

Institutionalization of a gender approach in the ministries of labor of the americas

Follow-up to the workshops on strategic planning with a gender perspective



Organization of
American States



Canadian International
Development Agency



Inter-American Commission of Women

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The Organization of American States (OAS) brings together the nations of the Western hemisphere to promote democracy, strengthen human rights, foster peace, security and cooperation and advance common interests. The origins of the Organization date back to 1890 when nations of the region formed the Pan American Union to forge closer hemispheric relations. This union later evolved into the OAS and in 1948, 21 nations signed its governing charter. Since then, the OAS has expanded to include the nations of the English-speaking Caribbean and Canada, and today all of the independent nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean make up its 35 member states.

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Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas. Follow-up to the Workshops on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective.

Document prepared by the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM within the framework of cooperation on gender and decent work carried out with the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment. It was prepared by Senior Consultant Lylia Mires. Maria Celina Conte, CIM/OAS Specialist, coordinated the preparation of the document.

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ACRONYMS

CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
DSDE	Department of Social Development and Employment of the OAS
GMS	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy of Jamaica
GSU	Gender Specialized Units
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
IACML	Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor
IAP/PIA	Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality
ILO	International Labour Organization
INAMUJER	Instituto Nacional de la Mujer de Venezuela (National Women's Institute of Venezuela)
INMUJERES	Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (National Institute of Women)
ISDEMU	Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women)
MITRADEL	Ministerio de Trabajo y Desarrollo Laboral de Panamá (Ministry of Labor and Labor Development of Panama)
MTPE	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo de Perú (Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion of Peru)
MTPS	Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social de El Salvador (Ministry of Labor and Social Security of El Salvador)
NMAW	National Machinery for the Advancement of Women
OAS	Organization of American States
RIAL	Red Interamericana para la Administración Laboral (Inter-American Network for Labor Administration Network)
TRIFOR	Participants in the Decent Work Country Program for the Bahamas

INTRODUCTION

The objective of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that gender equality issues are incorporated in all public policies, not just in particular social policies that, even though they do address specific gender needs, are insufficient to counteract the inequality that general policies can trigger.

Gender mainstreaming focuses on both gender inequalities and the political and institutional processes required for implementing gender equality policies. That involves transforming or reorganizing institutions in such a way that they become capable of promoting policies of that nature.

It is in that context that the Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM/OAS), the Department of Social Development and Employment, and the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL)¹ of the OAS have engaged, particularly since 2005, in institutional strengthening projects in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, including the adoption of strategic guidelines, preparation of studies, and the organization of a hemispheric workshop. Recently, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA/ACDI), these efforts² have included the preparation of additional studies; training in 2010 in Participatory Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective for the Gender Specialized Units (GSU)³ in the Ministries of Labor and the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women; follow-up to those training courses in 2011; and the holding of the First Inter-Ministerial Dialogue between the Highest Authorities in both sectors in the framework of the XVII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, in San Salvador, El Salvador, on November 1, 2011.

This report deals mainly with the follow-up to the training delivered in four subregional workshops. It achieved ample coverage of both institutions and was aimed at boosting their capacity to put in place policies designed to promote gender equality in the workplace and employment.

During the Strategic Planning with a Gender perspective workshops, participants learned that for policies to be imbued with a gender equality perspective it is necessary to work with organizations and incorporate a gender perspective throughout their structures. For that reason, planning with a gender perspective was conceived as a tool for enhancing, developing, and evaluating technical and political/institutional processes for incorporating the gender dimension in labor and employment policies.

After completing the training courses, the CIM/OAS attempted to follow up on activities carried out in the Ministries of Labor subsequent to the workshops. The idea was not just to evaluate the outcomes of the

1. Inter-American Network for Labor Administration, a cooperation and technical assistance mechanism of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS.

2. These efforts were part of the CIM/OAS Hemispheric project on "Advancing Gender Equality in the context of Decent Work," financed by the Canadian International Development Agency.

3. Generic name to describe the various individuals, commissions, committees or focal points responsible for gender mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor.

training but also to identify the difficulties encountered by the ministries with regard to this process, as an input for designing new actions to support gender mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor.

A questionnaire was drawn up and sent to the ministry staff who had participated in the workshops regarding activities carried out in their institutions after their participation in the workshop, any difficulties they had encountered, areas in which they needed support, and gender mainstreaming actions they planned to undertake in the short-term in relation to workplaces and employment in their respective countries.

Another questionnaire was simultaneously sent to the National Machineryes for the Advancement of Women to ascertain the opinions of staff who had attended the workshops regarding the activities of their counterparts in the Ministries of Labor with respect to gender mainstreaming. The replies to these questionnaires not only afforded more insight into these institutions' views regarding the activities undertaken by the ministries; they also showed what they felt about inter-agency coordination and possible changes in the relations between both institutions that had attended the workshop and their impact on their joint work.

Following is a description of the methodology used in the Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective Workshops, followed by a summary of the principal outcomes of the follow-up, sound practices and lessons learned regarding the institutionalization and mainstreaming of the gender equality perspective, and conclusions and recommendations.



FRAMEWORK OF COMMITMENTS FOR DECENT WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY

I.1. Genesis of the training plan for institutionalizing the gender approach in the ministries of labor

The Hemisphere's commitment to gender equity and equality dates back to the General Assembly session of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in 2000, at which the member states agreed to incorporate the gender perspective in their policies and projects as a means of achieving the full and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life, both public and private.

This commitment was set forth in the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (IAP/PIA), backed in 2001 at the Third Summit of the Americas. The IAP is still the principal tool for incorporating a gender perspective in the OAS. The Program entrusted the task of its implementation to the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and recognized the CIM as the principal forum for generating hemispheric policies for promoting women's human rights and gender equity and equality.

One of the goals of the IAP is to achieve the full and equal access of women to work and to productive resources through the formulation of public policies with a gender perspective. Along those same lines, the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) has made major commitments to progress toward equality and nondiscrimination against women in the workplace. Its priorities include the incorporation of a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of labor policies; promotion of efforts to

harmonize family life and work; protection of the rights of women workers; and the implementation of actions designed to eliminate the gender gap in the workplace.

At the XIV IACML, held in Mexico City in 2005, the Ministers of Labor of the OAS member states agreed to include a gender perspective among the dimensions of decent work and pledged to coordinate and promote proactive policies to that effect. That mandate was reaffirmed by the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata, 2005), at which the Heads of State and Government pledged to increase women's access to decent work by combating gender discrimination at work, promoting equal opportunity, eliminating gender gaps in the workplace, and incorporating a gender perspective in labor and employment policies.

In support of that process, the XIV IACML agreed to conduct studies, formulate proposals and promote the sharing of successful practices for incorporating a gender perspective in labor and employment policies.

To fulfill this mandate, the Department of Social Development and Employment (DSDE) of the OAS, which serves as the Technical Secretariat of the IACML, held a meeting with the CIM and the International Labour Office (ILO) to establish the strategy to follow. It was agreed to draw up a document that would take stock of the incorporation of a gender perspective in labor policies and identify areas which needed strengthening.

The result of that effort was a paper entitled Gender Equality for Decent Work which, together with the "Strategic Guidelines for Advancing Gender Equality and Non-discrimination within a Decent Work Framework," was approved by the XV IACML in 2007. This paper puts forward hemispheric strategic guidelines aimed, in the short term, at institutional strengthening of ministries of labor in order to achieve effective gender mainstreaming in their policies, plans, and programs and access to decent work with gender equality.

Given the heterogeneity and the varying degrees of progress of initiatives undertaken in this regard by the ministries, it was recommended that a study be conducted to ascertain the existence of specialized gender units in the Ministries of Labor, their features, and the reasons why some ministries did not have such units. The purpose of the study was to give the IACML a hemispheric overview of progress made towards institutionalizing the gender perspective in labor ministries in the Americas, by detecting strengths and weaknesses as well as the most remarkable results for the processes involved, in order to define strategic areas of intervention, particularly through the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).

The study entitled The Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas was coordinated by the DSDE/OAS, with the active participation of the CIM and contributions from the ILO. Following consultation with the specialized gender units in these ministries and with the National Machineryes for the Advancement of Women, this study managed to produce a diagnostic assessment of the existence, status, strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the units established for the purpose of imbuing a gender approach in the internal and external activities of the ministries of labor.

The study highlighted the progress made and difficulties encountered by the specialized gender units, as well as areas in which more support is needed. The main areas requiring improvement were identified as: a more precise mission statement, the formulation of strategic objectives, gender analysis, and the construction of gender indicators.

The preliminary version of the document was presented at the RIAL workshop on Gender mainstreaming in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, held in Buenos Aires in 2009, which benefited from the inputs of 25 Ministries of Labor, most of which were represented by their highest authorities on gender. Various agreements were also reached on implementing the proposals arising out of the study's analysis of the situation of the specialized gender units in the ministries. Three types of intervention were proposed:

Participatory Gender Audits

Based on the model developed by the ILO, this intervention makes it possible to gauge the extent to which gender equality has been institutionalized and identifies best practices and effective and efficient processes for advancing the objective of gender mainstreaming as a mechanism conducive to decent work.

Internships

It was suggested that internships be organized through the Technical Secretariat of the IACML, as the mediator for horizontal cooperation between countries, and through the RIAL in order to facilitate specific knowledge of particular practices for institutionalizing and mainstreaming a gender perspective in the ministries of labor that have been recognized as successful in other countries.

Institution-Building Training Plan

The research showed that, for the gender units, it was particularly important to undertake an institution-building process emphasizing the key role of training, conceived as a tool capable of bringing about a qualitative improvement in the activities of these units. In the information garnered in parallel consultations from representatives of both the ministries of labor and the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, they both see training as vital for achieving the objectives related to their role in the ministries of labor. The participating countries called especially for training in strategic planning with a gender perspective, gender analysis, and the construction of indicators.⁴

4. The OAS study "Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas," Washington, D.C. 2009, pp. 59-62, addresses the training proposal for strengthening the institutional role of the specialized gender units in the Ministries of Labor. This proposal includes participatory gender audits, internships, and institution-building training plans. This third component refers to three basic training topics: strategic planning with a gender approach, gender analysis, and the construction of gender indicators.

This last matter, regarding implementation of a training plan, was highlighted as the starting point for activities aimed at strengthening the specialized gender units in the ministries of labor. The Inter-American Commission of Women pledged to support such training directly, as part of the hemispheric project Advancing Gender Equality in the Context of Decent Work⁵, executed by the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM in coordination with DSDE/OAS pursuant to shared political mandates arising out of both the Inter-American Conference of Ministries of Labor and the CIM.

It was against this backdrop that a training plan was developed for institution-building in the labor ministries, which, first and foremost, envisaged the preparation of a Training Guide in Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective and four subregional workshops.

1.2. Characteristic features of the training

The Training Guide was prepared taking into consideration both the heterogeneity of the gender units in place in the labor ministries and the needs of the countries, based on the findings of the study Institutionalization of the Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, so that it covers the most important training requirements of the ministries of labor and the Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the different countries.

Simultaneously it was necessary to amalgamate the ideas from all three areas, i.e., strategic planning, gender analysis and the construction of gender indicators, into a single final outcome gradually developed by the participants.

Its objectives are:

- To foster gender-related capacity and skills in the planning team (GSU);
- To facilitate the identification of key points for incorporating a gender approach in the diagnostic assessment and analysis of problems and objectives, identifying existing gender gaps;
- To introduce participants to the construction of gender indicators; and
- To facilitate replication of strategic planning with a gender perspective workshops.

5. This CIM/OAS project included not just the technical training component but also a political component: support for conducting an inter-ministerial dialogue between the two sectors at the highest level, which occurred in connection with the XVII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, in San Salvador, El Salvador, on November 1, 2011.

The ultimate purpose of the Training Guide is to make available to the GSUs a set of tools for supporting the process of institutionalizing and mainstreaming the gender perspective in the ministries of labor by means of a cross-cutting planning approach which takes into account, from a gender perspective, the impact of measures carried out.

The Guide was translated into English for the Caribbean countries, with some adjustments to take their specific circumstances into account.

Once the Training Guide had been produced, the CIM and the DSDE/OAS began organizing the Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective workshops and establishing contact with the ministries of labor and the Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the OAS member states.

It was decided to group the countries together by subregions: the Caribbean; Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic; Andean Countries, and the Southern Cone.

The workshops were conducted between April and October 2010. The first was for the Caribbean countries and took place in Guyana; the second workshop was held in El Salvador for the countries of Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. The Andean countries met in Ecuador and the workshop for Southern Cone countries took place in Paraguay.

Workshops on Participatory Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective	
The Caribbean	Georgetown, Guyana from April 12 to 14, 2010, in coordination with the Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security of Guyana.
Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic	San Salvador, El Salvador from May 4 to 6, 2010, in coordination with the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women (ISDEMU) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of El Salvador.
Southern Cone	Asunción, Paraguay from September 15 to 17, 2010, in coordination with the Secretariat for Women of the Office of the President of the Republic and the Ministry of Labor and Justice of Paraguay.
Andean Countries	Quito, Ecuador; from October 12 to 14, 2010, in coordination with the Commission for Transition to the Council of Women and Gender Equality and the Ministry of Labor Relations of Ecuador.

The workshops were prepared and convened by the CIM and the DSDE/OAS. They were held with the institutional support at the highest level of both the Ministry of Labor and the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women of the country hosting the workshop. Each workshop lasted three days. There were two facilitators⁶ for each workshop, who combined presentations and exercises on the work of the gender units with presentations by working groups on their findings. In the group activities, the facilitators commented on both the contents and on the working procedures, given that one of the objectives of the training was to ensure that participants are later able to replicate the methodology used.

6. The facilitators for the Caribbean workshop were Norma Shorey-Bryan (principal facilitator) and Juliette Maughan (assistant facilitator). For the other three workshops, the principal facilitator was Lylian Mires and the assistant facilitator was Beatriz Cueto.

