



XIV Meeting of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean - Santiago, Chile.

Concept note and parallel event programme

Name of the event: Child, early and forced marriages and unions: a limitation on the autonomy of girls and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Convening organizations:

- UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women: Inter-Agency Programme to Accelerate Actions to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Plan International Americas
- Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage
- Inter-American Commission of Women / OAS

Date: January 27, 12: 30-14: 00, Enrique Iglesias Auditorium

Context and objectives

If autonomy implies being able to have the capacity and concrete conditions to freely make decisions that affect one's life, millions of teenagers and girls in the region see their autonomy diminished when they do not choose who, when or if to marry, join or enter a cohabitation relationship. Child, Early and Forced Marriages and Unions (CEFMU) of adolescents and girls constitute a problem that increases gender inequality, hinders the exercise of human rights and is the cause and consequence of limited physical, social and economic autonomy.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world where there was no reduction in child marriage and early unions in the last 25 years¹. With a regional prevalence of 25%, countries such as the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras or Belize, exceeds the 30% of girls married or united before the age of 18. The lack of comprehensive responses to address CEFMU through legal frameworks, public policies, programs and other measures puts adolescents and girls at risk. Without actions and investments, Latin America and the Caribbean will occupy the second highest place in child marriage and early unions by 2030².

The 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development and the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to girls and adolescents in the region. In this context, the session will bring together representatives of civil society, government and international organizations to share experiences and evidence and generate commitments to advance the elimination of CEFMU in the region. To do this, firstly we will present the characteristics of the

1 UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, 2018. Accelerate Actions to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean (Poster). Disponible: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/2426/file>

2 UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, 2018. A commitment to end child marriage and early unions in Latin America and the Caribbean. Disponible: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/commitment-end-child-marriage-and-early-unions>



practice and the latest evidence and data from the region. Afterwards, a space for discussion will be created for panellists and the audience to exchange on current national and regional level work, joint initiatives and the commitments that each one can make to ensure that the issue of CEFMU advances within the regional gender agendas and priorities.

Preliminary Programme:

- 12:30-12:40 Welcome and presentation on the purposes of the panel.
Moderator: Neus Bernabeu, Regional Gender and Youth Advisor, UNFPA LACRO
- 12:40-13:20 Presentations on the latest data and evidence, followed by a dialogue on current work at national and regional level.
Panellists:
- Janet Camilo Hernández, Minister of Women, Dominican Republic and President of the Inter-American Commission of Women of the OAS.
 - Nadine Gasman Zylbermann, Director of the National Women's Institute, Mexico.
 - Fiorella Mackliff, Regional Head of Programme Quality and Accountability, Plan International Americas.
 - Eugenia López Uribe, Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Girls Not Brides.
 - Shelly Abdool, Regional Gender Advisor, UNICEF LACRO.
- 13:20-13:50 Discussion with the audience on the commitments necessary to advance CEFMU in the regional gender agenda.
- 13:50-14:00 Conclusions and closing by the moderator.