX 1 THE COLOMBIAN CASE

Although Colombia has never had a woman in the presidential chair, women have made their way into the different portfolios of the executive branch, including the recent election of the country's first female vice president, who is Afro-Colombian. In 2000, after eight years of discussion, Colombia adopted an affirmative action measure, the Quota Law,⁹¹ which has been key to increasing women's participation in the upper echelons of public administration. The Colombian case stands out because the law not only establishes quotas but also sets penalties for non-compliance, the only country in the region to do so. The numbers would seem to indicate that it is working. This is not only because the country is at the top of the region regarding women's presence in leadership positions (47 percent), which is very close to parity. It also shows a similar distribution in the four levels of the hierarchy, and in the different sectors, breaking with gender stereotypes. These are signs that horizontal and vertical segregation is being broken. The effect of gender quotas needs to be studied in more detail, but its results are undoubtedly noteworthy.



PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES BY SECTOR



- Social development
- Education
- Health
- Labor

Female predominance



- Production
- Planning
- Environment
- Foreign affairs
- Public works
- Internal security
- Finance
- Defense

Male predominance

91. The Quota Law establishes that women must hold at least 30 percent of public entities' management positions to guarantee their participation in the spaces where public policy decisions are made, goods are provided and public services are rendered.



Twelve countries have specific laws or decrees on gender equality, but their scope of action is very general. They include issues such as gender equality in public administration, equal opportunities and treatment, improving working conditions for women and avoiding gender discrimination.



A key initiative for mainstreaming gender policies is to create gender units within the state apparatus. National machineries for the advancement of women (MAWs) are created to direct and coordinate gender equality policies. According to the literature, for MAWs to function effectively, they must be at the highest possible level in government; have sufficient human and financial resources; have mechanisms for planning, implementing and monitoring their actions; and have the opportunity to influence the development of all government policies.⁹²

In the region, MAWs have been created since the 1980s with varying degrees of hierarchy and powers. In LAC, the MAWs have undergone changes over time regarding name, powers, objectives and hierarchical level. To date, their level of institutionalization and hierarchy is very diverse. The first MAW was created in Jamaica in 1975 and the most recent is that of Argentina in 2019 (*Box 2*). Most MAWs focus on designing and implementing public policies to promote gender equality, equal opportunities and eradicate gender-based violence. However, some MAWs also include promoting the rights of children, youth and the elderly; women's empowerment; and accountability and transparency (*Annex 4*).

92. UN Women, 2021b; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.



BOX 2 EVOLUTION OF ARGENTINA'S MAW

In Argentina, in 1992, a presidential decree created the National Women's Council (NWC). The NWC had a convulsive trajectory and did not have instruments for gender mainstreaming in public administration. As a result, in 2002, the NWC lost hierarchy and moved to the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies of the Ministry of Social Development.⁹³ Then, in 2017, the National Women's Institute (INAM) (Decree 698/17 2017) replaced the NWC. The INAM had a higher hierarchy than its predecessor did and it had autonomy. Among the policies it promoted, the update of the national plan on violence against women and the strategic litigation and monitoring of cases for protecting women victims of violence were highlighted.⁹⁴ In 2019, INAM was abolished to make way for the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity. With this change, the Argentine MAW reached the highest hierarchy. Now, its holder has full participation in the cabinet and therefore, its level of influence can be higher.⁹⁵

All the countries analyzed have a MAW, although not always with the desired budget and influence. Ten countries have MAWs with a high hierarchical level, with full participation in the cabinet (ministries and offices attached to the presidency). Barbados, Colombia and Guatemala have MAWs with medium hierarchical level because they have access to the social or expanded cabinet. In the remaining 13 countries, MAWs do not have access to the cabinet and therefore have a low hierarchical level (*Figure 16*). For the 16 countries for which information could be obtained, the MAW budget represents on average 0.05 percent of the general state budget (PGE). Contrary to the theoretical expectation that the higher the hierarchical level of the MAW, the larger the budget, and similar to what has been found in other studies,⁹⁶ the available data do not show a clear relationship between the hierarchical level of the MAW and the budget it receives. Both variables affect the administrative capacities⁹⁷ and the degree of effectiveness of MAWs in mainstreaming the gender perspective in the public sector.

93. Rodríguez Gustá et al., 2017.

94. Rodríguez Gustá, 2021.

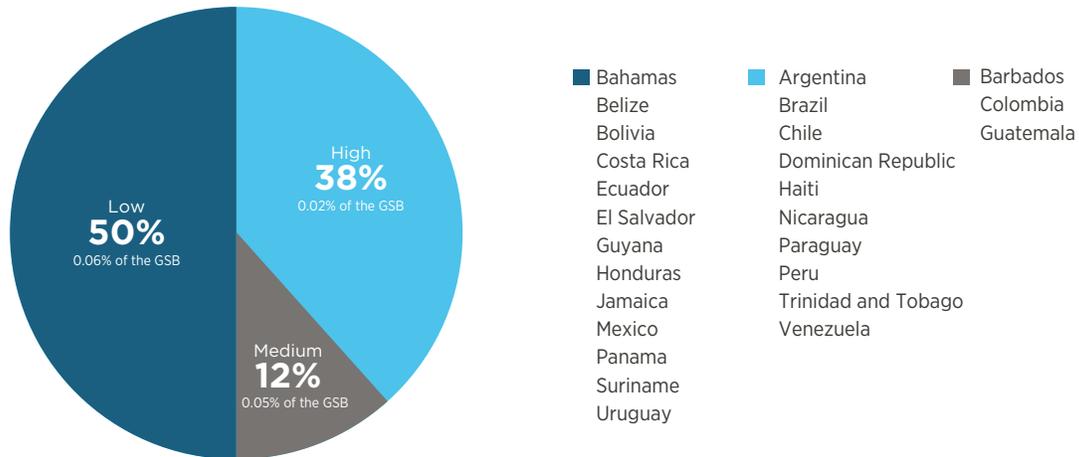
95. UN Women, 2021b; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

96. Evidence from subnational MAWs in Mexico shows that an agency being higher in the hierarchy does not imply a higher budget. In fact, budget allocation is counterintuitive: There are decentralized agencies of the Executive (low hierarchical level) with larger budgets (as in the state of Quintana Roo) compared to agencies at the level of Ministries (the highest level) (in Guerrero and Michoacán) (Ríos Cázares, 2017).