After each workshop, the outcomes were evaluated and adjustments were made based on observation of the participants' learning processes, in order to strengthen what appeared to be weaker points and stress those that required further explanation. At the same time as the results of the study became known, preparation for each workshop carefully took into account the characteristics of the countries that would be participating in the next workshop, in order to prioritize the needs of particular countries with respect to institutionalizing and mainstreaming a gender perspective in the ministries of labor in the context of decent work.

It is important to note that, in addition to representatives of the gender units and Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the subregions, participants included a large number of people from different departments in the labor ministries of the host country as well as staff from other public and private institutions and trade union representatives. This mix was considered an advantage because it allowed other areas in the ministries of labor, such as the administrative or financial departments, to understand the need to make budget allocations to the gender units. Participation by other ministries was also important both to strengthen inter-agency coordination on gender issues and to open up the possibility of establishing similar units in their respective institutions. At the same time, the presence of a variety of participants added new facets to the discussions in the working groups thereby catering to the demands of other sectors on the gender units of the ministries of labor.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) also participated in the workshops, as well as in their preparation.

I.3. Short- and medium-term outlook for the institutionalization and mainstreaming of a gender approach in the ministries of labor of the americas

“Gender institutionalization” and “gender mainstreaming” are often used as synonyms to refer to the process by which an institution internalizes a gender perspective in everything it does. Nevertheless, it is necessary to differentiate between the two parts of the process if the idea is to implement the process in a given period of time.

In general, institutionalization is used to refer to a situation in which certain kinds of practices become habitual: a repetitive way of doing things that are required, which then becomes a norm or “institutionalized” form of conduct. Thus, institutionalization of a gender perspective occurs when this approach is integrated into a habitual practice within an institution.

Gender institutionalization refers to both the objectives and activities of organizations and the set of formal and informal rules followed and their execution mechanisms. In that context, it implies recognition of the existence of an inequitable system of power relations between the sexes in a society. It also implies, in light of

that recognition, the incorporation of habitual and institutionalized activities and behavior designed to reduce gender gaps, once institutional actors have appropriated the principle of gender equality in their practices. Institutionalized should not be thought of as a mere inclusion or as just one more addition to already existing structures and objectives. Rather, it is both cross-cutting and intersectoral.

For its part, gender “mainstreaming”⁷ is, according to the definition of the Group of Specialists of the Council of Europe “the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”⁸

Thus, gender mainstreaming in an institution or organization consists of embodying that approach in all the organization’s policies, strategies, programs, administrative and financial activities and even in its culture, in such a way as to truly contribute to a reduction of gender inequality.

The two processes feed into and boost one another: institutionalization of the gender approach is a prerequisite for gender mainstreaming to become embodied in all the structures and actions of an entire organization; the gender content is “mainstreamed” when an appropriate institutional structure is in place, when it has turned into a recognizably “habitual” practice in the institution and in turn reinforces the institutionality that has been built up.

In the ministries of labor, gender institutionalization is expressed both in the institutional nature of the bodies concerned (units, focal points, commissions), the position it is accorded in the structure of the organization (decision-making spheres), in the legal framework supporting the gender units (laws, conventions, agreements) - that render them, more or less, vulnerable to political swings, and in the extension of institutional gender practices to the whole of the institutional structure, including its planning, administrative, and financial units.

An important factor for establishing firmly rooted specialized gender units within the Ministry, with decision-making powers to institutionalize a gender equality approach, is the pressure that each country’s National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and Women’s Movements can exert to have the matter placed on the public agenda and thereby influence the political will of the authorities concerned.

However, experience has shown that such pressure involves more than the mere establishment of those units. Their sustainability and permanence has to be ensured by an appropriate legal and regulatory framework that

7. Gender mainstreaming was explicitly adopted by the Platform for Action of the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Beijing Platform requires that “governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.” (Beijing Platform of Action, paragraphs 79, 105, 123, 141, 164, 189, 202, 229, 238, 252, 273).

8. Council of Europe: Gender Mainstreaming. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of best practices. Final Report of activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming (EG-S-MS), Women’s Institute, Ministry of labor and Social Affairs, Documents series, No. 28, Madrid, 1999.

guarantees allocation of the funds they need to perform their functions. It is also vital to achieve their insertion into decision-making structures and their impact on policies, so that those decisions and policies are imbued with the gender perspective. So, the establishment of specialized gender units is part, but not all, of the process of institutionalizing a gender approach in the Ministries of Labor:

Unfortunately, actual practice has led to the false impression that the whole institutionalization process consists of establishing gender units. In fact, in many cases, the establishment consists of no more than appointing a single person to the job, which may not even be full-time, of looking after gender issues throughout the institution, in the belief that that is sufficient to meet a country's commitment. That is why the specialized gender units in ministries of labor are overwhelmed with work and deprived of the resources they need to do what is expected of them: gender mainstreaming in all of the Ministry's day to day work. That generates a tension between the responsibilities taken on and the actual possibility of making headway. Sometimes tier activities are limited to occasional training courses, either in-house or for other players involved with labor issues.

True institutionalization, construed as the port of entry for gender mainstreaming in organizations (in this case, the Ministries of Labor), is a commitment that the ministerial authorities should enter into on the understanding that the incorporation of a gender perspective in the policies, programs, and projects—in short, in all the activities of the ministries of labor—is an efficient and effective way to let a large percentage of the female population forge and participate in the development of their countries. Whereby, that participation should be understood in a decent work context.

Gender mainstreaming, on the other hand, is manifested by the extent to which the interests, concerns, and experiences of women and men have become an integral dimension of the process of designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating labor and employment policies and programs, in such a way as to advance the elimination of gender gaps in this field. In this sphere, the work of the specialized gender units is essential for carrying out diagnostic assessments and forward-looking, surveillance activities and for establishing partnerships within ministries and with other public institutions, workers' organizations, employers' associations, and with civil society in general. In that sense, their task is to facilitate and promote activities that manage to alter the beliefs and cultural codes that maintain long-standing routines that do not reflect on the day-to-day gender inequalities they perpetuate.

Currently, a large number of ministries of labor in the region have a GSU, although they vary in size and characteristics. At the time the workshops were held, a majority of countries in the region lacked such units. However, several have already embarked on the process of establishing one, hiring legal advisors to promote the institutionalization of a gender approach in their respective institutions. Others have reached in-house and, as yet, informal agreements, that are nevertheless moving in the right direction. In the medium term, these efforts to constitute gender units are expected to bear fruit, although care has to be taken to ensure that they

are constituted in a way that facilitates their objective of incorporating a gender approach in public policies and strengthens their long-term institutional position within the Ministry.

In those countries that do have specialized gender units, such units vary enormously in terms of both their positioning within the organizational structure and the resources they are allocated. Both those variables necessarily affect the magnitude and nature of what they can achieve in the medium term. For many of the individuals representing these units, training has been a driving force in the quest for new partnerships within institutions and with other institutions to strengthen the role of gender units. For others, training opened up new possibilities for gender mainstreaming within the different areas of the institution; in other words, they were able to make progress in the short term, which was picked up in the follow-up to the workshops.

The new interventions proposed in the GSUs Institution-Building Training Plan, such as gender audits, will undoubtedly make it possible to explore the long-term potential of the ministries of labor in the region for strengthening institutionalization and effective mainstreaming of the gender perspective. This is a still incipient process, headed by the DSDE/SEDI, the fruits of which will hopefully be shared by a growing number of institutions.



CHAPTER

2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in the Workshops on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective is an adaptation of a series of mutually reinforcing participatory methodologies. The proceedings consist of a sequence of steps required to induce in the participants a sense that they are advancing toward concrete and palpable results.

There are three key moments in Strategic Planning:

1. Identification of the problem to be solved;
2. Identification of the desired outcome after the problem has been solved;
3. Identification of a strategy for solving the problem.

2.1. Identification of the problem to be solved

Identification of the problem is fundamental, because all subsequent work depends on accurate diagnosis of it. The methodology used to identify the problem was adapted from the ZOPP (Goal Oriented Project Planning) Facilitation Methodology developed by the German technical cooperation agency Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). Using the dynamics of that approach, the participants jot down problems on cards which are then ordered into columns based on affinity, under a heading which is chosen by consensus to reflect the central idea that encompassed all the cards in the column.



Photo: CIM/OAS, Subregional Workshop for Southern Cone Countries, Paraguay, Sep. 2010



In order to build a problem tree, it was necessary to identify all the problems recorded by the GSUs and note them down on cards in answer to the question: What problems can be identified for institutionalizing the gender approach in the Ministry of Labor?

In this brainstorming exercise, the participants mentioned the problems on the cards before proceeding to order and label them according to similarities in the ideas expressed. Then, in a participatory activity, they then placed the “cause” problems on the higher part of the board, above the problems derived from them.

This helped establish those problems that had to be tackled as a matter of priority.



9. Problem analysis is a methodology derived from an extension of the logical framework developed by the Inter-American Development Bank.

2.2. Identification of the desired outcome after the problem has been solved

The objectives are established by the ideal situation. The methodology used to identify them is, once again, the ZOPP facilitation methodology for establishing “the Vision” and “the Mission” through a visualization process. This methodology can be very useful when the idea is to define an ideal situation and achieve it and when the right conditions are in place for generating a “structure” (strategy) for getting there.

However, in situations in which the day-to-day problems overwhelm the stakeholders, a prior step needs to be taken to solve some of the most acute problems through concrete actions first, before proceeding to define the desired outcome. For that, objectives analysis is used, in which the problems detected are rewritten into desired outcomes, regardless of whether achievement of this objective is short-term or addresses a structural problem.

During objectives analysis the problems on the problem tree are turned into objectives or solutions to those problems, as part of the initial step for specifying the future desired outcome, that is to say, for identifying an objective or goal.

A positive effect of objectives analysis is that it puts the work team in a better frame of mind inasmuch as it addresses problems that the team members feel to be more “urgent,” thereby creating greater willingness to work thereafter on more long-term changes. In that sense, the objectives analysis should identify strategic objectives and distinguish them from practical objectives.

Objectives analysis is also very useful if individuals lack the powers or resources to generate changes in the institutional structure but, through this exercise, can identify real circumstances in which their bringing about changes is more feasible.

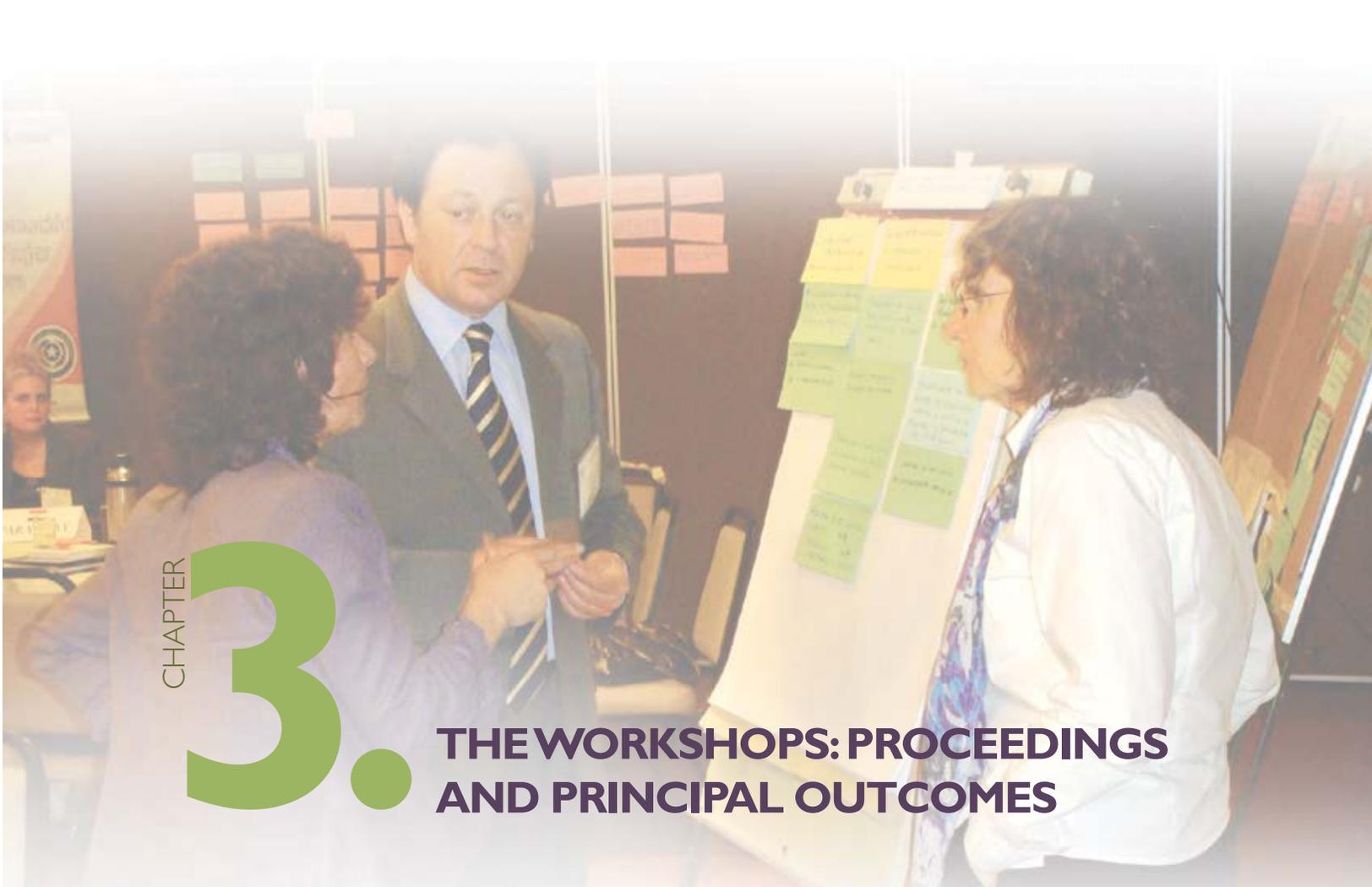
2.3. Identification of a strategy for solving the problem

Once the objectives that the work team or institution are going to address have been established, a working strategy for achieving them needs to be established.

