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Fifty-fifth meeting of the Presiding Officers
of the Regional Conference on Women
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, 25-26 May 2017

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE REGIONAL FUND
IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN'S AND FEMINIST
ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS**

1. Background

At the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean expressed a wish to “Study the possibility of establishing a regional fund for gender equality and intercultural dialogue, funded by contributions from different types of donors, encouraging public-private partnerships” (Santo Domingo Consensus, para. 120).

Subsequently, at their fifty-first meeting, held on 17-19 November 2014, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference agreed to “Ratify prior commitments by the Governments of the region regarding the need to ensure the sustainability of women’s and feminist organizations and movements and, in this connection, emphasize the importance of moving forward with the possible creation of a regional fund for gender equality, further to the provisions of paragraphs 28, 103 and 120 of the Santo Domingo Consensus” (agreement 11), and to “Redouble efforts and intensify the commitment of the countries to the establishment of a regional fund for gender equality and request the Commission, in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Regional Conference on Women, to promote the establishment of a working group to take action at different levels to this end, in consultation with feminist and women’s organizations in the region” (agreement 12).

At their fifty-third meeting, held on 26-28 January 2016, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference held a discussion, at the request of the Government of Uruguay, on the regional fund for gender equality and intercultural dialogue, and received a report on the consultation of ministers conducted by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on agreement 120 of the Santo Domingo Consensus. The Presiding Officers reaffirmed their previous agreements and agreed to “create a working group consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Uruguay to examine the viability and modes of operation of a regional fund for gender equality and intercultural dialogue” (agreement 18). They also requested ECLAC “in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Regional Conference, to provide technical assistance in preparing a road map to address the different aspects relating to the viability and operation of the regional fund” (agreement 19).

At the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 25-28 October 2016, the ministers and authorities of women’s affairs reaffirmed their “will to work, through joint efforts between countries, on the creation of a regional fund in support of women’s and feminist organizations and movements, in the framework of the Montevideo Strategy and in coordination with machineries for the advancement of women” (resolution 6 (XIII), par 10).

2. Working group on the regional fund in support of women’s and feminist organizations and movements

First meeting of the working group on the regional fund in support of women’s and feminist organizations and movements (Montevideo, 27 October 2016)

The working group on the regional fund in support of women’s and feminist organizations and movements was established on 27 October 2016, in the framework of the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The following ministers and authorities of machineries for the advancement of women were present:

- Argentina: Fabiana Tuñez, President of the National Women's Council, and María Luisa Martino, Director of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship;
- Dominican Republic: Janet Camilo, Minister for Women's Affairs, and Yngrid Alcántara, Director of International Affairs of the Ministry for Women's Affairs;
- Mexico: Marcela Eternod, Executive Secretary of the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES) and Flor de Lis Vásquez, Deputy Director-General for International Affairs of the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES)
- Uruguay: Mariella Mazzotti, Director of the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES), and Daniela Tellechea, Head of International Relations of the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES);
- ECLAC: Luis Fidel Yáñez, Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Secretary of the Commission, María Nieves Rico, Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs, and Alejandra Valdés, Researcher with the Division for Gender Affairs.

At this meeting, as well as reviewing the background described above and the opportunities and limitations existing in the region's international institutions, the authorities present reaffirmed the will of their countries to establish the fund and agreed to:

1. Ratify the political will to establish a fund for civil society and acknowledge the creation of a working group for this purpose;
2. Reflect upon the institutional structure that could host and administer the fund, given that ECLAC is not in a position to do so, and examine who should have decision-making power over the fund;
3. Decide that the fund would be governed by the governments and should be for regional projects at first, broadening access during a second phase to subregional and national organizations;
4. Underscore the importance of establishing deadlines for the work relating to the fund and affirm that it will be voluntary for the countries;
5. Hold the second meeting of the working group during the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, at the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York, in March 2017;
6. Open the working group to other countries that may wish to participate.

Second meeting of the working group on the regional fund in support of women's and feminist organizations and movements (New York, 15 March 2017)

The working group on the regional fund in support of women's and feminist organizations and movements held its second meeting on 15 March 2016, in the framework of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The following ministers and authorities of machineries for the advancement of women were present:

- Argentina: Nicole Neiman, National Director for Integrated Protection and Coordination of Direct Action of the National Women's Council;
- Colombia: Martha Ordóñez, Presidential Adviser for Women's Equity, and Mauricio Carabalí, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations;
- Mexico: Flor de María Montes de Oca, Deputy Director for International Projects of the National Women's Institute (INMUJERES);
- Uruguay: Mariella Mazzotti, Advisor to the Director of the National Care Secretariat of the Ministry of Social Development, and Silvana Guerra, Chair of the Gender Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- ECLAC: María Nieves Rico, Chief of the Division for Gender Affairs.

At its second meeting, the working group adopted the following agreements, to be presented to the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean for consideration at their fifty-fifth meeting.

1. The fund will be regional in scope: it will support subregional and, possibly, binational projects. Funds may be assigned to national projects at a second stage of implementation;

2. The fund will be administered by the Governments, which will set up an ad hoc committee with decision-making powers;

3. The Fund will support projects presented by associations of non-governmental organizations of at least two countries or by regional networks whose work is related to the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

4. It is suggested that the ad hoc committee should include representatives of women's and feminist organizations;

5. It is proposed to evaluate the possibility of the fund being hosted by UN-Women;

6. The institution that hosts the fund will also administer it;

7. The Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC will be represented on the ad hoc committee and will be involved in follow-up and evaluation of the progress of the fund;

8. Applications for funding will be invited every two years, related to a theme from the Regional Gender Agenda or a target population;

9. Responsibility for coordinating the committee will rotate among its members;

10. The financial contribution to the regional fund will be voluntary for the countries and formulas may be studied to promote such contributions;

11. Strategies must be devised to finance the regional fund, including sources from government, regional cooperation and international cooperation;

12. The ad hoc committee will be available at all times for discussion, and will report to the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women on its financing and outcomes.