Speech by Cecilia Alemany, Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) for the Americas and the Caribbean, at the 67th Executive Committee of the Regional Conference on Women

Report of the Regional Fund to Support Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements

December 2, 2025, Santiago, Chile

Thank you very much, Gabriela [Rivadeneira], in your role as Chair of the Fund's Board of Directors, representing Mexico.

It is truly an honor to participate virtually and to be listening to all the sessions of this new 67th Meeting of the Presiding Officers of our Regional Conference after Tlatelolco. I would also like to express my gratitude for the co-organization with ECLAC and with the members of the Regional Fund, who have been the driving force behind the creation of this innovative mechanism— all the representatives of women's and feminist organizations and networks in the region, particularly Mariana Iácono, who I believe will also be speaking here on behalf of those who represent the Fund from the networks.

Gabriela, you have already provided much of the key information, and I will try not to repeat it, but perhaps revisit some points for those who do not know in detail the history of the Fund and our respective roles. And of course, I join

in applauding the delegations and governments that have expressed their interest in contributing to its management.

The Fund itself is an innovative mechanism, as described by Gabriela Rivadeneira. It is innovative because it is, by definition, multi-stakeholder, and it emerged from within the Regional Conference on Women at that time. It is truly an instrument that results directly from the region's gender agenda. This is important because, as we have heard from all delegations in these two days—both in the specific consultations and in the reporting on the implementation of the Tlatelolco commitments—this is the type of instrument that, when built collectively at the intergovernmental level, but based on proposal and demand from civil society, and managed by the Secretariat within ECLAC and administrated by UN Women, should serve as an example when we speak of innovation in financing and coordination.

It is evidently a challenge for the Fund to meet the high demand. Gabriela, you also referred to the background of the three previous calls. The central purpose of the Fund, and this is important to emphasize from its inception, is to strengthen women's and feminist organizations and networks in the region, and to reinforce their role in promoting gender equality and guaranteeing women's human rights—at a time when development financing in general, and international cooperation financing in particular, is declining not only in our region but globally. The severe difficulties that women's organizations and networks are facing to survive and remain sustainable will

likely be greater in 2025 than what we anticipated when we launched this call in Tlatelolco, the third call, as you rightly said, Gabriela.

Therefore, in addition to welcoming and encouraging interested government delegations to join, as was noted at the beginning of the Board and in the Secretariat, we reiterate today the call to honor the commitments adopted in Tlatelolco, particularly Articles 33 and 74, through which States in the region committed to mobilizing financing for these purposes. We also encouraged governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, and from other regions, developed countries, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and other relevant actors, to contribute financial resources to ensure the sustainability of this Regional Fund supporting feminist organizations and movements.

In practice, the Fund has operated through this cycle of calls mentioned previously: the first edition in 2022 was supported initially by the Government of Mexico through the National Institute for Women and UN Women; the second edition also relied on voluntary contributions from the Government of Mexico, and on the support of UN Women—prior to its transition—as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

We have also contributed with funding from women's programmes thanks to the support of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the European Union through gender, environment, and climate programmes, and *Actuemos*

intiative to end violence against women. With these resources—from the two programmes with Luxembourg, in partnership with the European Union—we are financing this third call, which we launched at the conclusion of the Regional Conference in Tlatelolco and which is now in its final stage.

As you summarized, Gabriela, since mid-October more than 883 proposals from across the region were reviewed—once again, far exceeding both the financing capacity and the expectations generated in previous rounds. The second call received more than 1,000 proposals. And each time we end up financing only a short list of civil society organizations, while many others, with strong ideas and meeting every single requirement, cannot be supported unless additional resources are mobilized.

Across all editions, accountability has been provided to the Board, and in the Regional Conferences—both through administrative reporting and through presentations on results and impact. Even though the resources are modest, these small grants often make a significant difference, helping consolidate and strengthen capacities, advocacy reach, and impact of organizations throughout the region.

UN Women procedures and standards are applied, including outreach sessions to encourage broader participation and diversity— which we have clearly achieved in the last two calls. And starting this year, applications are submitted online through a single digital platform. This is an administrative improvement as it centralizes and standardizes information, but it also

represents a challenge for many organizations that may require support or training to complete online applications, particularly given connectivity issues—so there has been a period of adaptation.

Of the nearly 900 proposals received, the funds we have available for this third call are those provided through UN Women programmes in cooperation with the Government of Luxembourg and the European Union. Out of the 883 proposals, a first screening identified approximately 140 that fully meet the formal criteria—these form the long list. Of these, nearly 100—specifically 98—focus on eliminating violence against women and girls, clearly showing that many organizations that remain the first responders for survivors of violence are struggling to access funding. And around 40—specifically 41—of the long-listed proposals address environmental and climate action and gender climate justice.

We are currently in the final verification stage, reviewing legal documentation of the organizations. With the resources currently available—USD 250,000 in total—we expect to finance around 11 organizations with these small-grant contributions. As in previous processes, once the final list is confirmed, it will be validated and presented to the full Board, and then published.

The Regional Fund provides small grants, but the purpose was never simply to finance projects. It is designed to serve as a catalyst for collective leadership and for the sustainability of women's and feminist movements and organizations in the region—now more challenged than ever.

We believe this is also an opportunity to work with UN system organizations, governments, donors, and other actors to ensure the continued growth of this innovative mechanism, which already integrates all relevant stakeholders in its governance and uses best transparency practices. The demand is high— as you can imagine, there is a list of nearly 120 organizations that meet every requirement and are ready to be funded should new contributions be announced in the coming months. We are, of course, preparing for the fourth call next year, continuing the expected annual cycle.

Thank you very much for the time and the opportunity to share this administrative overview. It is an honor for UN Women to serve as the administrative entity and to support the innovation of this mechanism, which we hope will be the beginning and the seed of a much broader Regional Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to present.