It is in this third phase of the planning process that tasks are defined that will have to be completed in a given period of time (say, between six months and a year). At the same time, results indicators for those tasks have to be devised and the person responsible for achieving them has to be appointed. She or he will also need to know what steps will be taken and what resources will be allocated.

Only in this way a strategic planning is transformed into a real tool for bringing about change. At this stage, it is essential to generate not just qualitative, temporal, and quantitative indicators, but also gender indicators for measuring the extent to which results have concrete effects in the form of a narrowing of gender gaps.





CHAPTER

3.

THE WORKSHOPS: PROCEEDINGS AND PRINCIPAL OUTCOMES

Following the schedule of activities established for implementing the Program for Institutional Strengthening of the Labor Ministries of the Americas to Ensure Effective Gender Mainstreaming, the Permanent Secretariat of the CIM, together with the Department for Social Development and Employment of the OAS and the RIAL, began training activities, with ILO participation and financial support from the Canadian Government. All four workshops on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective were conducted in 2010. They targeted staff in charge of GSUs or relevant bodies in the Ministries of Labor and their Counterparts in the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women.

The principal objective of the workshops was to teach the methodologies used so that participants would be able to replicate them in their own countries. For that reason, special emphasis was placed in the workshops on practical exercises in applying each methodology, so that participants could really grasp it and apply it by heart.

To make them more realistic, the exercises were based on participants' own experiences and problems. However, it is important to bear in mind that, although the culling of information on the countries was in fact one of the outcomes achieved, the objective was not to conduct a diagnostic assessment of each GSU's circumstances but rather to deliver methodological tools that would enable them to strengthen the unit according to their own circumstances and support the mainstreaming process.

To get workshop activities rolling, the participants were asked to identify the main problems they faced in mainstreaming the gender approach.

The degree of institutionalization varied from country to country. Some had no GSU, others had a variety of mechanisms (a person in charge, a council, committee, commission, counseling services, and so on). Nevertheless, it became clear in the process of analyzing actual circumstances that there were major points of convergence.

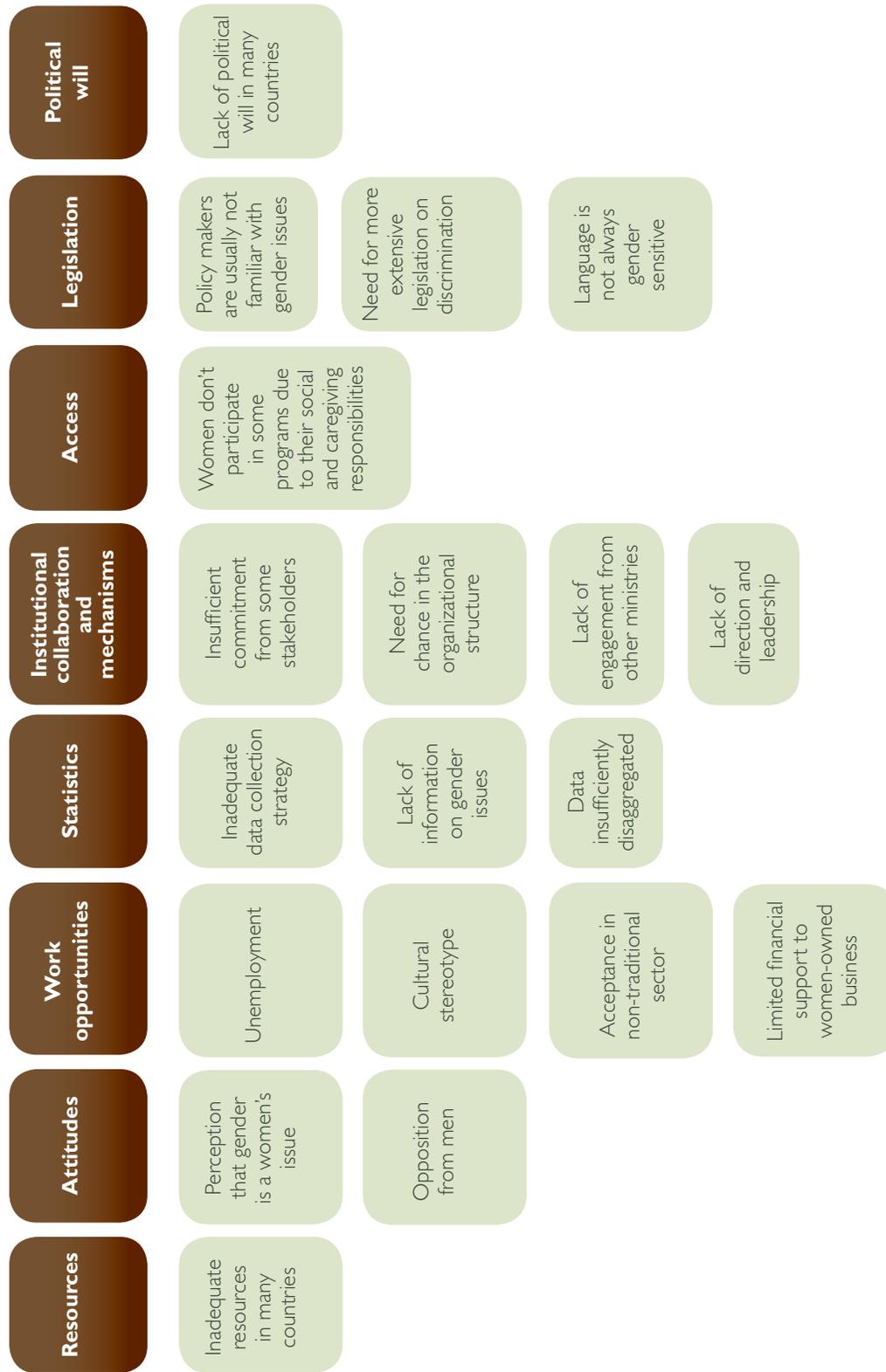
By addressing both real and fictitious problems, the participants were able to conduct the whole process of planning with a gender perspective, from problem identification to establishment of objectives, construction of indicators, and the formulation of tasks for addressing the problem and solving it.

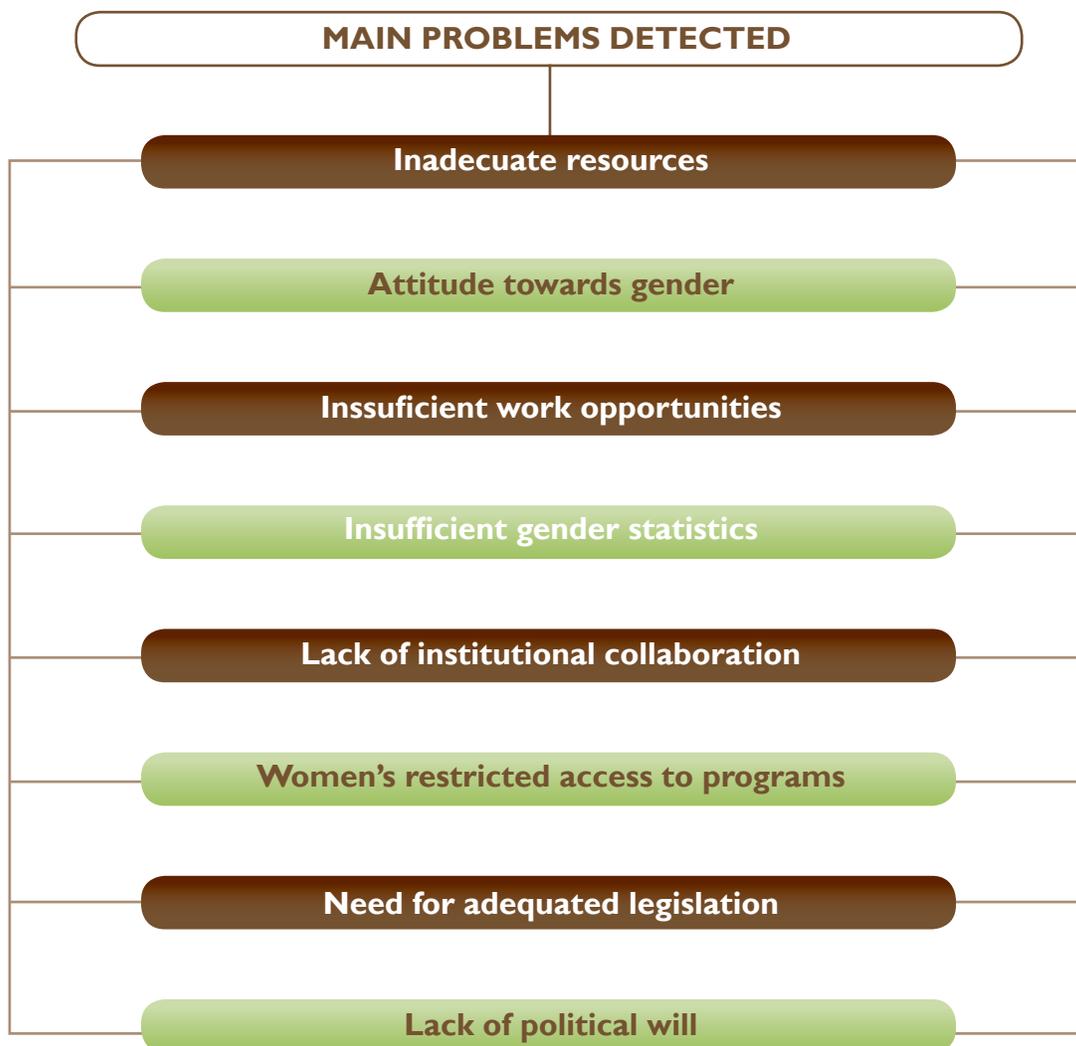
The participants' ideas were noted on flip charts and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

Following is a verbatim transcription of the problem identification exercises conducted in each of the four workshops. They show how, despite regional, climatic, ethnical, and cultural differences, the problems perceived by participants are basically the same.

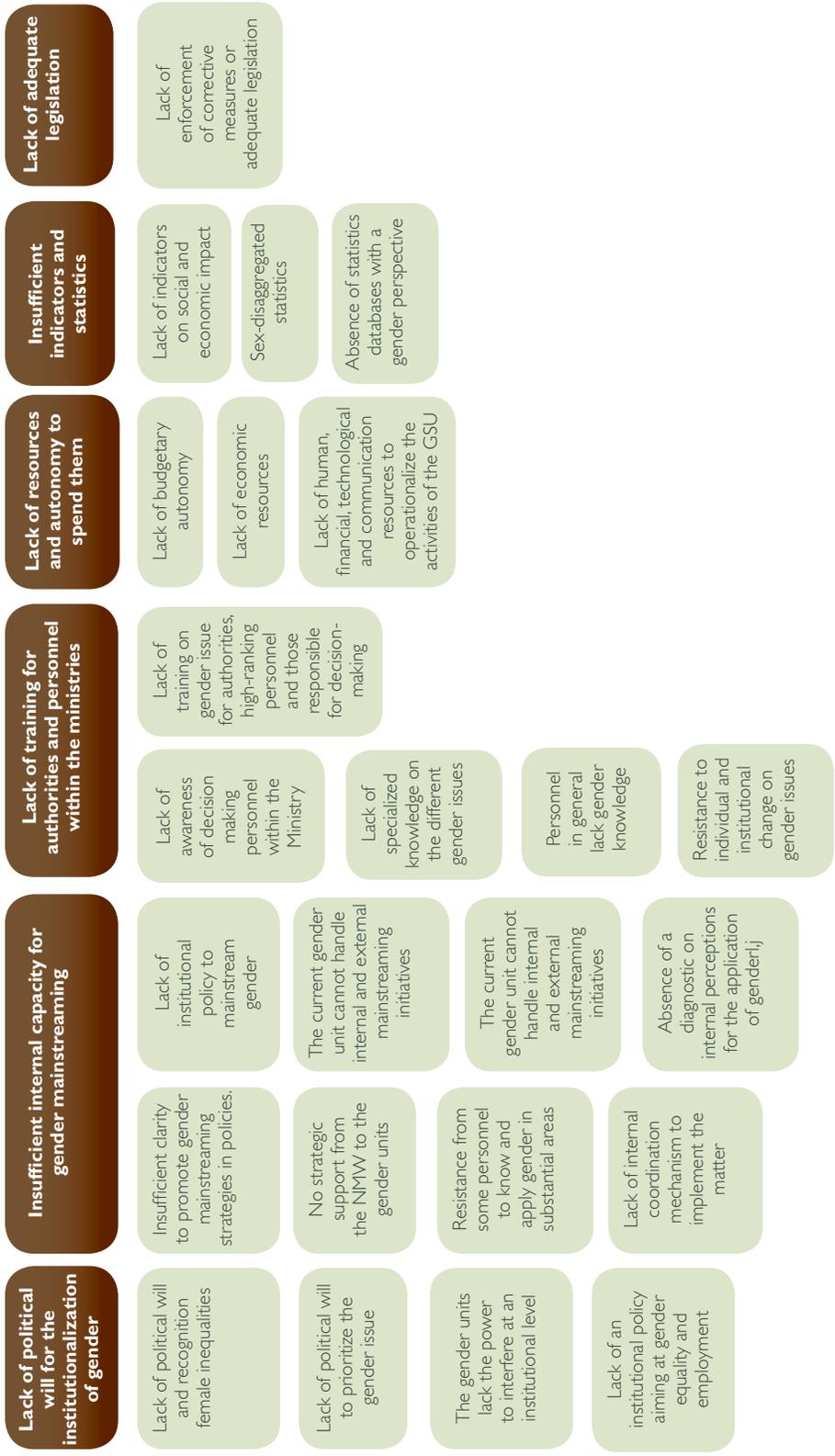
ILO actively participated in the subregional workshops, as well as in the preparations for them, as did the CARICOM Secretariat in the case of the workshop for the Caribbean countries.

