

Cecilia Alemany, Deputy Regional Director of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean at the Regional Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), at the Report Session on the Regional Fund for Support to Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements, during the regional consultation ahead of the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 66th Board of Directors Meeting of the Regional Conference on Women

4th December 2024, Santiago, Chile

In this session, we will be reporting to this room on behalf of the Secretariat of the Regional Fund. Lucy Garrido will speak on behalf of the women's and feminist organizations and networks that are part of the Regional Fund, and I will do so on behalf of UN Women, thanking the Board of the Fund for delegating the fiduciary management of the Fund to the Regional Office of UN Women.

For those who are not familiar with it, the Regional Fund for Support to Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements was created in this space, as it is an initiative of the Regional Conference on Women and reports periodically to its Board of Directors here within the framework of ECLAC. The Regional Fund is an innovative financing mechanism, as it is co-managed and integrated by representatives from governments on its Board of Directors, civil society organizations (feminist networks and movements), ECLAC, and UN Women as the administering entity.

This year, the second call for proposals from feminist organizations took place, exceeding all expectations: 1,034 applications were submitted by civil society organizations from across the region, many of which are present in this room. This is nearly 800 more proposals than were received during the first call, which had 258 proposals. Some countries were very well represented, with 136 applications from Mexico and 360 from Colombia, but there were submissions from across the entire region.

This also signals that the Regional Fund, this innovative mechanism for financing networks and organizations, is helping to correct the inequality of access to resources that is so prominent in the region. When we analyze Official Development Assistance (ODA), less than 1% of total ODA still reaches women's and feminist organizations in civil society worldwide.

Given the high demand for funding from the Regional Fund, we invite contributions to the Fund. In this regard, it is important to recognize that the first call made in 2023 was funded by the Government of Mexico and UN Women. Thanks to this, the Fund was capitalized, and we were able to operationalize this second call.

The selected organizations have already been notified, and the process of signing agreements to operationalize all the grants is underway.

It is worth highlighting that the Fund was able to consolidate resources from the Government of Colombia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Ministry of Multilateral Affairs) and the National Institute for Women of the United Mexican States (INMUJERES), to whom we express our sincere gratitude here for their efforts through public budgets, as well as resources from UN Women in collaboration with the European Union and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, through the ACTUEMOS program and the regional Gender and Climate Change program.

Aware of the fiscal constraints in the region, we hope that governments here in the room will make an effort to contribute to this Fund as a demonstration of their political will towards substantive gender equality and support for organizations working in the territories and regionally.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that, of these 1,034 proposals, all valid, interesting, and relevant, which passed all formal filters, we first worked with civil society organizations to create a shortlist of more than 200 proposals, eventually awarding funds to 18 organizations.

All these proposals form a pool of ideas, projects, and requests for work that is not funded by civil society organizations, which challenges all of us to think about how, despite the challenges that may exist in the international and regional context for development financing and gender equality, we can continue to mobilize resources for the Regional Fund.

Finally, I would like to close by saying that we place this mechanism—the Regional Fund—at the disposal of all the delegates from governments, traditional and South-South cooperation, UN System agencies, philanthropy, and development banks so that they may contribute to the Fund, given their commitment to supporting women's organizations and advancing gender equality.