97. This refers to the ability of the state to order itself, organize itself, generate resources and take and prevent actions (Calamari, 2012).



FIGURE 16 **HIERARCHICAL LEVEL OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**



Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.

Note: GSB refers to general state budget.

Given that gender mainstreaming is a mandate for the entire state apparatus, it is key that coordination mechanisms are in place; however, only a quarter of the countries have them.

Gender mainstreaming mandates seek to infuse normative principles into the entire public apparatus through deliberate strategies. This type of mechanism facilitates institutionalizing the gender perspective because it involves various actors and sectors in implementing policies and programs. Furthermore, given that the discrimination women face in accessing leadership positions is a multi-causal problem, it is essential that the policies designed and implemented to solve it have a multi-sectoral approach to address it from different areas of the state. However, only 27 percent of the countries analyzed have formal mechanisms of this type: Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Panama and Uruguay.



Another key element for gender mainstreaming is public gender policies within the state apparatus. The gender equality plans (GEPs) have different objectives in each country (see *Annex 5*). The three most common objectives in the region are to promote equal opportunities, labor integration and strengthening women’s autonomy. Beyond these plans’ political weight or hierarchy, their elaboration expresses the state’s commitment to gender equality and they form an axis around which other public policies should operate. By definition, the plans are linked to the gender institutional framework (MAW) in each country and are not only an important expression of the work these mechanisms carry out but also an instrument for achieving greater legitimacy and institutionalization. Of the 26 countries analyzed, with the exception of Guyana, all have a gender equality plan (GEP). It is worth noting that the GEPs of Brazil and Venezuela ended in 2015 and 2019, respectively; as of the close of this study, no update had been found. Ecuador’s ended in 2021 and the 2022–2025 version is in preparation. Despite being a widely used type of policy, there are major institutionalization challenges. One of the main obstacles has been the difficulty of establishing expenditure classifiers from a gender perspective, which would make it possible to make budget items for gender equality visible at the level of programs or budgets linked to planning. Likewise, the amount of resources allocated for equal opportunities has been so marginal in the region that it does not allow for the success of policies such as the GEPs.⁹⁸

98. ECLAC, 2019.



The normative basis of the GEPs provides information on the progress made in the institutionalization of gender equality in each country. In Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay, an Executive Decree established the GEP. Although they are of limited duration, they have the advantage of being endorsed by the head of the executive and, on occasion, by their ministers (Bolivia and Uruguay). In Chile and the Dominican Republic, the GEP was developed within the framework of the law governing the MAW. Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago created their GEPs in accordance with the provisions of their National Development Plan or the equivalent. In Guatemala, the equality program is based on a governmental agreement between all the ministers and the Secretary General of the Republic, and in Venezuela, it is a management tool of the Ministry of Popular Power for Women and Gender Equality (*Annex 6*). It is important to mention that the definition of a GEP by decree does not guarantee, per se, the success of its implementation. The analysis of these plans' normative basis is relevant because it shows that the region has managed to install a management logic that allows maintaining this technical and political tool over the years, which facilitates the accumulation of lessons learned. Regardless of their normative basis, the GEPs provide a framework that guarantees continuity and sustainability.⁹⁹

Seven countries have policies that are articulated around the GEPs specifically to promote the inclusion of women in management positions in the public sector. Except in the case of Argentina, most of these documents make no reference to the problems of horizontal and vertical segregation. Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Chile and Peru seek to promote women's participation in decision-making processes and, in some cases, Brazil and Colombia in politics. In contrast, Uruguay established gender parity for all branches of government by 2020.

99. ECLAC, 2019.



4 From Formality to Results

Latin America and the Caribbean require a more ambitious gender agenda in the public sector, moving from compliance with formality to harnessing the talents of women in the region.

4.1 A more ambitious gender agenda in the public sector

If equality factors have not been enough to generate the urgency to increase women's participation in public administration, the broad benefits generated by their presence in leadership positions should be. Latin America's GDP may increase by as much as 34 percent by 2025 if the gender gap can decrease in the labor market.¹⁰⁰ This is an additional \$2.6 trillion for the benefit of citizens. In addition, as we emphasize throughout the document, there is evidence of a positive impact on the performance of public organizations,¹⁰¹ decreased levels of corruption¹⁰² and increased social spending on education, health and environmental protection¹⁰³ thanks to the presence of women in public policy.

4.1.1 Why not start at home?

The public sector could be the benchmark in each country for what it means to close the gender gap. It requires political will and prioritization of concrete actions that are measurable and achievable over time. It is time to measure progress on gender issues based on results, not on the mere adoption of norms, standards and policies that in practice do not change anything.

100. Increasing the GDP by reducing the gender gap should be achieved for three reasons. First, women do not participate in the labor force as much as men; increasing the participation of women in the labor force accounts for 54 percent of potential incremental GDP. Second, women work fewer hours than men do (in the labor force) because many have part-time jobs; this could be partly due to their choice and partly due to the difficulty of working full time given family and household responsibilities. Third, women are disproportionately represented in lower productivity sectors and underrepresented in higher productivity sectors such as business services (MGI, 2015).

101. Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Park and Liang, 2021.

102. Jin, 2016.

103. Yañez-Pagans, 2015.



Women's access to leadership positions in the public sector should not be reduced to achieving parity, but rather to having a real influence in public policy decision making. This implies not only a numerical presence but also the elimination of the vertical and horizontal segregation that is currently evident in the region. In addition, it is necessary to promote the active participation of women and to take advantage of the positive effect they have generated in public organizations¹⁰⁴ and the economy.¹⁰⁵ With the effective presence of women in the public sector, a demonstrative effect can be generated in other sectors of the economy.

For affirmative measures established in norms and laws to have an effect, they must be concrete and measurable. Affirmative action policies such as gender quotas seek the numerical presence of women and, consequently, are linked to passive representation and, therefore, to formal equality. To be effective, these policies require more than mere statements. For example, one of the characteristics of the gender quota regulations in Colombia is that they translate the intention of gender parity into quantifiable goals per year and even establish sanctions for non-compliance. The generic recognition of *parity in everything*, even at the constitutional level as in the case of Mexico, Ecuador and Bolivia, is a first step, but it does not produce concrete change if it is not translated into specific actions that have an impact on the dynamics of access, permanence and mobility in public employment.

In order to achieve substantive equality, policies must mainstream the gender perspective in all areas of state activity. Because gender mainstreaming is a vague idea, it must be operationalized through concrete strategies, MAWs and GEPs, taking into account that the state organization is not gender-neutral. State bureaucracies reproduce gender roles and stereotypes that result in discrimination against women. In particular, this can be seen in the difficulty women have accessing leadership positions and their concentrated presence in certain sectors.

Having organizations focused on gender equality (MAWs) is not enough. It is necessary to provide these organizations with the necessary capabilities and resources to fulfill their mandate. Many countries have a MAW, but with varying degrees of hierarchy. However, they do not always have the necessary capabilities to influence gender policy. The next step is to assess whether they meet their objectives. The literature indicates that even when there is an expression of political will at the highest level of government in favor of gender equality, the successful implementation of gender policies depends on the agencies' capacity and not exclusively on their hierarchy.

104. Opstrup and Villadsen, 2015; Park and Liang, 2021.

105. MGI, 2015.



Gender equality plans in the region, beyond expressing the state’s commitment to gender equality, should be instruments that guide the effective implementation of measures. Although most countries have adopted GEPs, there are major challenges to their institutionalization. There are difficulties in prioritizing strategies and measures and insufficient commitments by the various state actors to assume their institutional responsibilities in gender issues.

The creation of gender mainstreaming instruments must be accompanied by the strengthening of state capability and the creation of conditions that facilitate their effective implementation. For MAWs and GEPs to be effective and have an impact on the addition of women to public sector leadership positions, these public management instruments must also focus on building state capabilities and the necessary conditions in public agencies so that women can compete and attain public leadership positions under equal conditions. This implies competition and neutral selection for such positions, but also, and with great relevance, the creation of working conditions that remove the obstacles preventing the greater participation of women—for example, programs, services and regulations focused on improving work-life balance and co-responsibility, or tools that strengthen their skills and capacities in leadership positions.

It is key to foster the presence of women’s leadership, promoting the value of their adoption, and not merely in symbolic roles. While the numerical presence of women in leadership positions matters, this should not be the end in itself. A gender agenda must be considered that modifies the circumstances preventing women from fully exercising their rights and having access to development opportunities through structural, legal or public policy measures.

Just as the existence of gender leadership is not limited to the presence of women, neither is it reduced to the existence of affirmative action such as gender quotas. Although Article 4 of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) promotes the adoption by the state parties of temporary special measures (affirmative action), it states that these measures will cease when the objectives of substantive equality have been achieved. The region should aspire to the point when affirmative action is not required and when studies such as this are not necessary because the presence of women in leadership positions is normalized. To this end, action must be taken now.



4.2 Proposals to reduce gender gaps

There is consensus in the literature on intervention measures to reduce gender gaps. There are agreements on the capacities, characteristics and conditions that should be added to public employment to increase the presence of women in leadership positions and, in turn, ensure that this numerical increase translates into substantive changes for all women within public administration.¹⁰⁶ The studies highlight four areas of intervention, several of which we have already analyzed in this analysis.

1. Affirmative action policies are temporary interventions that seek to guarantee access to resources or rights for different vulnerable groups in order to counteract situations of discrimination.¹⁰⁷ There are direct actions, such as gender quotas implemented in LAC in elective decision-making positions,¹⁰⁸ but few in public administrations.¹⁰⁹ Only Colombia, Haiti and Panama have adopted them (*Section 3.3*). Indirect measures such as the reorganization of job positions to facilitate the promotion of women to positions of greater responsibility,¹¹⁰ promote transformations in the institutional structure so that, eventually, there is greater representation of women in organizational hierarchies.¹¹¹

2. The first set of institutional capabilities to be created are organizational arrangement mechanisms needed to mainstream gender policies, such as machineries for the advancement of women (MAWs) and gender equality plans (GEPs). MAWs operate from within the state apparatus to promote gender-sensitive policies, such as care and work-life balance policies. Given the central role of the MAWs in achieving substantive equality, it is key to analyze whether they have the management capacities to implement gender mainstreaming effectively throughout the state. These capacities include a clear mandate for ordering and mainstreaming measures that promote effective equality, the necessary functions to coordinate and monitor their implementation, and the necessary budgetary resources for this purpose. Linked to the MAWs are the national action plans that promote gender equality as a priority and in a crosscutting manner throughout public administration.¹¹² An example of this are the GEPs.