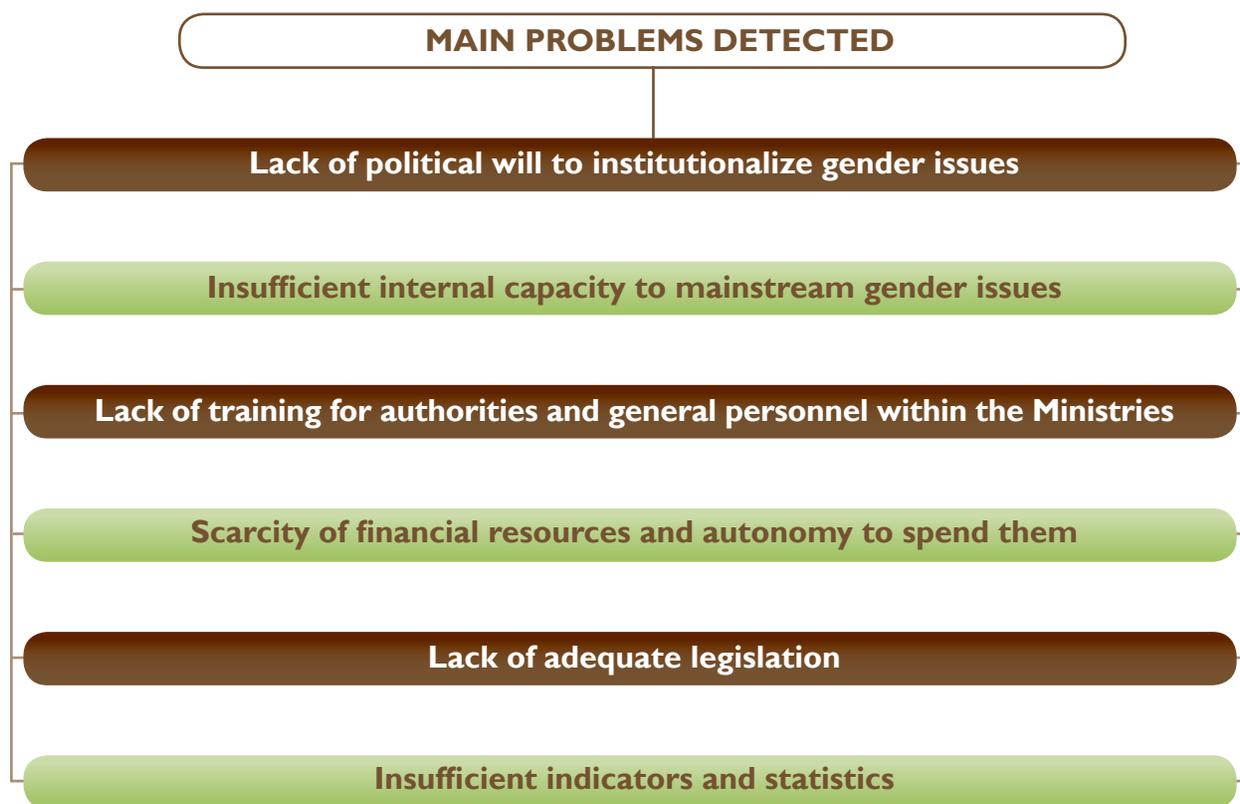
Caribbean Workshop





Workshop for Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic

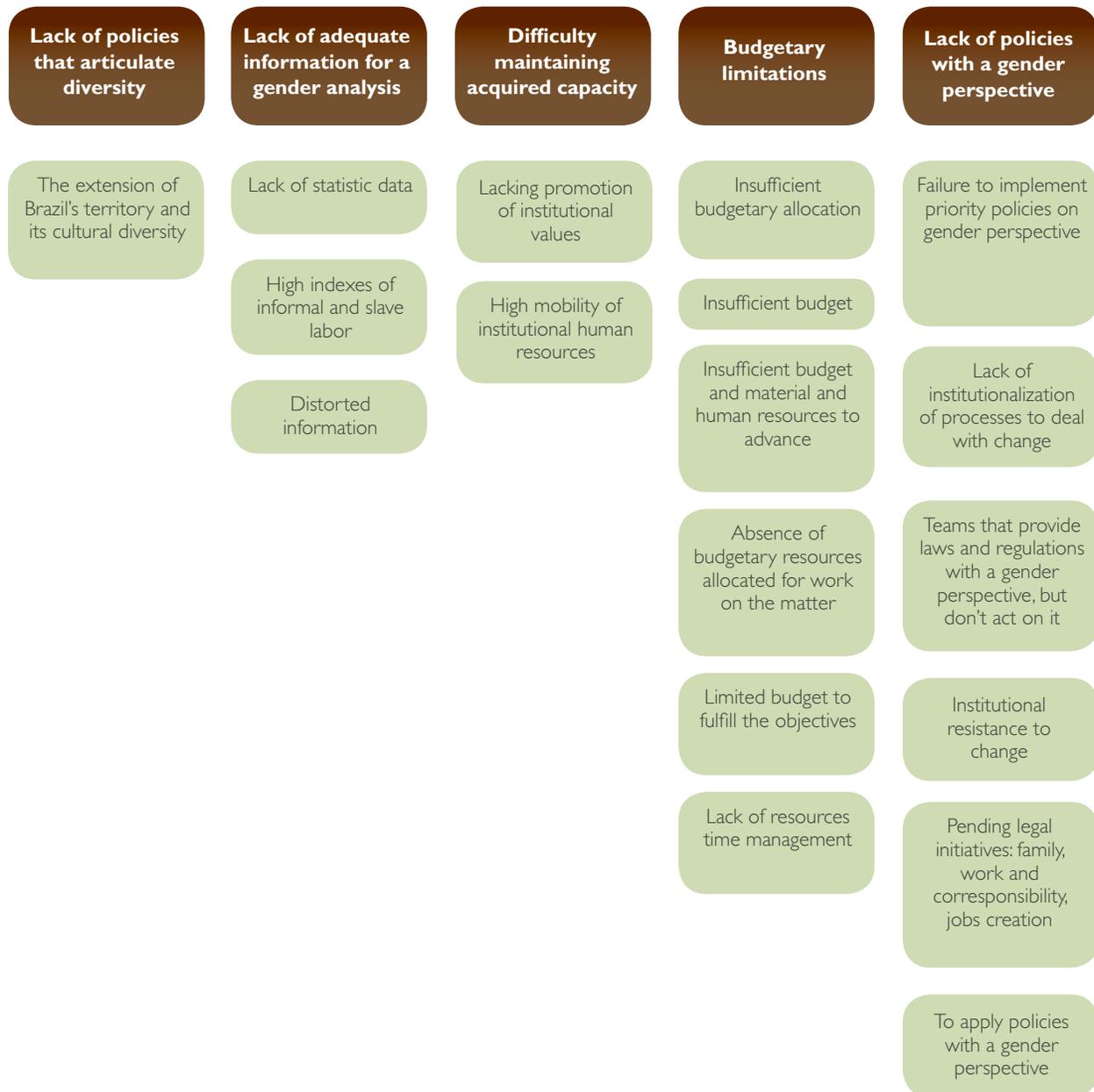


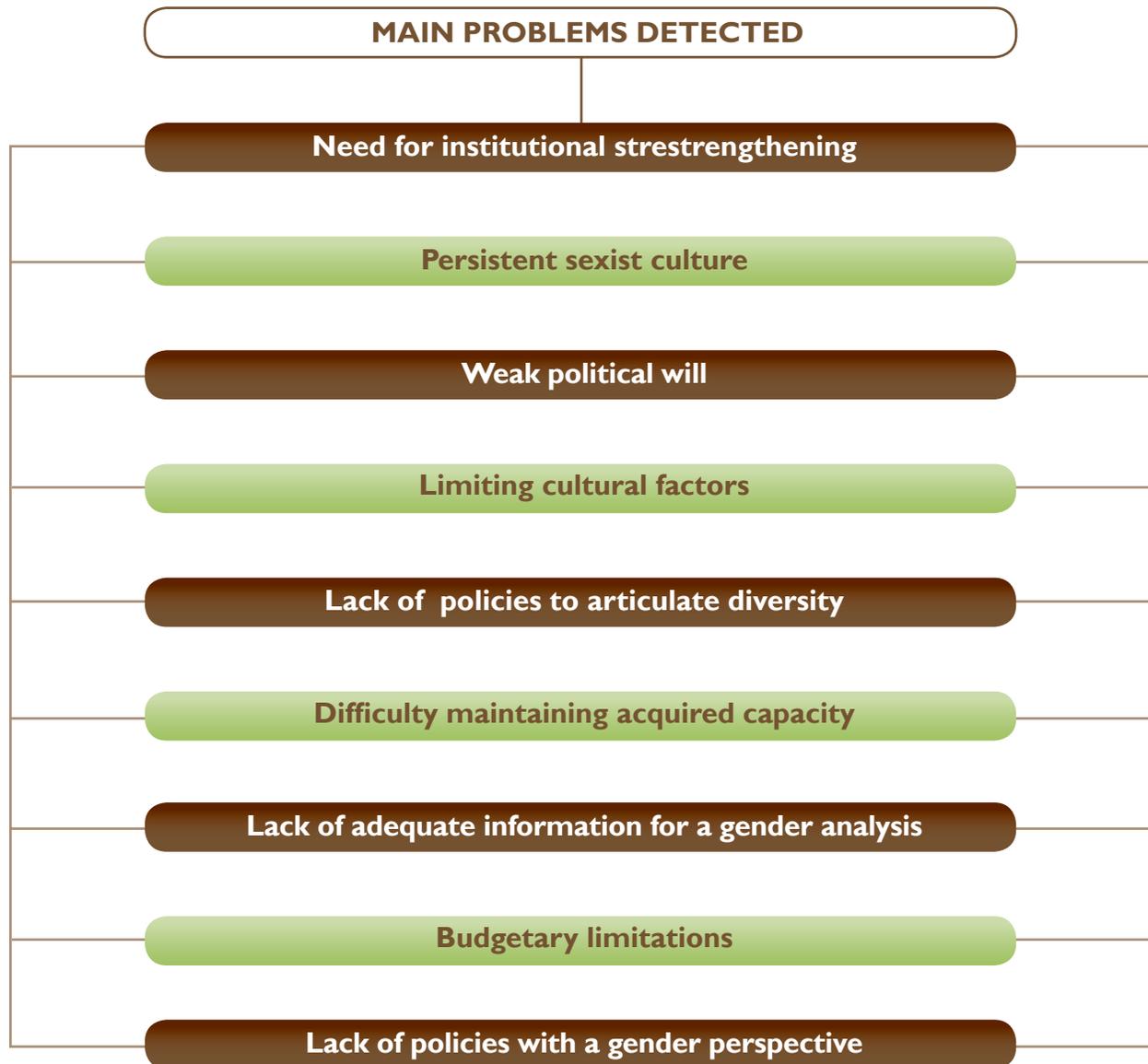


Workshop for the Southern Cone

Need for institutional strengthening		Weak political will	Persistent sexist culture	Limiting cultural factors
Scarce conceptual and methodological management of gender	Lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming	Weak political will	Marked difference in gender roles	Low self-esteem of women
Lack of training within the ministries	Few staff trained in gender to act as multipliers	Beyond the politically correct discourse it is not a priority	There is no equality in jobs and wages	Masculinizing thought of women
Difficulty perceiving gender equity as a cornerstone of public policy	Difficulty to understand that gender policies do not refer particularly to women's problems.	Limited interest to integrate and know more about gender mainstreaming	Rigid and conservative cultural parameters	Cultural factors rooted in the institutions
Strengthening of the participative strategic planning	Few personal trained on gender issues	Gender policies are not viewed as priority policies	Education does not favor gender equality	Cultural barriers that impede the importance of gender mainstreaming
Lack of real understanding of the subject by middle and top level management		The importance of women participation in policy and decision making is overlooked	Lack of knowledge on gender issues among the personnel	Differential treatment granted by same parents to daughters and sons
Empowerment of the unit within the Ministry		Policies to advance women participation on decision making are needed.	Constant rotation of personnel who are sensitized on gender perspective	A conservative and traditional view of the world

