

## **Closing remarks**

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#### **Closure of the 66th Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Thursday, 5 December 2024**

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECLAC, my brother, José Manuel Salazar, I didn't want the meeting to end. We are coming to a close when my heart still just wants to remain in this space. Thank you very much for hosting us.

Your Excellency, Madame Ingrid Gomez, Undersecretary of the Women's Secretariat of Mexico. Thank you so much.

Honorable ministers, high-level officials, government representatives from this very important region of Latin America and the Caribbean. Members of the diplomatic community who are here. Thank you so much for your presence and support. Distinguished representatives from civil society, women's organizations, networks, and the very vibrant young people in the room, let me recognize my sister Ana Güzmes and María Noel.

You really drove this process. Congratulations to you and your teams.

It was an emotional moment for me. I'm even feeling emotional. It was an emotional moment to connect with the women from this region who were in Beijing 30 years ago and for us to talk again about those experiences. What a joy and inspiration to be reunited with many of you, but also with many who are caring and sustaining this effort forward.

Therefore, filled with the passion of 30 years ago, with the energy that was there, but also inspired by the reality of the present, the wisdom that I carry and that we carry from the indigenous communities, has been very profound, reminding us that we are connected with nature. The assertiveness of the Afro-descendants has been very much present, reminding us that we still need to address issues of racism.

The amazing young people who have been with us, and also my community of people with disabilities. It has also been important to hear and to see each other and to listen to the voices that we have. I want to appreciate all the delegates and partners. Please allow me to really thank, first and foremost, and very substantively, ECLAC for the exceptional partnership and your leadership in supporting our Member States as they gather today. The role of the Economic

Commissions in monitoring and supporting Member States on the Beijing commitments is part of the decisions we made 30 years ago. It's actually written in the text of the Beijing Platform for Action, and we want to thank you since, for the last 30 years, you have continued to offer a space for accountability and reflection and continue to build on this commitment.

We really appreciate the very high-quality data and the analysis that was shared that informed and guided the Beijing+30 process, which enabled us to be rooted in evidence and not just in rhetoric and anecdotes. Thank you so much for that very important effort to have the data in front of us.

We really appreciate, and I do, the protocol colleagues. The interpreters, in a diversity of languages ranging from French, English, Español, and Portuguese. We are a human community which can still communicate, irrespective of the diversities of language. Congratulations, and thank you as I state my appreciation for the host country, Chile.

Madam Under-Secretary-General Ingrid Gomez, we are thrilled to support Mexico for the next Regional Conference on Women in 2025. You can count on us as a UN System. You can count on us as UN Women to ensure success and continue the discussion on the issues that have been raised here. We are looking forward to Her Excellency, the President, hosting and opening that meeting.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate from my part of the world the election of a woman president in Namibia. And, for us, it's very encouraging to continue to see women in decision-making. I cannot speak for the government of Namibia, but I wish they could also come and join our sister in Mexico and our distinguished partners and friends in civil society.

Thank you. Thank you for holding us accountable. When I listened to civil society, I also felt that, as rights holders, they are expressing the expectations we have of Member States. The UN Charter starts with "We the people", ECOSOC has a framework for civil society participation, and I really want to appreciate the opportunity for civil society to engage very substantively and very significantly.

Congratulations to our Member States for adopting an extraordinary declaration, an ambitious declaration, a declaration rooted in a transformative agenda, but also in the realities of this region. Latin America and the Caribbean has long been at the forefront of advancing gender equality on the global stage.

At CSW57, it was the leadership of this region, the governments, and the civil society that made it possible for femicide to be recognized as agreed language for the first time. This declaration reflects the same determination to break new ground and to ensure that the voices of women in this region resonate globally.

The declaration puts care front and center. It recognizes care as more than an economic issue; it's more than just a redistribution of time; that care is about dignity; care is about equality and the full exercise of women's rights. You've positioned the care society as a global priority. You

have redefined care as a shared responsibility, breaking free from the outdated norms that placed the burden overwhelmingly on women.