106. OECD-IDB, 2018, 2019; UNDP, 2018, 2019; World Bank, 2019; WEF, 2021; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; UN Women, 2021a.

107. O'Neill, 2021; Piscopo and Wylie, 2020; UNDP, 2018; Gürtler and Gürtler, 2019.

108. Rodríguez Gustá, 2008; Freidenberg, 2020; Schwindt-Bayer and Senk, 2020.

109. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.

110. For example, if responsibilities are distributed in such a way that people in service positions also have some technical component to keep them up to date or to gain experience in moving up the ladder.

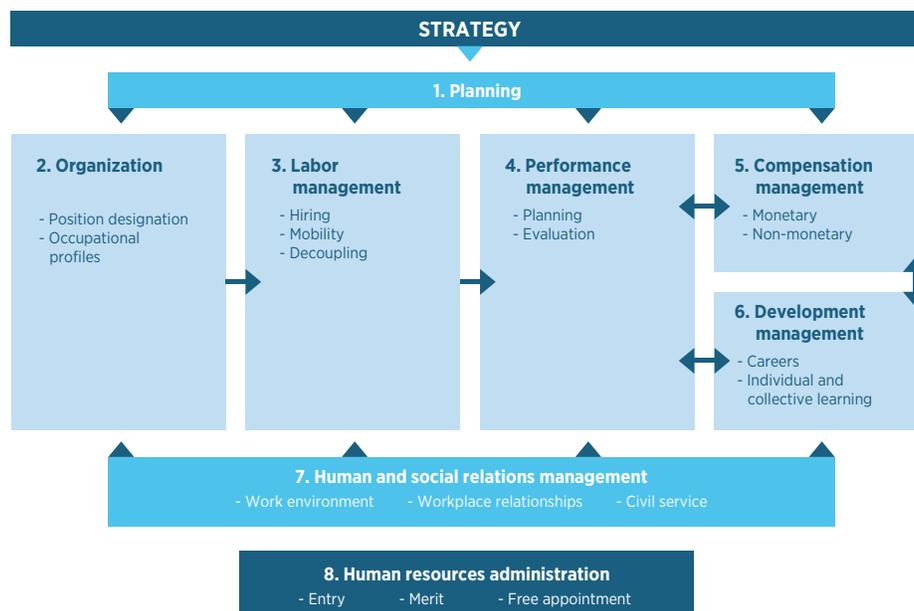
111. Rodríguez Gustá, 2008.

112. Bustelo et al., 2021; UN Women, 2021b; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.



3. A second group of capabilities is aimed at incorporating various policies and practices in human resources management in the public sector.¹¹³ To achieve substantive equality in public administrations and counteract existing discrimination, it is important for the state to have a human resources management (HRM) strategy that includes a gender perspective at all stages. The HRM model developed by the IDB and based on the Ibero-American Charter of the Civil Service¹¹⁴ is an excellent point of reference (*Figure 17*). The ILO has already adapted this model to include the gender perspective in HRM in the private sector.¹¹⁵

FIGURE 17 STRATEGIC MODEL OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



Source: Longo, 2002.

There are several mechanisms to ensure that women’s careers are not constrained by gender biases and stereotypes. In employment management, for example, evidence shows that employers tend to value competence and commitment among male applicants but privilege female applicants perceived as likable.¹¹⁶ It is also common for women to exclude

113. Weber, 1964; Evans and Rauch, 1999; Zuvanic and Iacoviello, 2005; Cortázar Velarde et al., 2014.

114. Longo, 2002; Cortázar Velarde et al., 2014; Iacoviello, 2016; Porrúa et al., 2021.

115. ILO, 2016.

116. Quadlin, 2018.



themselves from civil service recruitment processes because institutional policies are not gender-neutral. One way to do this is by designing job requirement profiles that are objective, gender-neutral and oriented to the required competencies.¹¹⁷ Regarding performance management, evidence shows that performance goals, standards and criteria should be objective and clearly stipulated so that there are no different standards for men and women such as “360° evaluations”¹¹⁸ or “competency-based performance evaluations.”¹¹⁹

4. A third group of measures to be implemented in public agencies is aimed at creating conditions that compensate for roles usually exercised by women such as family care that can become obstacles to their participation in leadership positions. Having parental leave, daycare centers, childcare centers, breastfeeding rooms or flexible work schedules in the workplace allows women to reconcile work and family life by facilitating the performance of their job functions.¹²⁰ Information on these types of initiatives is limited and a comparative analysis of their implementation in LAC is not possible. Such interventions are still uncommon. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate these organizational variables into the analysis of passive and active representation in order to have a more complete diagnosis.

The problem is not the absence of mechanisms to improve substantive equality, but rather that the existing ones have not been effectively implemented. This problem is common in the design and implementation of public policies. The challenge is not what to do but how to do it. Major reforms require gradual changes effectively implemented on the right trajectory. Along these lines, the proposed set of recommendations combines what has been seen to work, based on international literature and experience, with strategies to improve the implementation of actions. There would be no point in another document with broad lines of action that in practice do not bring about any change. We hope that concrete, measurable and feasible lines of action in the short term will be a first step to consolidating the structural changes that our region needs to achieve substantive gender equality. To achieve this, it is necessary to work on various aspects simultaneously and to combine all possible strategies.

117. ILO, 2016.

118. This refers to the process of feedback on professional and personal competencies that an employee receives from his or her coworkers. This evaluation model breaks the paradigm that only higher positions can rate the competencies of their subordinates. Some of its advantages are that it is based on the principle of equality, it seeks to avoid discriminatory practices in the performance evaluation process, and it reduces the risk of impairing performance by evaluating with subjective criteria unrelated to the work performed.