Workshop for the Southern Cone

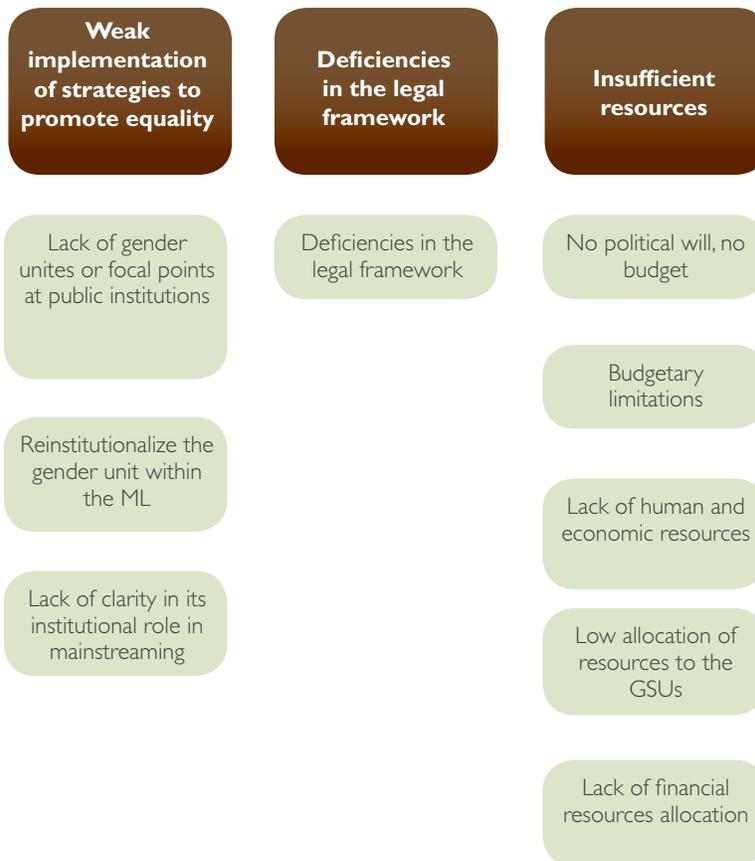


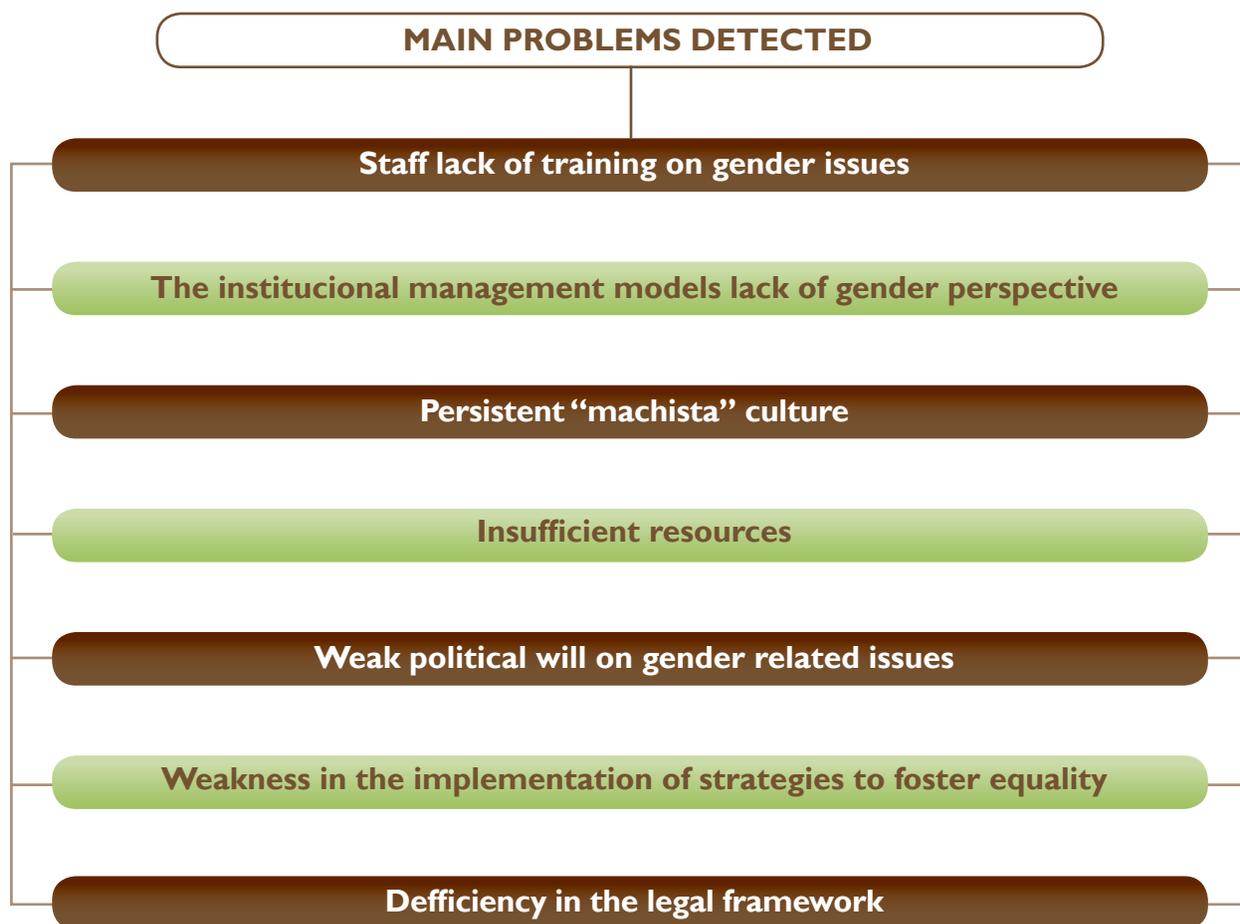


Workshop for the Andean Countries



Workshop for the Andean Countries





3.1. Consolidated summary of problems detected

As one can see, the major problems encountered are very similar, regardless of geographical area from which the participants came.

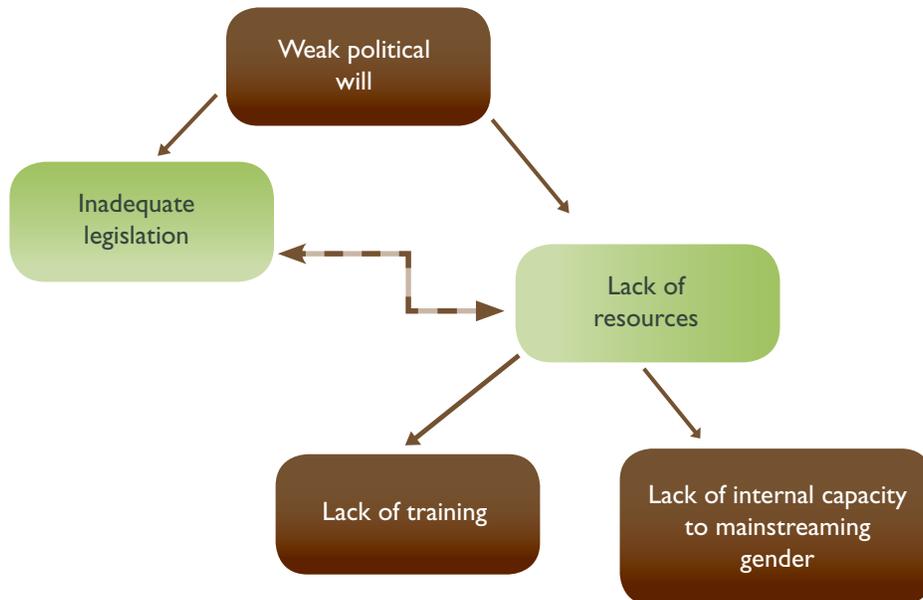


There are five major issues facing gender specialized units in Latin America and the Caribbean, and they constitute the principal obstacles for achieving the institutionalization and mainstreaming of the gender perspective in institutions.

During the workshop, the participants established a ranking or hierarchy of problems on the Problem Tree. Thus, it was generally agreed that lack of political will ranked in the top part of the tree and while its consequences are felt everywhere else, the levels at which the problem needs to be resolved are only partially accessible by the gender specialized units.

At the same time, the lack of resources results in lack of training and partly explains the shortage of internal capacity to mainstream or integrate a gender approach.

3.2. The problem tree



At the very top of the tree, the principal problem was always the lack of political will on the part of the authorities, which translated directly into the absence of an institutional policy geared to gender equity and its mainstreaming.

That basic problem explains many of the other problems besetting the gender specialized units, such as the lack of human and financial resources and the lack of training for staff.

As the participants unraveled the various layers of problems, expectations could be formulated and solutions proposed within their spheres of action in the whole course of the workshop.

It is important to bear in mind that in the workshop the working groups comprised people from different countries, so that the “planning” they engaged in consisted of a consensus regarding shared issues. This meant that the exercise triggered good ideas that they could potentially apply in their own countries, along with the methodology for Participatory Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective in which all key shareholders would have a part to play.

Nevertheless, the presence of representatives of both ministries of labor and the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women of each country made it possible, on several occasions, to reach areas of consensus that, according to the findings of the follow-up phase, eventually did turn into inter-agency working agreements.

3.3. Formulating objectives

Each group identified the Vision, Mission, and strategic objectives in a strategic matrix. In that way, they were able to grasp and apply the different layers of objectives. Once the participants had identified the objectives, they proceeded to fill in the strategic matrices, taking special care to maintain the coherence of each matrix and its consistency with the objectives, while bearing in mind the need to develop indicators.

When generating strategic objectives, attention was paid to the participants' sphere of action. That is a key consideration because once a strategy is generated it is supposed to have measurable concrete results.

Thus, although the lack of political will at the top of the Problem Tree may seem to be a fundamental obstacle, it cannot be the object of the participants' strategy because their sphere of action does not give them the clout needed to bring about an increase in political will on the part of the authorities.

The problems addressed must be limited to levels at which participants can really intervene and achieve concrete results that will eventually contribute to enhancing the authorities' political will in the medium and long term.

In that sense, the participants were well aware of the level at which the strategy had to be generated and they formulated specific short-, medium- and long-term objectives, along with the activities needed and performance indicators.

3.4. Strategic objectives outlined in the course of the workshops

Each of these points was repeated in the workshops, which encouraged the participants because they saw that they could work internally with the resources already at their disposal on improving the work being done.

It is precisely in those areas that the best results were ascertained after the workshops had ended and the participants returned to their countries of origin and began to relay what they had learned to their peers.



Definir los objetivos a corto, mediano y largo plazo para la UEG, entendiendo que es necesario contar con un plan de trabajo consensuado que permita establecer una estrategia para el logro de dichos objetivos.



Fortalecer el recurso humano de la UEG a través de la capacitación.



Elaboración de una política institucional de género, que defina la metodología y los objetivos de trabajo para incorporar el enfoque de género en el Ministerio de Trabajo.

3.5. Conclusions reached during the workshops

In all the countries that hosted the subregional workshops, there was ample support at the highest political level¹⁰, from the ministries of labor and the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women. The participants in the workshops also came from relevant backgrounds, in the sense that they were persons in charge of gender specialized units in the ministries of labor and their counterparts in the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women. The participation of staff from sectors marked the start of what will surely have to be a joint effort.

The joint participation of ministries of labor and National Machineries for the Advancement of Women was an enriching milestone for those countries in which both counterparts attended (only exceptionally did just one of the two attend). That combination had a multiplier effect on the cooperation and collaboration to be established outside the workshops. To a large extent, it also facilitated the forging of points of consensus and commitments to subsequent activities in the countries.

¹⁰The workshops benefited from the support and participation of labor ministers and ministers for the advancement of women or the highest authorities in the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the host countries. That led to special press, radio and television coverage in those countries of the topics addressed in the workshops, especially gender equality in decent work.

That being so, it can be said that the workshop was a medium that will help strengthen inter-agency cooperation between the two sectors, at both the national and subregional level. That assertion is confirmed by the answers to the follow-up questionnaire, most of which maintain that relations between the two institutions have improved since their participation in the workshop.

It is necessary to continue to expand and strengthen that inter-agency cooperation based on a shared interest in achieving effective results in terms of the generation of decent work. Boosting initiatives that strive for gender equity in the workplace can only benefit each nation.

Looking at the results, based on the participants' own analysis, it could be said that they certainly managed to apply the planning tools delivered. The outcomes shown in the strategic matrices point to outstanding "ownership" of the concepts and skills imparted in the workshop.

As already mentioned, there are major differences in the extent to which the gender approach has been institutionalized in the ministries of labor in the region, ranging from total absence of a unit, focal point or other mechanism for addressing gender mainstreaming in the institution to units endowed with a clearly established mission and objectives. Nevertheless, despite the unevenness of progress in this area, the problems continue to be of a similar nature, with varying degrees of intensity but all characterized by the five factors systematized in the workshops mentioned in the previous Chapter.

Institutionalization, that is to say, the decision to incorporate the gender approach in the structure and organizational culture of the ministries, which translates into the establishment of gender units with enough funds and autonomy to perform the functions assigned to them is a necessary step toward achieving mainstreaming of this perspective. As the workshops showed, the representatives of the ministries are aware that the institutionalization process, as the expression of the political will of the authorities to commit to gender equity in work and employment, is a decision beyond their powers. For that reason, they focused on developing strategies for doing as much as possible with the resources available, however limited they might be.

As they proceeded to identify problems and to classify them in clusters, the participants ascertained a series of weaknesses, such as those related to lack of data broken down by sex needed to make accurate diagnostic assessments. In such cases, they assigned priority to strengthening inter-agency relations with the official producers of statistics in their respective countries.

According to the views expressed by participants in the workshops, the various steps involved in strategic planning with a gender perspective that they practiced during their training gave them a useful tool not just for planning activities, but also for identifying and prioritizing objectives. To the extent that objectives can be ordered according to existing resources (and not just those of the gender unit itself),

it is possible to identify stakeholders and allies both within the ministries and in other entities with whom partnerships could be formed, which would then have a multiplier effect on resources available. At the same time, participants appreciated getting to know more about gender mainstreaming work being done in other countries.

In addition, this initiative has strengthened cooperation between the CIM, the OAS, and the ILO, in an effort in which they have a shared interest and which is backed by mandates assigned at the highest level.



CHAPTER

4. FINDINGS OF THE FOLLOW-UP PHASE

Given the considerable interest shown by the participants in the Subregional Workshops on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective and their statements that they would apply what they had learnt in their respective countries, and with a view to the objective of ensuring continuity in its actions to strengthen gender mainstreaming, the Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women, in consultation with the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment, proposed following up on activities undertaken by the ministries of labor. To that end, a questionnaire was drawn up and sent to the institutions, to be filled in by the persons who had attended the workshops. That questionnaire sought to ascertain what actions or activities had been undertaken or would be undertaken to apply the content delivered during the workshops aimed at strengthening gender mainstreaming.

A similar questionnaire was sent to the representatives of the National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women who had taken part in the workshops to hear their views as to any changes that might have occurred in the ministries of labor in their countries. The questionnaire asked, in particular, whether there had been any change in relations between the two institutions.

Another objective of the follow-up was to discover any difficulties that may have arisen with implementing measures designed to institutionalize and mainstream the gender equality approach in the ministries, from both the ministries' own perspective and that of the National Mechanism for the Advancement of Women.

4.1. Main achievements

As a first step in this follow-up, it is necessary to bear in mind that gender specialized units are at very different stages of development in the ministries of labor. In some there are none, while in others units have been established and institutionalized. In between, such units exist in a variety of manifestations, such as focal points, advisory services, and commissions. The extent of institutionalization also varies widely, with most exhibiting weakness in terms of insertion into the institutional structure and in the mechanisms needed to ensure their sustainability, such as an appropriate legal framework. As a result of those differences, the resources assigned to such units also vary significantly, although, as the workshops established, the common denominator is a shortage of human, technical, and financial resources.

