

**Closing remarks by María Noel Vaeza, UN Women's Regional Director
for the Americas and the Caribbean, during the XV Regional
Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Buenos Aires, Argentina - November 11, 2022

Well, the day has arrived. We have the commitment of Buenos Aires! This is wonderful.

It's very exciting to conclude this 15th conference after 45 years and to know that we have - in a few years - wonderful hosts: Mexico, Colombia, and Cuba.

It must be the only United Nations conference with a venue for the next 25 years. That speaks of the wonderful commitment expressed at this conference by all the governments present here.

Congratulations to the women ministers, and to the presidents of gender entities who have made this commitment to go to their countries and sit down with the ministers of finance to raise the money.

First of all, I would like to thank and congratulate the new President Ayelén Mazzina, Minister of Women, Genders, and Diversities of Argentina; the President of the Nation who has come to tell us what Argentina is doing to advance towards equality, not only of gender but also of diversities. We congratulate the Argentine government for these advancements.

Madam President, you can count on us: on UN Women, on ECLAC, and on the entire United Nations system to support you in your presidency.

And I would especially like, from my heart and place of friendship, to thank my dear friend Marita: Marita Perceval, Secretary for Equality Policies of the Argentine Republic. It is an honor to work with you. It was an honor to work with you. Thank you very much for the heart you put into making this Buenos Aires commitment what it is. Thank you very much.

I also extend my warmest regards to Antonia Orellana, our former President. Dear Minister, a pleasure to work with you. I am pleased to have made this recognition because we need to congratulate and recognize each other: in June, we are celebrating 45 years of this conference. It is the only one in the world: do not forget this when you go back home and share your stories.

We are at the forefront of the world to continue advancing women's rights, in gender equality, and now in this innovation of care systems of the care society.

A very special greeting to my dear friend Raúl García-Buchaca. Thank you for being a feminist, and for supporting us.

To all the women ministers, ladies and gentlemen, and civil society in all its diversity: thank you.

Thank you for accompanying us all week from the feminist forum.

Thank you, legislators, of the parliamentary forum, a great innovation brought to us by Argentina. Now there will never again be a women's conference without parliamentary forums.

A big hug to all women in their diversity. That is what we need in the United Nations conferences: a vibrant civil society in all its diversity, intercultural: all the adjectives you want to put on them. All of you are here, and all of you have made us think and work differently at the United Nations. I want to thank you for that.

Thanks to you, the United Nations today is more relevant and inclusive. Thank you very much.

The Buenos Aires commitment marks the horizon of this feminist dream. We now have a roadmap to move towards a new inclusive development model with the care society at the center, where the sustainability of life and the planet are fundamental and at the center of the whole cycle of our lives.

The agreement we have reached deserves concrete measures to continue talking about the three Rs: recognize, redistribute and reduce unpaid work. We have to continue this cultural revolution towards co-responsibility. This is our task.

This commitment is also proof of the great consensus that consensus can be achieved in our region and that commitments can be achieved. In our region, we are an example: we do not have wars in our region, we have a lot of solidarity, and we have demonstrated once again that we are leaders in gender equality.

This commitment is what we have to do. From now on, we have to work on the how.

And to work on how I want to leave you with three messages:

The first is that we have to ensure good governance for comprehensive care systems and build an inter-institutional architecture with political and social dialogues that implement care-oriented actions that ensure that the systems incorporate, of course, the gender approach at the center, but also that intersectional, intergenerational and intercultural perspective. To this end, civil society organizations must be part of the governance systems.

The second message is that we need a legal foundation that sanctions people's right to care, care for, and self-care through regulatory frameworks and public policies. We need this political will, and we also need parliamentarians to help us approve these legal frameworks.

And third, we need financing. We cannot create and sustain comprehensive systems without guaranteeing the provision of the necessary resources.

At this conference, we have advanced proposals to strengthen financing through measures such as general revenues, insurance, mixed funds, contributions, etc. We have presented many options that we hope you will be able to discuss with the Ministers of Finance.

Now it is up to the States to decide how they want to finance their comprehensive care systems. Investing in this general welfare is an excellent investment. That is why we have to ensure that it is seen as such and also as a contribution to the economic reactivation with the creation of quality employment.

From UN Women, we are here to support you in integrating all the wealth that our region has into what is already being done at the community, public and private levels so that we have robust legal systems that will lead us to have comprehensive care systems in all countries.

First of all, I would also like to thank the Mexican government because, truly, knowing that we are preparing to go there implies being very proud of the path that Mexico has been following under the leadership of Nadine Gasman to implement all these ideas in the country.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge once again the excellent relationship and strategic alliance we have and have developed with ECLAC and thank the new Executive Secretary José-Manuel Salazar for his support, who has made a commitment and has told me that we are going to continue with this beautiful alliance we have.

And now, I would like to thank my colleague Ana Guezmes with great affection. It has been wonderful to work together and continue working together. I would also like to thank your entire DAG team, especially Lucía Scurro and Nicole Bidegain who have worked wonderfully with our teams. I ask for a big round of applause to the UN Women team, led by our Deputy Regional Director, Cecilia Alemany. Thank you very much to all of you, to

the office in Argentina, the regional office, and also to all of the UN Women representatives.

And I would like to conclude by remembering a dear friend, the former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Alicia Bárcena, who headed ECLAC for ten years and invited UN Women to this strategic alliance that we have. I believe the regional conferences are historic because we have such an extraordinary alliance.

And remember what she used to tell us, that she loved to refer to poets and authors, and I found one that Alicia said: "*We are in an era of change. It is an urgent and civilizing change towards a feminist era. When a woman progresses and transforms, we all progress because when women progress, society progresses. The world and women cannot wait any longer. The time for the feminist era is now. Let's change and keep changing the world.*"

Thank you very much.