119. This type of evaluation, in contrast to traditional scores that compare one person with another, diagnoses how the individual's potential matches the company's activities and projects. It also makes it possible to forecast the possible areas for the future development of the employee being evaluated.

120. Báez, 2018; Bustelo et al., 2021; UN Women, 2021b.



4.2.1 Three lines of action toward true gender equality

1. Break down access barriers to achieve formal equality

The first challenge is to achieve women's access to leadership and decision-making positions in the public sector. In that way, bureaucracies would represent the societies in which they operate, **passive bureaucracies**. Evidence shows that affirmative action measures work when well designed. It is important that the design of these measures considers that in most countries of the region, the four highest levels of leadership are political (*Section 3.2.4*).

1. Implement affirmative action measures

- a. **Gender goals with clear, measurable, and time-bound objectives.** Goals can be established in a general way, by position, or even with the requirement of interspersing positions by gender. For this, it is essential to have quality information and to make it transparent—for example, with public goals and information portals that allow evidence of compliance (see recommendation 3). Colombia could be an interesting case to explore in more detail.
- b. **Strategically used personnel selection processes.** It is important to incorporate the gender perspective in recruitment, hiring, evaluation and promotion processes to eliminate gender stereotypes and reduce the barriers that women face.¹²¹ There are different tools such as affirmative action measures through competition exclusively for women, designing neutral job profiles, and blind selection processes where the gender of the participants is not considered.

2. Facilitate the conditions for achieving substantive equality, with the active participation of women in decision making and the public policy cycle

As this analysis has shown, it is not enough to achieve parity if women are absent from decision-making in the public sector. Active bureaucracies are needed. The presence of women in the design and implementation of public policies not only responds to a criterion of equality but also of effectiveness. The strength of the public sector can be used to generate a virtuous cycle that creates the space and conditions to implement a more ambitious gender agenda.

121. UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021.



1. Use and strengthen existing instruments for mainstreaming gender policies. It is not enough to create MAWs and have GEPs if there is no implementation capacity in state agencies. An effective gender agenda should prioritize strengthening state capabilities toward strategic action, setting concrete goals and objectives, monitoring progress and taking timely action when required. Existing instruments such as the implementation of *delivery units* in MAWs could help to achieve results. Similarly, the experience of multilateral banks in gender mainstreaming in their projects could be taken advantage of and used in the development of new tools to measure its implementation in the public sector.

2. Actively use human resources policies in public management to democratize women's access to the public sector and specifically to senior government. To achieve substantive equality in public administration, it is important for the state to have a human resources management strategy that includes a gender perspective at all stages.

a. Human resources management systems with a gender perspective. The HRM model developed by the IDB based on the Ibero-American Charter for Public Service (*Figure 17*) is an excellent reference point for all the areas to be taken into account to improve the participation of women in the public sector, with special emphasis on leadership positions.

b. Create mechanisms to support women to increase their influence and effectiveness in office. Getting women into leadership positions is the first step. The next step is to harness their talent. To this end, programs can be created for women in leadership positions to provide them with tools to carry out their functions and a support network. Chile, for example, has the [Network of Women Leaders in the State](#). The role of men is also fundamental to accelerating women's access to management levels. When male leaders commit to equality and become champions, they encourage other men to support women and contribute to leveling the playing field.

c. Adopt measures that facilitate the reconciliation and co-responsibility of family and work life. Implement changes directly in organizations, such as day care centers, child-care centers, breastfeeding rooms or flexible work schedules.¹²² The development of new technological tools and greater use of teleworking can also contribute to providing more flexibility and facilitate a better distribution of responsibilities at home.

122. Báez, 2018; Bustelo et al., 2021; UN Women, 2021b.



3. Information for better decision-making

- 1. Attain disaggregated and periodic information on the presence of women in leadership positions in the public sector.** Without information, it is unlikely that effective interventions can be designed. Evidence shows that there is a significant gap in both the availability and quality of information in the different countries of the region.¹²³ This analysis highlighted the need for disaggregated and comparable data to understand more clearly where the gaps are and to take concrete actions.
- 2. Design tools to monitor progress on strategic objectives regarding the presence of women in leadership positions in the public sector.** One of the lessons learned from this analysis is that good intentions are not enough. These must be translated into concrete, measurable and time-bound policies that allow timely identification of alerts, corrective actions and measurement of the fulfillment of objectives.

123. ECLAC, 2020; UNDP and University of Pittsburgh, 2021; UN Women, 2021b.



4.3 Five areas where the analysis can be deepened

- 1. Determinants of gender gaps.** Our objective in this study was to highlight gender gaps in public administration. Further research could broaden the countries of the study and delve deeper into the factors in the regulatory, organizational, societal and labor market levels that affect women's access to and permanence in leadership positions in the public sector.
- 2. Case studies.** A more detailed investigation of some countries will allow us to understand better the implementation of certain measures and to draw valuable lessons for other countries in the region. We identified countries with great advances in results, such as Colombia, others with high participation but that maintain horizontal and vertical segregation, such as Costa Rica, countries where civil service positions are within the four highest hierarchical levels, such as Trinidad and Tobago, and others where participation is still low despite the adoption of interesting policies, such as Chile.
- 3. Human resources management (HRM) systems.** This technical note highlighted the importance of the state having an HRM strategy that includes the gender perspective in all its stages and is a topic that can be explored further. In addition, the **differences between civil servants and politicians** can be **understood better**. In the vast majority of countries, the four highest levels of the civil service are political positions, freely appointed and removable. We could extend this study one or two additional levels to understand whether the type of position and the mode of access to it have any implication for the gender gap.
- 4. Go into more detail on the role of women within the public administration, especially at Levels 3 and 4.** Although the presence of women is greater at these levels, the study did not differentiate between the types of role they assume. Future exploration may differentiate the presence of women in value-adding areas, those directly related to the strategic objectives of the institution, and support areas, those that support the primary activities of an organization.
- 5. Identify the different perspectives and proposals that women bring to the design and implementation of public policies.** The existing literature shows various elements of public value that women in state leadership positions bring to public policies. This additional public value is a contribution based on women's own gender perspectives and experiences, so it is essential to show this added value for more evidence on the important role of women in increasing the quality of public policies.