Partly as a result of the above, the nature of the actions undertaken by the representatives of the ministries of Labor of the region also varies. However, less than one year after completion of the subregional workshops, numerous activities had been undertaken by the representatives of the ministries of labor and the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in the participating countries. Eighty percent of the ministries and half (50%) of the Machineries that replied¹¹ to the questionnaire had undertaken some action or activity related to the contents of the workshop on strengthening gender mainstreaming.

First, it is worth noting the initiatives embarked upon in countries in which no gender specialized unit had existed in the ministry of labor:

- In Venezuela, a major effort was made by the Ministry of the People's Power for Labor and Social Security and the Ministry of the People's Power for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality – Instituto Nacional de la Mujer (INAMUJER) to coordinate on the setting up of a gender specialized unit (through official letters and follow-up).

In INAMUJER there was a presentation and a discussion with the authorities of the Institute on the agreements and commitments undertaken in the Training Workshop on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective, with respect to the establishment, coordinated with the Ministry of Labor, of a Gender Specialized Unit (GSU). Coordination meetings also took place with representatives of the Ministry of Labor on how to move ahead with implementation of the country's commitments and the Ministry of Labor authorities were asked to establish working groups and inter-agency discussions to raise awareness of gender issues and develop strategies for establishing the GSU.

- In El Salvador, the workshop was said to have reinforced initiatives already under way to draft the Ministerial Decision to Create the Office for Gender Equity in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. That Office was in fact recently established. In addition, in May 2012, the Ministry conducted a Gender

11. The questionnaire was sent to the 29 ministries of labor and 28 National Machineries for the Advancement of Women that participated in the workshops. Replies were received from 22 ministries and 22 Mechanisms.

Audit performed by the OAS and the ILO, with Canadian Government financing, in the framework of the gender-related institution-building initiatives of the OAS. The audit yielded an up-to-date overview of the situation, which made it possible to propose an Action Plan.

- Jamaica's Bureau of Women's Affairs reported that a person had been appointed to be gender focal point in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, as well as in other ministries, departments, and agencies, as part of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (GMS) to ensure implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy adopted recently, in March 2011.
- Barbados and Belize have moved ahead, in the case of Barbados with identification of consultants to analyze the legal framework and Ministry policies, and, in the case of Belize, with identifying the assistance required to create a gender focal point.
- In Barbados, in particular, following the workshop, the Bureau of Gender Affairs met with the Human Resources and Social Research Unit in the Ministry of Labor to examine the best strategy for gender mainstreaming in labor policies, laws, and programs. It was established that the Unit would be a focal point and that all its staff would have to attend a gender training course delivered by the Bureau of Gender Affairs and that the Ministry would defray the cost of training program officials at the University of the West Indies. Finally, it was agreed that the Bureau of Gender Affairs would perform an advisory role. Another notable development in Barbados was the Ministry of Labor's swift response to the offer by the OAS and ILO to conduct a Participatory Gender Audit. That occurred in October 2011 and was the first audit of this kind to have been undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further mention is made of this later on in this report.
- Grenada expects to appoint a focal point to conduct activities within the Ministry and to coordinate with the Division of Gender and Family Affairs.
- In the Bahamas, where a gender specialized unit has yet to be established, informal talks were held with the Directors of Labor and Statistics and with representatives of the TRIFOR Committee (Members of the National Decent Work Program of The Bahamas) regarding fulfillment of the workshop's objectives.

In other countries, such as Saint Lucia and Guyana, it has not yet proved possible to establish gender specialized units. There, it is thought that technical support is required to sensitize persons in decision-making positions who could institutionalize the changes needed.

Another group of countries, including Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, and Guatemala already had gender specialized units. They all agree, in their Ministries of Labor and in their National Machineries for the Advancement of Women, that the tools they received in the workshops strengthened their work and boosted their capacity, and they say they applied them in their planning processes.

- In Mexico, the Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (INMUJERES), through the National Directorate for Gender Mainstreaming and the Directorate General for Labor Equality of the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security, has held a number of planning meetings regarding joint actions and possible agreements, strategies, and measures designed to strengthen gender mainstreaming in programs fostering labor equality between women and men.
- The Women's Directorate in Argentina reports that ties have been strengthened with gender focal points in the other ministries, the legislature, and the judiciary, as well as other agencies.
- In Uruguay, the Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres indicates that thanks to the exercises conducted in the workshop improvements have been made to strategic planning of relations and coordination with the Ministry of Social Development and other Uruguayan state agencies on the question of female domestic workers. For its part, the Ministry of Labor has embarked on major planning in a number of areas.
- Guatemala has formed a task force, composed of senior Ministry staff, to ensure implementation of the process of institutionalizing a gender and ethnicity approach, as a strategy for institutionalizing the National Policy for the Advancement of Women,
- In Peru, the representative of the Directorate General of Fundamental Rights and Occupational Safety and Health (MTPE) and the representative of the Directorate General for the Advancement of Women (MIMDES) publicly pledged to strengthen joint activities and to begin coordinating actions designed to promote equal opportunities and nondiscrimination. To that end, they developed a schedule of activities that includes in-house training in the Ministry of Labor in institutionalization and mainstreaming of the gender approach and policies to ensure equal opportunities for women and men; monitoring and evaluation of equality policies; and strengthening of the gender unit in the Ministry of Labor.
- In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Labor is examining proposals to modify its mission and vision from a gender perspective, in line with the exercises conducted in the workshop on that subject; a working agreement has been signed with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women; and consensus is said to have been reached on institutionalizing the Gender Commission within the Ministry of Labor. In addition, the Ministry of Labor reports that it has disseminated, and provided training in, the gender approach in key areas of the institution. Finally, it considers that there have been positive changes of attitude among the Ministry's Planning and Development personnel.

In other countries, external factors have slowed the pace of activities. An example is Suriname, where, although some actions have been undertaken, the change of authorities has delayed further activity. In Venezuela, major initiatives were begun by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the Women's Institute, but interrupted by weather-related emergencies. In Ecuador, too, staff changes in the Ministry of Labor and Labor Relations have delayed compliance with the agreement to raise the status of the gender unit located in the

Special Protection of Rights Directorate. No information was received from the Ministry. Nor was follow-up information received from the Ministry of Labor in Chile, which sent a representative of the National Women's Service to take part in the workshop.

4.2. Difficulties

The difficulties encountered by countries in institutionalizing and mainstreaming the gender approach in their Ministries of Labor mainly stem from lack of training and sensitization of Ministry staff to the gender issues, which for many is synonymous with looking after "women." One of the most recurrent difficulties impeding their work is the lack of both financial and human resources, as well as time.

Some problems of a cultural nature were also identified relating to an ongoing male sexist ("machista") culture and resistance to the change involved in introducing a gender perspective in institutional processes.

Another set of perceived problems have to do with changes in the authorities in certain ministries that have delayed institutionalization processes already under way and pledged.

A glance at the aforementioned list of difficulties encountered shows that they are of the same nature as those that surfaced in the initial diagnostic assessment carried out in the study entitled Institutionalization of a Gender Approach in the Ministries of Labor of the Americas. They also echo the problems identified by the participants in the workshops referred to in the foregoing Chapter. Such difficulties stem from weak institutionalization of the gender specialized units in their respective ministries, which is reflected in the dearth of resources of all kinds allocated to gender issues. Undoubtedly, the lack of resources makes it more difficult for the gender units to provide sensitization and training courses within the ministries, thereby creating a vicious circle: persons in decision-making positions who have not been sensitized to the importance and benefits of incorporating a gender approach in labor and employment policies and programs for generating decent work do not assign priority to allocating resources for those units because they have no inkling that it is an investment with high social and economic returns for their countries.

For the GSUs, these are difficulties that they are generally not in a position to solve because, as pointed out above, they involve institutionalization issues that they may not be able to change in the short term; generally speaking, it is a matter of forging political will in the authorities, which may be influenced by external factors. Here, gender units may be able to bring about changes indirectly by forming partnerships with women movements and civil society organizations and, above all with the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women.

On this matter, several countries have requested technical assistance from international organizations for institution-building with regard to gender units in their ministries of labor (for instance, El Salvador, Barbados,

Suriname, and Belize). There are also signs of an interesting rapprochement between the Ministries of Labor and National Machineries for the Advancement of Women (for example, in Peru and Venezuela).

The importance of political will for robust institutionalization and mainstreaming of a gender approach is evident in countries that report no difficulties, such as Mexico, where the gender perspective is strongly embedded in the State, and in countries that claim not to have encountered problems due to support of this process by the highest authority in the Ministry of Labor (examples are El Salvador, Panama, and the Dominican Republic).

4.3. Support needs for implementation of activities

When consulted regarding past and future needs for carrying out activities conducive to gender mainstreaming in all areas of the Ministry of Labor, practically all countries mention the need for technical and financial support. Technical and financial report is required, on the one hand, to develop trained human resources, who can in turn train ministry personnel and thereby facilitate the gender mainstreaming process. At the same time, countries also see technical and financial support as a vehicle for project implementation.

Greater familiarity with successful cases of incorporation or mainstreaming was also mentioned on several occasions as a support need felt by gender counterparts in the Ministries of Labor.

It is worth underscoring the type of support requested by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of El Salvador, which has embarked on an interesting process of strengthening the gender perspective with the ILO and which conducted a Gender Audit, supported by the OAS and the ILO, to consolidate that process.

4.4. Changes perceived as a result of participation in the workshop

There are several different dimensions to perceptions of changes that have taken place and are attributed to participation in the workshop. On the one hand, emphasis is placed on the way in which people think of the work of the GSUs, on the way they approach the tasks assigned to them, and on changes in personal perceptions of the scope of the work to be done. For example, participation in the workshop is cited as having provided greater insight into the importance of incorporating a gender approach in all aspects of work, including relations with interested parties or stakeholders (Trinidad and Tobago); or greater awareness of gender issues in interacting in a number of committees, in which an effort is being made to ensure gender equity (Belize). In Suriname they say that the workshop afforded insight into how objectives are to be envisaged and into the need for creativity in that regard.

In the Dominican Republic, they say that they have experienced changes of attitude in the third cross-cutting theme (equal opportunities and nondiscrimination) in all the Ministry's work and that they are managing to persuade management to incorporate a gender perspective in their institutional programs, plans, and projects.

For its part, Barbados envisages changes on a broader scale and attributes to the workshop a change in the Ministry's approach to labor market analysis, policy, and development.

Several countries mention changes in planning processes. For instance, Argentina points out that in the gender unit in the Ministry of Labor, procedures are now being planned more thoughtfully, with priority being given to the team's management capabilities and to the coordination of activities with other areas. In Peru, changes have been made to the guidelines for formulating the Ministry's strategic and operational plans and steps have been taken to produce sectoral statistics broken down by sex. In Uruguay, they consider the training they received in strategic planning to be a tool that not only facilitated proceedings during the workshop but also made it possible to share experiences by employing a specific methodology with the potential to stimulate group reflection, above all on how to identify and influence in a planned manner inequalities in the policies and programs pursued by the ministries of labor.

In Venezuela, the staff at INAMUJER report that they have implemented strategic planning principles in a participatory management process that guarantees institutionalization of the gender approach in the Venezuelan State. Stakeholder analysis has been adopted with a view to identifying the individuals, groups, and institutions that in some way are decisive for implementing programs and projects. They also claim to have attached importance to the construction of indicators for monitoring the actions of institutions and public agencies in relation to the institutionalization of a gender approach.

4.5. Relations with national machineries for the advancement of women

Representatives of 14 of the National Machineries for the Advancement of Women attending the workshops consider that their relations with their counterparts in the Ministries of Labor of their respective countries have improved; six consider it unchanged and only one country thought that it had deteriorated.

The reasons why, for some, inter-agency relations improved included having got to know each institution's difficulties in incorporating a gender approach; the opportunity to dispel doubts; and the ability to establish working ties and greater collaboration. In the only country that reported a deterioration of relations, that was due to changes of authorities in the Ministry hampering the communication that had previously been established.

4.6. Future activities

Practically all countries have planned gender mainstreaming activities for the near future.

These activities cover a range of areas, although some distinct trends are discernible. Notably, there are activities planned in several countries that are geared to the establishment of a gender unit or focal point in the labor ministry. This is the case in those countries that, after attending the workshop, pledged to promote a gender counterpart (Belize, Saint Lucia, the Bahamas, and Grenada).

Then there are a number of activities related to training staff of the ministries of labor and other stakeholders (Argentina, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Grenada, Guyana, Peru, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic), which are perceived to be an extension of the training courses already under way and which, in most countries, constitute the chief activity of the GSUs.

Prominent among activities planned for the future are those actions geared to designing and/or implementing gender mainstreaming plans within the ministries (Venezuela's Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming in the Ministry; Costa Rica's Gender Equality and Equity Policy in the MTSS; El Salvador's Drafting of a Gender Mainstreaming Policy in the MTPS; Guatemala's Implementation of the Labor Component of the National Policy for the Advancement and Integral Development of Women by means of the Institutional Strategic Gender Plan). Along similar lines, some countries – especially Caribbean countries – are proposing activities related to the National Decent Work Program (Suriname and The Bahamas).

Finally, countries like Brazil or Panama, are focusing their planned activities for the future on strengthening gender mainstreaming in their respective ministries. Other countries, such as Paraguay and Saint Lucia, are emphasizing the breaking down of statistics by sex and age as tasks to be accomplished in the near future. All these actions cited by representatives of the Ministries of Labor testify to a firm intention to continue forging ahead with the mainstreaming or incorporation of a gender approach.

SOUND PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND MAINSTREAMING OF A GENDER EQUALITY APPROACH

Analysis of the replies received to the follow-up questionnaire from both the ministries of labor and the National Machineryes for the Advancement of Women reveals a fair number of sound practices with respect to gender mainstreaming in different countries. Following is an account of those experiences.

Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, Decree 974-01 expressly mandates the establishment of a Gender Equity and Development Office in each ministry for the purpose of incorporating the gender perspective in policies, actions, programs, and projects, in coordination with the Ministry for the Advancement of Women.

