

Status of Women's rights in Colombia

Colombia has achieved important victories in the last two decades regarding the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, although there are still significant gaps to reduce.

Colombia has ratified all current international treaties on human rights and women's rights, and has made significant progress towards drafting laws that promote gender equality and warrant the human rights of women. A few examples are the Public Policy Guidelines for Women's Gender Equality and the Comprehensive Plan to assure women have a life free of violence, approved in 2012; in 2011 the Victims and Restitution of Land Law was approved with important provisions on gender equality; also Law 1257 "Whereby regulations are issued to raise awareness, prevent and punish forms of violence and discrimination against women" in 2008, and Law 1719 in 2014 by which measures are set in place to guarantee access to justice to victims of sexual violence, especially sexual violence during the armed conflict.

Although these regulations give a solid framework to advance in women's rights, there are challenges to gain their full application, as shown by the data on gender gaps. Colombia is displaying important signs of economic growth as well as progress in the human development indicators. But there still are gender gaps particularly in the economic and political spheres.

Several laws have been enacted to prevent and punish violence against women, like Law 1257 in 2008. Nevertheless, the figures remain alarming. According to a report of the National Institute of Legal Medicine of Colombia (INMLCF) in 2014 there were 1,007 women murdered; 37,881 registered cases of violence against women at the hands of their intimate partner and 16,088 of reported sexual violence cases were against women, 86% share of total victims of this crime, and an important number of them are girls and adolescents.

Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women have been affected disproportionately by violence derived from the conflict; among 3,445 cases of murder in Indigenous and Afro-Colombian individuals, 65.5% were women.

Historic peace talks are taking place in Colombia now between the government and the FARC-EP. The peace talks started in September 2012 in La Habana, Cuba and are still ongoing to date. The peace and transition process in Colombia is a unique opportunity to advance in women's full participation, as well as carry out extra efforts on gender equality. It is also an opportunity to address the structural causes of inequality and promote substantive change at the normative and implementation level towards social transformation and inclusion.

UN Women has worked in Colombia since 2005, initially under UNIFEM program (one of the four entities merged into UN Women) on Women, Peace and Security. And under the Country Offices structure of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean, since 2011.

UN Women Colombia works mainly on incidence and technical assistance to support the implementation of the normative and policy framework, develop the capacities of the civil society organizations and women as subjects of rights, and of government actors as the guarantors of women's rights.

Fields of action:

Women, Peace and Access to justice:

Women's citizenship for peace, justice and development. Donor: Sweden. National coverage with actions in Antioquia

Cauca, Meta and Nariño.

Women builders of peace and advances on the implementation of Resolution 1325 and other partners. Donor: Norway, national coverage and actions in Meta.

Leadership and Political Participation:

Leadership and Political Participation of women in Nariño. Donor: Spanish Agency for International Cooperation / AECID

Economic empowerment:

Productive territories and food safety for a resilient population and in peace, Cauca strategic ecosystems.

Donor: SDG-F

End gender violence:

Overcoming gender violence (GBV) to guarantee full enjoyment of women's rights. Donor: USAID with national coverage and actions in Cauca and Meta.

Indigenous women, gender based violence and access to justice. Donor: UN Trust Fund to end violence against women. Coverage: Cauca and Cesar.