5 Annexes

5.1 Annex 1. Main regulatory instruments

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW (1979)⁶

International convention adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1979, considered the **Charter of Women's Rights**. States that sign the Convention undertake a series of measures to put an end to discrimination against women in all its forms (UN, 1979).

Third World Conference on Women (1985)^E

This conference no longer considers the incorporation of women in all spheres of life to be a legitimate right of women; rather, it considers it a necessity for societies themselves to be able to count on the richness that women's participation implies. Three types of measures were identified: legal measures, measures to achieve equality in social participation and measures to achieve equality in political participation and in decision-making positions (UN, 1985).

Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994)^E

This is the most important inter-American convention in terms of women's rights. It was created to prevent, punish and eradicate physical, sexual and psychological violence against women in public and private life, as well as violence perpetrated by the state (Organization of American States, 1994).

Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995)⁶ and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995)^E

This international convention is the **second global milestone in the fight against discrimination against women**. The UN adopted the treaty in 1995. It reaffirms women's rights, with special reference to all aspects of women's lives that are violated because of their gender. This conference resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action (UN, 1995), the objective of which was to accelerate strategies aimed at the advancement of women and to eliminate all obstacles that hinder their participation in all spheres of public and private life—economic, social, cultural and political. To implement the platform, each country must enact laws and formulate strategies, policies, programs and priorities for gender-inclusive development (UN, 1995).



Quito Consensus (2007)^E

This is an agreement among 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in which they committed to adopting all affirmative action measures and the necessary mechanisms, including legislative reforms and budgetary allocations, to guarantee the full participation of women in public office and political representation. Its objective is to achieve parity in state institutions (executive, legislative and judicial branches and special and autonomous regimes) and at the national and local levels. In labor matters, it calls for guaranteeing the elimination of all discriminatory, precarious and illegal working conditions and encouraging the participation of women in creative and innovative work sectors to overcome sexist labor segregation (ECLAC, 2007).

Resolution 66/130: Women's participation in politics adopted by the General Assembly on December 19, 2011^E

This resolution highlights the importance of women's political participation in all contexts. It calls on the Member States of the United Nations to adopt a series of measures for the inclusion of women and against violence and discrimination (UN, 2011).

Standing Committee on Gender and Access to Justice (2014)^E

This commission is part of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit. Its objective is to stimulate dialogue and research on gender perspectives and its incorporation in the judiciaries of the countries. It is based on the recommendations of the CEDAW (1979) and the Beijing Platform (1995). It is also responsible for monitoring, developing and modifying normative instruments, processes and mechanisms so that gender mainstreaming in the judiciary becomes institutionalized (Ibero-American Judicial Summit, 2014).

Montevideo Strategy (2017)^G

This was developed to comply with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level (UN, 2019). It proposes measures to overcome the main obstacles in the processes of institutionalizing gender equality and women's rights in the structure of the states. The strategy's measures guide sectoral and crosscutting public policies aimed at eliminating gender inequalities and contributing to sustainable development (ECLAC, 2017).

Type of document: **G:** General, **E:** Specific

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



5.2 Annex 2. Study Methodology

5.2.1 Sources of information by country

For the first edition of this study, we collected information with a cut-off date between December 2021 and March 2022, which makes it possible to work with comparable data over time.

The data analysis is at the country level and is based on a combination of country responses, secondary sources and consultations with experts, particularly in relation to the budget.¹²⁴

TABLE 5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION BY COUNTRY

COUNTRY	PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS				REGULATORY, ORGANIZATIONAL AND PUBLIC POLICY VARIABLES	
	Primary sources ¹²⁵	Secondary sources ¹²⁶	Cut-off date	Source	Primary sources	Secondary sources
ARGENTINA		✓	Mar-22	State map		✓
BAHAMAS						✓
BARBADOS						✓
BELIZE						✓
BOLIVIA						✓
BRAZIL		✓	Feb-22	gov.br site		✓
CHILE	✓		Mar-22	National Directorate of Civil Service	✓	✓
COLOMBIA	✓		Feb-22	Administrative Department of the Public Function with SIGEP data	✓	✓
COSTA RICA	✓		Jan-22	Ministry of Finance with data from the Integra System (Employment Cube)	✓	✓
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	✓		Feb-22	Ministry of Public Administration	✓	✓

(continued on next page)

124. Argentina: Laura Cafarelli; Mexico: José Carlos Fernández; Peru: Cynthia Sú; Brazil: Rafael Leite.

125. Information provided directly by the counterparties in each country.

126. Public information on institutional and official websites.



TABLE 5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION BY COUNTRY (Cont.)