Article 5 of Regulation 163-04, which established the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, stipulates that each Gender Equity and Development Office “shall establish the Work Committee, which shall function ad hoc and be composed of one representative of each area in the different ministries, so as to guarantee incorporation of the gender perspective in each and every action of the institution.” The Ministry of Labor is currently working on implementation of that goal.

The Ministry of Labor has a new organizational structure approved by the Ministry of Public Administration, which includes a Department on Gender Equity. That Department has in turn reached a consensus with the key areas of the Department of Labor to establish the Institutional Gender Commission to achieve gender mainstreaming in the institution.

Uruguay

The National Directorate of Employment of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Uruguay established “gender mainstreaming¹² in all its key activities” as one of eight strategic goals for 2010-2015.

It was based on the notion that employment and training policies must necessarily take into account not only the requirements and demands of the productive apparatus but also the characteristics, circumstances, and motives of the persons addressed by the actions undertaken. In that sense, the gender perspective involves and runs through all work processes and consequently encompasses all areas and spheres of an institution's activities.

The ultimate objective is to ensure that: “planning of the activities of the Public Centers for Employment incorporates objectives and performance targets that make specific reference to the gender dimension.”¹³

In the Public Centers for Employment, which acts as the local executors of public policies on employment and as promoters of regional development strategies, this process began with reflection on how to “dismantle” socially attributed gender roles as a prior step for identifying the inequalities encountered between women and men in the job market and subsequently addressing them.

An ad hoc, inter-areas working group was established for this purpose, coordinated by the Gender Advisory Office, which amounted to an innovative approach to this issue. It was in this context and during preparations for the workshop that the departments were asked about their familiarity with the gender approach.

In November 2010, with the support of the Spanish Cooperation Agency, a workshop was held on “Incorporation of the Gender Dimension in the Activity of the Public Centers for Employment” and attended by staff from provincial offices.

Mexico

Mexico's labor policy is governed by two strategic priorities: economic policy and social policy. Each relates to strategic themes in the 2007-2012 National Development Plan: Theme 2. A competitive economy that generates jobs and Theme 3. Equal Opportunities.

Based on Theme 3, Equal Opportunities, under “gender equity,” the Secretariat of Labor and Social Security of Mexico (STPS) committed in its Sectoral Program to devising a policy for equal opportunities for women and men through affirmative actions and labor practices that foster equity in income, mobility, and job stability.

¹² It was preceded by the National Employment Generation Strategy (2005), which incorporates the principles and contents of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, as well as the First National Opportunities and Rights Plan (PIODNA) 2007-2011, the First Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment Plan agreed upon by the Tripartite Commission on Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment, which establish objectives and strategic guidelines for action.

¹³ DINA-E-MTSS Planificación Estratégica 2010-2015, page 46.

The Mexican Government's program-budget is based on a logical framework methodology. That tool facilitates planning with a vision, strategic objectives, and activities, with activities prioritized according to feasibility.

Personnel from each area in the STPS responsible for planning and follow-up in their respective units have taken part in the strategic planning process.

Based on the methodology adopted in the guidelines set by the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, Mexico uses indicators to measure implementation of actions designed to comply with the commitments undertaken in the Labor and Social Security Sector Program and evaluates outcomes.

The Results Indicators Matrix (MIR) contains both quantitative and qualitative indicators and the periodicity with which reports must be produced.

In addition, the Expenditure Budget of the Federation (Annex 10, specifically) includes activities under the heading "Promotion of Gender Equity and Nondiscrimination in the Labor Market" undertaken in actions and programs coordinated by the Directorate General for Labor Equality.

Panama

The Gender and Labor Office is a body reporting to the Management Office (Despacho Superior) of the Ministry of Labor and Labor Development (MITRADEL). It was established by Resolution D.M. 131-2010 of April 28, 2010. Its objectives include permanent strengthening of the in-house institutional capacities of counterparts with a view to enhancing knowledge of, and the ability to handle, simplified and flexible concepts relating to gender mainstreaming in development projects and accessing the job market.

The Gender Office in the Ministry currently has an Office Chief, a social worker, two assistant psychologists, and one public relations specialist. Within the organizational structure of the Ministry, the Office is at the Advisory Level.

The First Annual Operating Program (AOP) was prepared for 2011 - 2012, as a prerequisite for receiving its own funds for carrying out the Office's activities.

The Gender and Labor Office is rooted in Law 4 of January 29, 1999, which instituted equal opportunities for women. A cooperation agreement was also concluded between MITRADEL and INAMU, one of whose objectives is to coordinate with public and private institutions programs and projects designed to foster actions aimed at eradicating or reducing the structural causes of gender inequality.

Barbados

Following the Workshop for Caribbean countries on Strategic Planning with a Gender Perspective and as part of the activities scheduled in the Ministries of Labor Institution-Building Plan, the DSDE/OAS and the ILO sent an invitation to some Caribbean countries to take part in a Participatory Gender Audit. The Minister of Labor responded rapidly to that invitation and voiced her interest in boosting gender mainstreaming in the Ministry. Accordingly, the Ministry of Labor agreed to undergo a gender audit.

A Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) is both a tool and a mechanism based on a participatory methodology for promoting institutional learning processes regarding practical and effective ways of incorporating gender considerations at the individual level, in work stations, and in the organization as a whole. The mechanism is used to examine whether in-house practices and related support systems designed to incorporate gender considerations are effective and mutually reinforcing and whether they are monitored. Based on the findings, the exercise identifies the principal shortcomings and problems as well as ways to correct them and suggests possible improvements and new ideas.

A 5-person team, consisting of ILO and OAS representatives, was warmly welcomed by the Ministry, which gave them full access to the information requested via interviews, focal groups, and workshops. The final report will shortly be delivered to the Minister with recommendations to be implemented in the various units of the Ministry of Labor. With DSDE/OAS assistance, a Plan of Action will be drawn up for implementing the Audit's recommendations.

6.

**CONCLUSIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is evident that the joint work of the OAS and the CIM, with the support of the ILO and active participation and effort on the part of the member states, through their ministries of labor and Machineries for the Advancement of Women, especially since 2005, are producing results. The Inter-ministerial Dialogue of the highest authorities of both sectors in the framework of the XVII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, held in El Salvador in November 2011, is perhaps the most incontrovertible proof, politically speaking, of both sectors' commitment to advance gender equality in the context of decent work.

The political commitment is being accompanied by technical activities, which include subregional workshops, studies, and technical assistance missions of the CIM and the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) of the OAS. Following up on all those activities and thanks to renovated interest in promoting the gender perspective in the workplace, the countries have engaged in important activities at the national level as this document shows, including gender audits and the consolidation of gender specialized units.

The information compiled for this paper clearly shows that the main obstacles to gender mainstreaming have to do with the shortage of human, technical, and financial resources and with lack of political will.

These obstacles derive from, are maintained, and are exacerbated by insufficient understanding of the scope of gender mainstreaming in the structure of ministries and, as was mentioned in all the workshops, by the persistence of a culture still riddled with gender stereotypes. All that must be seen against the backdrop

of weak political will on the part of a large number of governments in the region to incorporate the gender perspective as a cross-cutting force driving development.

It is still not generally perceived that there are reasons of equality and equity, as well as efficiency, for incorporating a gender perspective in public policies. It is in the labor sphere that the counterproductive effects of gender inequalities are most evident: the inequitable status of women in the labor market is a common denominator of all countries in the region. It is evidenced in less participation in the labor market, in a major female unemployment gap, in less access to training, and in lower wages for the same job than those of male peers.

All of that has resulted in under-use of the female labor force, which, due to market inequities, has a low share of the labor market. That in turn leads to underperformance of the economy as a whole, which produces and distributes less than it could, leading, as a result, to a lower economic growth rate. In addition to this brake on economic growth, underutilization of female labor also results in a large number of people, mostly women, who, in order to circumvent the obstacles to their access to the job market on the right terms, that is to say, decent work, turn to self-employment or low productivity activities, or else are underemployed, unemployed, or just inactive. This creates a mass of people with insufficient income to satisfy all their needs and increasing poverty.

The structure of the Ministries of Labor is therefore an ideal scenario for ensuring that gender equality permeates everything they do. For that to come about, the whole organization – all its units, divisions, departments, and decision-making levels – have to unite around a work plan that they have agreed upon in a participatory process. Gender analysis has to permeate the entire structure and be regarded as a decision-making tool.

Gender mainstreaming affords a significant opportunity for institutional change that takes time to implement, among other reasons because often the persons responsible for formulating policies lack the necessary training. Often enough that inability is accompanied by reluctance and unwillingness to implement it.

Gender sensitization of all Ministry personnel, as well as of all the other players involved in the labor sphere, is vital for dispelling the myths, prejudices, and stereotypes on which gender inequality is based. Nevertheless, the experiences reviewed showed that in this field there is a danger of overdoing the role of training to the detriment of forging structures that create the framework needed to establish gender mainstreaming within ministries of labor.

It is understandable that most of the work of the Gender Specialized Units (GSUs) is based on training and sensitization and they plan to keep it that way. It is a fact that staff are needed who grasp the importance of orienting labor and employment policies toward gender equality. Moreover, it often proves easier to train than to undertake other activities proper to gender mainstreaming for which they may be unprepared or for which

the human and financial resources are lacking, or, most frequently of all, the GSU's position in the institutional hierarchy means that it lacks the clout to carry out tasks that require higher decision-making powers.

In many ministries of labor, the GSU does not have access to decision-making, has a reduced staff, and lacks a budget of its own. That same disadvantageous position also prevents the people in charge from choosing other strategies, such as training other people in management positions and monitoring compliance with an action plan within the institution, charging the cost involved to the budgets of those other units after having them understand that incorporation of a gender perspective is a responsibility of the institution, not just of the GSU.

It is clear that the hierarchical position of the GSU will be a key factor in determining how much say it can have in policies, and that this depends on the political will of the authorities and their grasp of the importance of gender mainstreaming. If their understanding of it is favorable, the institutional transformation process could be headed by management itself, which would greatly facilitate matters.

Unfortunately, that is not usually the case, because the establishment of the GSUs has often been due to external pressure on the authorities exerted by international commitments, due to pressure from the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women and/or women's movements. For that reason, GSUs sometimes have the outward appearance of units but in fact lack powers, resources, and a clear mandate to do the work for which they were supposedly established. In this case, the persons in charge have to overcome a series of hurdles and hostilities in order to bring about the profound changes that gender mainstreaming requires. That is why GSUs need to acquire the ability to generate internal and external partnerships and negotiating skills.

Whether or not a GSU is maintained depends to a great extent on the strength of the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in the public administration and on that of civil society organizations, especially women's organizations. The GSU needs to maintain smooth relations of cooperation and inter-agency coordination with both types of organization. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen its capacity to drive, support, control, and monitor the gender mainstreaming strategy.

Finally, it is necessary to insist that, in order to achieve gender mainstreaming, it is not enough to introduce a few gender considerations in public labor and employment policies. It cannot be conceived as a partial transformation encompassing some parts of processes. What is needed are changes of substance in the structure, the organizational culture, and the whole process by which policies are developed.

Undoubtedly, if gender mainstreaming is not backed by the highest levels in the organization, it will be a long-term process. Yet even if the authorities do back it, the process needs funding, and permanent oversight and evaluation.

The experience of countries in which these processes have been building up for some time already, as in the European Union¹⁴, shows that there are factors that can expedite gender mainstreaming. They include the availability of disaggregated statistics to facilitate diagnostic assessments and monitoring of processes and training programs for both Labor Ministry personnel and interlocutors involved in decision-making. Another key factor is the establishment and improvement of transparent accountability systems.

Achieving gender mainstreaming in the ministries of labor of the Americas is neither easy nor quick. Nevertheless, the efforts that are undertaken and the fruits that we are beginning to glimpse provide powerful encouragement not just to the institution itself but to the whole of a country's public administration.

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Annexes

**TABLE I. CHANGES INTRODUCED
ANSWERS BY MINISTRIES OF LABOR – (TEXTUAL)**

Taking into account the content of the Workshop, have you incorporated any changes or adjustment in your process of work (procedure, methodology, relationships, etc)?

Countries	Yes/No	What Kind?
Mexico	No	
Argentina	Yes	Los procedimientos se comenzaron a realizar con mayor planificación. Se ha priorizado la capacidad de gestionar del equipo de la CEGIOT y promover articuladamente acciones con otras áreas.
Bahamas	Yes	<p>Informal discussions have been held with the Directors of Labour and Statistics and with representatives of the TRIFOR Committee (Partners of The Bahamas' Decent Work Country Programme) with a view to fulfilling the objectives of the Workshop. Identifying approaches to strategically integrate gender perspectives in the Ministry of Labour is challenging due to the absence of a focal point person. Additionally, The Bahamas does not yet have a National Gender Policy.</p> <p>Discussions of the objectives of the workshop have also been ongoing with the representative from Jamaica. Proposed plans are underway (to be shared with other participants) for a regional plan of action for strategic planning with a gender perspective. One of the aims of the initial discussions was to establish a virtual forum with all participants of the workshop to share experiences on the progress made and challenges met with respect to Gender Mainstreaming within the Ministries of Labour in the region. (The Bureau of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Development)</p>
Bolivia	Yes	Capacitaciones sobre temas de los Derechos de la Mujer y desarrollo de Seminarios, Talleres y Proyectos con referencia al tema.
Brazil	Yes	Estamos em construção de um projeto para transversalizar a perspectiva de gênero com as áreas finalísticas de nosso Ministério.
Guyana		N/A
Paraguay	No	
Peru	Yes	En los lineamientos para la formulación de planes estratégicos y operativos del MINTRA, estableciendo la producción de estadística sectorial diferenciada por sexo.
Suriname	Yes	The workshop has contributed to the way you, the manner, to approach objectives. You have to be specific (go in depth) in your objectives and how you wish to reach the objectives and find alternative ways to reach goals. To be creative.
Uruguay	Yes	La posibilidad de participar en el taller, fundamentalmente contribuyó a comenzar a conocer a nivel técnico los procesos que se están desarrollando en los ministerios de la región. Poder compartir los logros, las dificultades, las formas de abordarlas, enriquece, despierta interrogantes e integra nuevos procedimientos en el abordaje de la temática, de acuerdo a la realidad institucional nacional.
Venezuela		N/A
Bahamas		

TABLE I. CHANGES INTRODUCED**ANSWERS BY MINISTRIES OF LABOR – (TEXTUAL)**

Taking into account the content of the Workshop, have you incorporated any changes or adjustment in your process of work (procedure, methodology, relationships, etc)?

