

# Beijing +30

## Call to States to Build a Care Society Rooted in Equality and Freedom from Violence

### Introduction

Thirty years on from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Belém do Pará Convention, the below signed organisations issue an urgent call to the States participating in the XVI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean to reinforce their commitments to legal equality, economic justice, and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women, adolescents, and girls. These are essential conditions to guarantee the right to care and build a genuine society.

Organisations working to advance access to justice and eliminate violence against women, girls, and adolescents across the region highlight that States have international obligations to address the structural roots of inequality, including its ethno-racial intersections. These include the subordination of women within legal frameworks, the unjust social and economic distribution of care, and impunity for violence.

### Diagnosis

Women experience multiple and compounding forms of violence throughout their lives:

- In **childhood and adolescence**, many are forced into early marriages and unions, and into unwanted pregnancies and motherhood, especially in rural areas and contexts of poverty.
- In **adulthood**, economic dependence, lack of access to housing and land, and the burden of unpaid care work trap many women in violent family environments. The absence of secure land rights and ownership reinforces dependency on male household members and entrenches discriminatory norms. These patterns stem from practices that favour men in inheritance, marriage, and land distribution.
- In **older age**, women who have spent their lives doing unpaid domestic and care work are often excluded from pension and social protection systems. In Colombia, for example, fewer than 12.1% of women over the age of 60 receive a pension, compared to 22.5% of men.

**None of the 33 countries in the region has fully met the substantive equality standards agreed in Beijing, including the elimination of all gender-discriminatory laws.** Legal inequality continues to reinforce economic dependence and limit women's ability to live free from violence.

Discriminatory laws and practices persist in areas such as family, inheritance, labour, and property, exacerbating women's vulnerability to violence:

- In Chile, the marital partnership regime grants the husband exclusive control over joint assets.
- In Honduras and Paraguay, domestic workers remain excluded from full labour rights.
- In Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Suriname, some of the region's most restrictive abortion laws force thousands of women and people who can become pregnant into unwanted motherhood and care responsibilities.

### A partnership between:



Even where more progressive legal frameworks exist, their implementation is often unequal and shaped by stereotypes, undermining women's access to justice, resources, and protection:

- In Mexico, agricultural subsidies require formal land titles, effectively excluding many rural women.
- In Ecuador and El Salvador, access to land remains limited due to discriminatory inheritance norms and informal land tenure.
- In Peru, less than 10% of formal land rights are registered in women's names, restricting access to credit and productive opportunities, and reinforcing cycles of precarity and violence.
- In the Dominican Republic, 82% of unpaid domestic and care work is carried out by women, severely affecting their access to paid employment.
- Across Latin America and the Caribbean, women dedicate on average 30 to 40 hours per week to unpaid domestic and care work, compared to 10 to 20 hours for men. This persistent gap limits women's economic autonomy and hinders the full exercise of their rights.

These structural inequalities are further intensified during crises, such as climate disasters and pandemics. In such contexts, care systems collapse or become inaccessible, exposing women and girls to greater risks of violence, including sexual violence. The burden of care is further concentrated on women, deepening their economic exclusion and increasing their unpaid workload.

### In light of this scenario, we urge States to:

1. **Recognise** that in contexts of crisis (climate, humanitarian, or economic), the right to care is weakened and gender-based violence, including sexual violence, is exacerbated. The absence of care systems in these contexts increases exposure to violence and deepens gender inequalities.
2. **Adopt** comprehensive laws that guarantee access to care systems and services, especially for women, girls, and persons with disabilities, including in crisis contexts. These policies must be linked to protection pathways against violence and ensure their sustainability in the face of emergencies, including climate-related ones.

3. **Acknowledge** care as a human right that must be exercised under concrete and just conditions. This right is intrinsically linked to the prevention, response, and sanction of violence against women. Violence in homes, workplaces, schools, online spaces, communities, or in crisis settings undermines the ability to care, be cared for, and practise self-care.
4. **Include** in care policies the needs of girls and adolescents who carry out care tasks. Recognise them not only as recipients of care but also as caregivers. Identify and reduce the burden they face, particularly in contexts of child and forced marriage, and adopt measures to protect their rights and support their holistic development.
5. **Recognise** the link between the right to care and reproductive autonomy, understood as the freedom to make decisions about one's body, life, and health without coercion, discrimination, or violence. Realising the right to care under conditions of equality requires that those who care do so freely and without imposition.
6. **Promote** legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure substantive legal equality, eliminating the subordination of women in family, inheritance, and property laws. Enact comprehensive care legislation that guarantees access to quality, accessible care systems and services for women, girls, and persons with disabilities, including in crisis situations. These policies must be integrated with protection pathways and designed to withstand emergencies, including climate-related ones.
7. **Ensure** equitable access to productive resources, financial services, land, and social protection systems. Remove legal barriers and discriminatory practices that limit women's economic independence.
8. **Recognise** women's leadership and participation in decision-making processes that enable them to contribute socially, economically, and politically to building a care society in their communities, ensuring their safety and a life free from violence in doing so.

**WORDS AND DEEDS:** Holding governments accountable in the Beijing+30 review process