COUNTRY	PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS				REGULATORY, ORGANIZATIONAL AND PUBLIC POLICY VARIABLES	
	Primary sources ¹²⁵	Secondary sources ¹²⁶	Cut-off date	Source	Primary sources	Secondary sources
ECUADOR	✓		Feb-22	Ministry of Labor	✓	✓
EL SALVADOR		✓	Mar-22	Institutional websites		✓
GUATEMALA	✓		Mar-22	National Civil Service Office	✓	✓
GUYANA						✓
HAITI						✓
HONDURAS						✓
JAMAICA						✓
MEXICO		✓	Feb-22	Transparency portal		✓
NICARAGUA						✓
PANAMA	✓		Mar-22	General Directorate of Administrative Careers		✓
PARAGUAY	✓		Feb-22	Technical Secretariat for Planning		✓
PERU	✓		Feb-22	National Civil Service Authority (SERVIR)	✓	✓
SURINAME					✓	✓
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	✓		Feb-22	Ministry of Planning and Development	✓	✓
URUGUAY	✓		Dec-22	Observatory of the National Civil Service Office	✓	✓
VENEZUELA						✓

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



5.2.2 Collection of information

Variables for the presence of women

Once we collected the information, either from primary or secondary sources, we systematized it in the job classification matrix. As shown in the example below, this matrix provides a detailed view for each country:

- Name of ministry/agency
- Name of position
- Nature of the position (political appointment or civil service)
- Access rule (trust or contest)
- Total number of items
- Number of vacant positions
- Number of positions held by men and women
- Percentage of women's participation (calculated by taking as the denominator the number of positions effectively occupied, the net between the total number of positions *minus* vacancies)

TABLE 6 EXAMPLE OF DATA SYSTEMATIZATION IN THE HOMOLOGATION MATRIX

COUNTRY NAME									
Ministry	Level	Position	Position's nature	Access rule	Total positions	Vacancies	M	F	%F
FINANCE	1	Minister	Political staff	Trust	1	0	1	0	-
	2	Secretary	Political staff	Trust	8	0	5	3	37.5
	3	Undersecretary	Political staff	Trust	18	0	10	8	44.4
	4	National Director	Civil service	Competitive	43	0	30	13	30.2
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	1	Minister	Political staff	Trust	1	0	1	0	-
	2	Secretary	Political staff	Trust	8	0	3	5	62.5
	3	Undersecretary	Political staff	Trust	10	1	6	3	37.5
	4	National Director	Civil service	Competitive	33	2	15	16	55.2

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



Homologation

TABLE 7 HOMOLOGATION OF POSITIONS IN LAC				
LEVEL	1	2	3	4
ARGENTINA	Minister	Secretary	Undersecretary	National or General Director
BRAZIL	Minister	Special Secretary Executive Secretary	Special Assistant Secretary Deputy Executive Secretary Secretary	Assistant Secretary Undersecretary
CHILE	Minister	Undersecretary	ADP First Level	ADP Second Level
COLOMBIA	Minister Director National Department	Vice Minister Assistant Director	General Secretary	Technical Director Academy Director
COSTA RICA	Minister	Vice Minister General Manager	Chief Executive Officer Chief Executive Officer Area Director Senior Officer Assistant Manager	Head of Civil Service Deputy Director
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Minister	Vice Minister	General Manager Major General	Director Department Head
ECUADOR	Minister National Secretary	Vice Minister	Undersecretary General Coordinator	National Director Director Coordinator
GUATEMALA	Minister	Vice Minister		
MEXICO	Secretary	Undersecretary Senior Officer	Unit Head	Head of Unit
PANAMA	Minister	Vice Minister	General Manager Executive Director Director	Assistant Director
PARAGUAY	Minister	Vice Minister Undersecretary General Coordinator	Secretary General National or General Director	Director Coordinator Department Head
PERU	Minister President PCM	Vice Minister General Secretary	General Manager Secretary	Undersecretary Director Head of Office
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Minister	Permanent Secretary	Deputy Permanent Secretary	Director Chief

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



Regulatory, organizational and public policy variables

We followed the following five steps to collect information:

1. In order to minimize the degree of discretion in the results, we designed a survey-response dump sheet with codes for each of the variables.
2. To complete the dump sheet by country, we included responses from primary sources, when available, and complemented with secondary sources. For this, we always followed these steps in the same order:
 - a. We consulted the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
 - b. We reviewed the reports of the GEPs of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
 - c. Based on these two sources, we obtained the precise name of the standard, agency or policy and sought information from the official web pages of each government.
3. To complete the dump sheet, we also reviewed and uploaded the responses that each country submitted.
4. With these two steps, we generated a dump sheet for each country.
5. We transformed the information from the dump sheets into a database in Excel format containing coded variables (based on the dump sheet) as well as text variables. The database includes the source for each of the variables.



5.3 Annex 3. Gender quotas in Latin America and the Caribbean

TABLE 8 GENDER QUOTAS IN LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES

Country	First legislative installment and year of enactment	Current legislative quota and year of enactment	Participation of women in the legislature in 2021	Executive quota
ARGENTINA	30% (1991)	In 2017, it increased to 50%.	43.9%	
BAHAMAS	n/a	n/a	21.5%	
BARBADOS	n/a	n/a	31.4%	
BELIZE	n/a	n/a	24.1%	
BOLIVIA	30% (1997)	In 2010, it increased to 50%.	50.9%	
BRAZIL	30% (1997)	Still at 30%.	13.8%	
CHILE	40% (2015)	Still at 40%.	29.7%	
COLOMBIA	30% (2011)	In 2011, it increased to 50%.	19.9%	30% (2000), increased to 45% by 2021
COSTA RICA	40% (1996)	In 2009, it increased to 50%.	45.6%	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	25% (1997)	In 2018, it increased to 40%.	20.2%	
ECUADOR	20% (1998)	In 2020, it increased to 50%.	39.4%	
EL SALVADOR	30% (2013)	Still at 30%.	27.4%	
GUATEMALA	No gender quota	No gender quota	19.4%	
GUYANA	33% (n/a)	Still at 30%.	35.7%	
HAITI	30% (2012)	Still at 30%.	ND	30% (2012)
HONDURAS	30% (2000)	In 2020, it increased to 50%.	27.3%	
JAMAICA	n/a	n/a	33.3%	
MEXICO	30% (2002)	In 2017, it increased to 50%.	49.6%	
NICARAGUA	50% (2010)	In 2014, it increased to 50%.	50.6%	
PANAMA	30% (1997)	In 2012, it increased to 50%.	22.5%	30% (1999)
PARAGUAY	20% (1996)	Still at 20%.	17%	
PERU	25% (1997)	In 2020, it increased to 50%.		
SURINAME	n/a	n/a	29.4%	
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	No gender quota	No gender quota	33.4%	
URUGUAY	33% (2009)	Still at 33%.	25.2%	
VENEZUELA	30% (1998)	In 2015, it increased to 50%.	22.2%	