Countries	Yes/No	What Kind?
Barbados	Yes	The workshop has changed the Ministry's approach to labour market analysis, policy and programme development. The gender dimension of any on-going or pending initiative has become a major consideration when planning. Furthermore, the relationship with the Bureau of Gender Affairs has been strengthened.
Belize	Yes	I have been more conscious of the issue of Gender and in my interactions on various committees (e.g. Rural Development and Local Government) where the CEO Human Development with responsibility for Gender Issues, also participates) efforts are made to ensure Gender equity. A National Policy on Rural Development, for example, currently in the process of development, also takes account of the issue of Gender
Costa Rica	No	Ante el cambio de administración se debe experimentar un acomodo a las prioridades que definen las nuevas autoridades
El Salvador	Yes	Contemplar la adaptación de la metodología utilizada para la elaboración del plan de trabajo cara a la formulación de la Política de Equidad entre los Géneros del MTPS
Grenada	No	
Guatemala	Yes	Se hizo una articulación con el Plan Estratégico Institucional de Género y la Política Nacional de Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres PNPDIM y Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades –PEO- 2008 – 2023.
Panama	No	
Dominican Republic	Yes	Cambios de actitudes del tercer eje transversal en todo el quehacer del Ministerio de Trabajo. Trabajo en equipo y la descentralización de las operaciones de la estructura. Acercamiento a los altos directivos para que incorporen la perspectiva de género en sus programas, planes y proyectos institucionales.
St. Lucia	Yes	LMIS modified to capture male/female data

**TABLE 2. FUTURE ACTIVITIES
ANSWERS BY MINISTRIES OF LABOR – (TEXTUAL)**

In the near future, can you visualize the possibility to implement actions that contribute to mainstreaming gender in your Ministry?

Countries	Yes/No	Description
Mexico	No	
Argentina	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuar y profundizar la implementación de la capacitación interna a los agentes que trabajan en todo el país y conocen la problemática del territorio. - Extender las acciones en relación a la promoción del Programa sobre nuevas trayectorias laborales para oficios no tradicionales para el género. - Continuar con las otras capacitaciones planificadas hacia otros actores.
Bahamas	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a need to formally establish a focal point from the Ministry of Labour to work with the Bureau of Women's Affairs to advance gender mainstreaming. - The promotion and awareness-raising of issues concerning gender equality and equity with Management and staff of the Department of Labour. Thereafter, an ongoing training programme should be developed to deepen the knowledge base of gender issues and equip staff to assist in training other stakeholders on gender issues. - The training of staff in gender issues would allow for the implementation of gender disaggregated data, i.e. sex, economic and social status, inter alia, within the Ministry of Labour. - Organize public forums to discuss labour legislation and how they impact on women and men in the workplace. Also discussions should be held on the ILO Conventions, including the CEDAW Convention that The Bahamas has ratified, and how its contents may be incorporated into national legislation. - Encouraging the commitments made by the Minister with responsibility for Labour and the TRIFOR team on the Decent Work Country Programme, which included (i) institutional strengthening of the Department of Labour; (ii) making social dialogue central to policy-making in the area of education and training, and (iii) revising labour legislation and promoting respect for labour standards. - Encouraging regular meetings and adequate representation of the TRIFOR Committee to follow-up on the actions indicated in (5).
Barbados	Yes	The Ministry of Labour is currently in the process of drafting a national employment policy which will seek to address, inter alia, gender issues as it pertains to employment creation and the enhancement of the labour supply through education and training.
Bolivia	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dar cumplimiento a la Normativa Legal inscrita en nuestra Nueva Constitución Política del Estado (NCPE), así como en diferentes instrumentos Internacionales. - Realizar Capacitaciones a los inspectores de trabajo para que estos hagan un seguimiento a nivel Nacional referidos al tema.
Brazil	Yes	O MTE fortalecerá a transversalidade que existe com a SPM (Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres).
Guyana		Firstly, training programmes must be held with the relevant staff in senior positions capable of instituting the necessary changes in future work plans and projects. Once they are sensitive to the need, they 'hopefully' will initiate the necessary changes.
Paraguay	Yes	Estadísticas con la discriminación en cada sector por género

**TABLE 2. FUTURE ACTIVITIES
ANSWERS BY MINISTRIES OF LABOR – (TEXTUAL)**

In the near future, can you visualize the possibility to implement actions that contribute to mainstreaming gender in your Ministry?

Countries	Yes/No	Description
Peru	Yes	Se realizará un riguroso seguimiento a los compromisos asumidos entre el MIMDES y el MINTRA para: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La realización de las actividades de capacitación al interior del Ministerio de Trabajo, en materia de institucionalización y transversalización del enfoque de género y políticas de igualdad de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres; así como la utilización del lenguaje inclusivo. - La elaboración de normas internas para institucionalizar acciones de prevención, atención y sanción frente al hostigamiento sexual. - Otras actividades en materia de cumplimiento de las políticas de igualdad de oportunidades.
Suriname	Yes	Decent Work Country Program for Suriname.
Uruguay	Yes	La planificación final podrá ser aportada luego de su aprobación parte de las autoridades del ministerio.
Venezuela	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talleres de formación y concientización a compañeros y compañeras del Ministerio pertenecientes a las diferentes Direcciones y Unidades. - Planificación y puesta en marcha de un Plan de Acción para la Transversalización de género en el Ministerio. - Incorporar progresivamente la perspectiva de género a los planes y proyectos del Ministerio. - Iniciar mesas de trabajo con instituciones del Estado, organizaciones sociales, de trabajadores y de empleadores, para la planificación de acciones en cuanto al empleo y condiciones de trabajo e igualdad de género. - Iniciar la formación y el debate sobre el presupuesto sensible al Género dentro del Ministerio del Poder Popular para el Trabajo y Seguridad Social, para incorporar la UEG al Plan Operativo Anual (POA).
Barbados	Yes	The Ministry of Labour is currently in the process of drafting a national employment policy which will seek to address, inter alia, gender issues as it pertains to employment creation and the enhancement of the labour supply through education and training.
Belize	Yes	Continuous training and Development of the two new focal points identified, and will be realized with the assistance of the UNDP.
Costa Rica	Yes	Desarrollo del plan de acción de la Política de Igualdad y Equidad de Género del MTSS, así como el fortalecimiento de los mecanismos de coordinación de la misma (Comisión Tripartita de Igualdad y Equidad de Género, Comisión de Alto Nivel y Comisión Institucional de Género.
El Salvador	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipamiento de la oficina para la equidad de género. - Elaboración del plan de trabajo de la Oficina de Equidad entre los Géneros. - Elaboración del diagnóstico institucional de género. - Elaboración de la Política para la transversalización de género en el MTPS.

**TABLE 2. FUTURE ACTIVITIES
ANSWERS BY MINISTRIES OF LABOR – (TEXTUAL)**

In the near future, can you visualize the possibility to implement actions that contribute to mainstreaming gender in your Ministry?

Countries	Yes/No	Description
Grenada	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A National Gender Policy - The appointment of a focal point person - Collaboration with the Division of Gender and Family Affairs - Sensitisation of the Ministry of Labour staff and stake holders.
Guatemala	Yes	Por medio del Plan Estratégico Institucional de Género darle cumplimiento al Eje Laboral de la Política Nacional de Promoción y Desarrollo Integral de las Mujeres PNPDIM y Plan de Equidad de Oportunidades –PEO- 2008 – 2023.
Panama	Yes	A través de los enlaces de género a nivel regional y local fortalecer la transversalización en brindar cada día una mejor atención a los beneficiarios de nuestro ministerio.
Dominican Republic	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensibilización y capacitación a todo el personal técnico- especializado del ministerio de trabajo a nivel nacional, con la introducción y sistematización del enfoque de género como eje transversal. Con incidencia en el trabajo fundamental de la institución. Además en todos los niveles jerárquicos, en términos políticos, del ministerio. - Campaña de difusión de cumplimiento de las normas de trabajo y convenios ratificados por el país. - Diseño y elaboración de un sistema de monitoreo, seguimiento y evaluación de la incorporación de la transversalidad de Género en el Ministerio. Sistema que generará los informes, reportes y otras informaciones requeridas para la toma de decisiones, identificación de buenas prácticas y rendición de cuentas en cuanto a un servicio de calidad, dentro y fuera de la institución.
St. Lucía	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The establishment of a Gender Focal Point within the Ministry of Labour: - The development of indicators to measure the economic contribution of men and women in economic status, opportunity and capacity, access to resources and knowledge, science and technology and information system. - Compilation and dissemination of disaggregated data compiled from the above sources to the Ministry of Labour: - Continue contact with individuals at the Bureaus mentioned earlier and obtain suggestions/ assistance as to what can be done to foster gender mainstreaming within the Ministry of Labour.

TABLA 3. INTER-AGENCY LINK

ANSWERS BY NATIONAL MACHINERIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN(TEXTUAL)

**How would you describe the relationship between your institution and the gender specialized unit (or person) of the Ministry of Labour after attending the workshop?
(1 = much better, 2 = better, 3 = same, 4 = worst)**

Countries	Score	Justification
Mexico	2	<p>La relación interinstitucional entre el Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (INMUJERES) y la Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS) se ha fortalecido mediante el desarrollo de las siguientes acciones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institucionalización de la perspectiva de género mediante el Programa de Cultura Institucional, adoptado por la Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. - Transversalización de perspectiva de género mediante la coordinación interinstitucional entre el INMUJERES y la Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. - Seguimiento al presupuesto etiquetado para el adelanto de las mujeres denominado Erogaciones para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres, donde la Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social tiene dos programas.
Argentina	1	Es una relación, fluida y coordinada, especialmente en lo relativo a la participación de las mujeres en el mercado laboral, debido al conocimiento del compromiso con el tema en ambos organismos.
Brazil	2	Porque possibilitou conhecer mais de perto as dificuldades enfrentadas por elas para inserir a perspectiva de gênero no seu ministério
Colombia	2	Existe más cercanía para compartir información, despejar dudas y establecer enlaces de trabajo.
Ecuador	4	Lamentablemente el cambio de autoridades no ha permitido tener una mayor relación con la Directora.
Paraguay	3	Se ha notado un mayor involucramiento con la temática que anteriormente era reacia al tema. Hoy en día existe más colaboración para articular acciones conjuntas.
Peru	2	Porque hay la voluntad política, existe la instancia especializada, la asignación de un equipo de trabajo y las coordinaciones con la Dirección General de la Mujer del MIMDES, que se han traducido al primer trimestre del 2011 en acuerdos para fortalecer capacidades en el MIN-TRA en materia de género y políticas de igualdad entre mujeres y hombres.
Suriname	2	We communicate with each other on a regular basis.
Uruguay	3	El Taller aportó a un vínculo que existe desde el año 1997 con la constitución de la Comisión Tripartita para Igualdad de Oportunidades y trato en el Empleo integrada por INMUJERES, MTSS, PIT-CNT y Cámaras Empresariales. En el año 2008 avanzando en el proceso de transversalidad de género en el Estado se crea por resolución del 29 de diciembre la Comisión de Igualdad de Género del MTSS, integrada por un titular y un suplente de cada una de las Unidades Ejecutoras: Dirección General, DINATRA, DINAIE, DINACOIN, INDA, IGTSS, DNSS.
Venezuela	2	Existe vinculación estrecha y de compromiso desde la elaboración de propuestas en conjunto por parte de la representante del Ministerio del Trabajo que asistió al Taller de Planificación Estratégica con Enfoque de Género en Quito. Sin embargo, es imprescindible el compromiso y sensibilización por parte de las autoridades de dicha institución para el logro de la incorporación del enfoque de género en el ámbito laboral.

Bahamas		A Specialized Gender Unit has not yet been formally established within the Ministry of Labour. Presently, the Bureau of Women's Affairs falls under the portfolio of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development.
Barbados		-NR
Costa Rica	1	Enlace más directo con la unidad del género del Ministerio. Conocimiento del trabajo que se está realizando desde el Ministerio.
Dominica	3	The relationships between the two organizations continue through the appointed gender focal point within the Labour Division. Our recent discussion show that there is great interest in moving forward to collaborate on issues outlined in the national gender policy and other related programs.
Grenada	2	The Division of Gender and Family Affairs and the Ministry of labour share information on relevant topics.
Guatemala	1	Se fortalecieron los vínculos de trabajo entre el Departamento de Mujer Trabajadora, Departamento de Pueblos indígenas y la Secretaría Presidencial de la Mujer –SEPREM-, para avanzar en el proceso de implementación de la PNPDIM y PEO 2008-2023.
Jamaica	3	Efforts at monitoring and institutional strengthening are current priority issues at this stage. This will be developed in the medium term in relation to the Decent Work agenda and the training of Gender Focal Points.
El Salvador	3	Los procesos que se habían desarrollado no tuvieron continuidad como consecuencia de los replanteamientos internos del ISDEMU.
Dominican Republic	2	La relación entre el Ministerio de la Mujer y el Ministerio de Trabajo es muy buena, en sentido general y, en lo que respecta a la aplicación de los conocimientos adquiridos en el Taller; también hay una buena relación en interacción con las unidades vinculantes.
St. Lucia	2	Greater collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and the Division of Gender Relations having attended the Workshop. There has also been a better understanding of gender mainstreaming and need for gendered policies and programmes implemented by the Ministry of Labour.
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	3	I am not sure if the Ministry had any opportunity to participate in any meeting or function organized by the Labour Department nor have I seen any levels of communication developed between the Ministries in distributing information and other forms of communication.



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