Even more so, it underscored that care is about living fully as a community and as a society, and that women deserve to rest. Simply resting. They deserve leisure, you know? Leisure and they deserve joy. The essence of being human, this is what you are bringing. This is ensuring that the issues of women and girls in all our diversities, we are able to live free, fulfilling lives in a balanced way, in a way that will contribute to the well-being of our families, our community, our nations and our countries.

You are reshaping the global conversation and setting new standards for progress. Congratulations! Your declaration also brings much-needed attention to the experience of migrant women and women who experience human trafficking. It calls for us to view migration with a human lens grounded in equality and respect. Migrant, refugee, and displaced women contribute so much to their societies.

Too often, they face violence, exploitation, and even death. This region is leading by example in saying no woman is invisible and no one's journey is unworthy of dignity. Every journey and every life requires dignity. We are deeply inspired by the region's call to the revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women. Your vision for a Commission that is fit for purpose is a powerful step forward.

We appreciate the leadership of countries like the Dominican Republic, Panama, Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and El Salvador, who actively advance this initiative during the negotiations of the Pact for the Future. As this process moves forward, spearheaded by Canada, at the helm as president of ECOSOC, we look forward to the vision and wisdom of Latin America and the Caribbean to shape this revitalized Commission on the Status of Women, one, with strengthened accountability that provides space and dedicated and frank discussions on violence against women, and one that brings together all pillars of the UN's work on human rights, on developments, on peace and security, for streamlined, and coherent action for women and girls.

Throughout the past three days, I had the privilege to meet many of you in informal settings, hugs along the corridor, coffee together, government officials, and civil society. I was struck by the common ethos and the passion and the dream that we each hold for our region in Latin America and the Caribbean.

You are not just the future of the region. You are its present, driving progress with determination and courage. I heard your calls for greater access to education and training, for resources to empower young people. Let us continue to place girls, the girl-child, at the front and center of our efforts, ensuring that every girl has the opportunity to live her life free of barriers and full of promise.

I heard stories of resilience and hope and profound pain and suffering. My heart is heavy with the accounts of violence and injustice that women and girls in the region continue to endure. I

cannot ignore the devastating impact of organized crime on women and girls in this region. Women are disproportionately targeted for trafficking, forced labor, and sexual exploitation.

They live in fear and speak about violence and abuse. These are issues you have raised, but these are not incidents—they are systemic and, therefore, require systemic solutions. As I reflect on this, I want to acknowledge that we continue to hear of the regressions that are happening in the decisions that you have already committed to relating to gender equality.

It takes all of us to continue to uphold the values of the United Nations, the values of equality, justice, and human rights. Let's continue to applaud the advances in gender parity across institutions as we honor the transformations we have named.

As we conclude this meeting, we are inspired by the resounding commitments, a renewed pledge to uphold nondiscrimination and to tackle inequalities, and a powerful call for greater resources.

A powerful call for deeper analysis, being low and middle income countries that do not relate to equality of opportunities for all in a region that continues to carry high levels of inequalities in and by itself.

In closing, allow me to reiterate this is the final year anniversary of Beijing before the SDGs in 2030. We are at that moment. Yes, we may be off track on some of the key indicators, but we can finish strong.

It's possible to finish strong on the SDGs and to move the needle for the gender equality indicators as we do the countdown. The declaration that you've adopted really enables us to achieve that. Let us agree upon and shape together an action agenda that provides a roadmap for bold, high impact measures that can be tangible and which we can deliver by 2030.

Let us carry the image of Santiago forward. Let us honor this declaration with action. I look forward to seeing many of you as we continue this effort. It's the CSW69 in New York, I learned and I learned very fast that we cannot conclude without saying "Viva América Latina y el Caribe! Vivan las mujeres y niñas! Vivas nos queremos!"