Source: Chudnovsky et al. (forthcoming). Based on Observatorio de Reformas (gender electoral regime database),¹²⁷ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) (gender quotas database)¹²⁸ and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (monthly ranking of women in national parliaments).¹²⁹

127. <https://reformaspoliticas.org/regimen-electoral-de-genero/>

128. <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/database>

129. <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=12&year=2021>



5.4 Annex 4. Year of creation and objectives of the machineries for the advancement of women by country

TABLE 9 YEAR OF CREATION AND OBJECTIVES OF MAWs IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Country	Year of creation	Promoting gender equality	Eradicating gender violence	Equal opportunity	Children's rights and family protection	Women's rights	Empowerment of women	Accountability and transparency
ARGENTINA	2019		✓			✓		
BAHAMAS	2016	✓			✓			
BARBADOS	1999	✓						
BELIZE	ND	✓	✓		✓		✓	
BOLIVIA	2013	✓		✓	✓			
BRAZIL	2019	✓			✓	✓		
CHILE	2016		✓	✓				
COLOMBIA	2014	✓					✓	
COSTA RICA	1998		✓	✓			✓	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2010							
ECUADOR	2014	✓						
EL SALVADOR	n/a					✓		
GUATEMALA	2000		✓					
GUYANA	1981							
HAITI	1994	✓						
HONDURAS	1999	✓						
JAMAICA	1975	✓						
MEXICO	2001			✓		✓		
NICARAGUA	2013	✓				✓	✓	
PANAMA	2008			✓				
PARAGUAY	2012	✓						
PERU	n/a	✓	✓		✓			
SURINAME	1985							
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	2005	✓						
URUGUAY	2009						✓	✓
VENEZUELA	n/a		✓					

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



5.5 Annex 5. Objectives of the gender equality plans by country

TABLE 10 OBJECTIVES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Country	Promoting equal opportunities	Labor integration	Strengthening women's empowerment	Promoting training and education policies	Promoting institutional coordination actions	Eradicating gender violence	Health policies and reproductive rights
ARGENTINA	✓	✓	✓				
BAHAMAS	✓	✓	✓	✓			
BARBADOS							
BELIZE	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
BOLIVIA	✓	✓	✓			✓	
BRAZIL							
CHILE				✓	✓	✓	
COLOMBIA	✓	✓	✓				✓
COSTA RICA	✓	✓	✓				
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	✓	✓	✓				
ECUADOR	✓	✓	✓	✓			
EL SALVADOR	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
GUATEMALA		✓	✓	✓		✓	
GUYANA							
HAITI	✓	✓	✓				
HONDURAS							
JAMAICA					✓		
MEXICO	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
NICARAGUA		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
PANAMA	✓	✓	✓				
PARAGUAY	✓	✓	✓			✓	
PERU	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
SURINAME							
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	✓	✓	✓				
URUGUAY	✓	✓	✓				
VENEZUELA			✓				

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



5.6 Annex 6. Regulatory basis for gender equality plans

TABLE 11 REGULATORY BASE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Country	GEPs	Regulatory basis	Year
BOLIVIA	National Plan for Equal Opportunity “Women Building the New Bolivia, to Live Well”	Executive decree	2008
BRAZIL	III National Plan of Policies for Women 2013-2015		2019
COLOMBIA	Transversal Pact for Women’s Equity in the National Development Plan 2018-2022		2013
MEXICO	National Program for Equality between Women and Men (PROIGUALDAD) 2020-2024		
NICARAGUA	National Gender Equity Program		2006
PANAMA	Public Policy for Equal Opportunities for Women (PPIOM)		2016
PARAGUAY	IV National Equality Plan (IV PlaNI) 2018-2024		2018
PERU	National Gender Equality Policy		2019
SURINAME	Gender Work Plan		2013
URUGUAY	National Plan for Equality of Opportunities and Rights		2018
CHILE	Fourth National Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2018-2030	Mandate established for gender entities	2018
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2018-2030 (PLANEG III)		2019
ARGENTINA	National Plan of Equality in Diversity 2021-2023	Mandate of a national development plan or legal instrument defining the government’s objectives	2021
COSTA RICA	National Policy for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PIEG 2018-2030)		2007
ECUADOR	National Agenda for Women and LGBTI People 2018-2021		2018
JAMAICA	National Policy for Gender Equality		2011
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	National Gender and Development Policy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (draft document)		2018
GUATEMALA	National Policy for the Promotion and Integral Development of Women (PNPDIM) and Equal Opportunity Plan (PEO) 2008-2023	Governmental agreement	2007
VENEZUELA	Plan for Gender Equality and Equity “Mama Rosa” 2013-2019	Responsible entity management tool of gender issues	2013
BAHAMAS	National Equality and Equity Policy and Action Plan, NEEPAP	Not available	2019
BARBADOS	National Gender Policy and Gender Plan of Action		2016
BELIZE	Revised National Gender Policy		2013
EL SALVADOR	National Women’s Policy		ND
HAITI	Policy on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2034		2014
HONDURAS	II National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2010-2022		2010

Source: Own elaboration based on the methodology used in this study.



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