

THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY IN COUNTERDRUG AGENCIES

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Our work at the Organization of American States (OAS) is based on four pillars – democracy, human rights, multidimensional security, and integral development – with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme throughout.

The OAS's strong commitment to advancing gender equality in the Americas is reflected, *inter alia*, in the *General Secretariat's Institutional Policy on Gender Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights*, the goal of which is to enhance equality of opportunities and equal treatment throughout the OAS General Secretariat. The policy recognizes that gender equality and non-discrimination are fundamental rights, and seeks to ensure that a gender perspective is included in the programs and projects of all of the Organization's departments and agencies.

Most of our member states have signed international and regional instruments designed to ensure substantive equality between men and women. These international instruments include the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which calls for action to eliminate prejudice and achieve full equality. In the OAS, the States Party to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (known as the

Convention of Belém do Pará) are committed to changing socio-cultural patterns that are based on gender stereotypes. OAS efforts to eliminate discrimination and gender violence are led primarily by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), with which the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security works closely on a number of issues.

International and regional strategies to address the world drug problem, such as the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action 2016-2020, and the Outcome Document of the 2016 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), call for inclusion of a gender perspective in all programs and policies on drugs, and discuss the importance of ensuring that women participate at every stage of program and policy development, implementation and evaluation.

Within the OAS, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) is the body responsible for addressing the drug issue. Through its annual programming and a broad range of national and regional projects throughout the Western Hemisphere, CICAD helps OAS member states enhance their public policies on drugs by

conducting research and evaluations, monitoring emerging trends, and providing technical assistance and specialized training and capacity-building.

Since it was created in 1986, CICAD and its Executive Secretariat have responded to the ever-changing challenges of drug control, and have expanded their efforts to promote regional cooperation and coordination with and among OAS member states. CICAD's Supply Reduction Unit helps OAS member states to strengthen their capacities to control and disrupt the production and sale of and trafficking in illicit drugs through training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies around the Hemisphere.

GENLEA: CREATING A MORE EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE TO COUNTER DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THE AMERICAS

In the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, we believe firmly that the key to the success of any organization lies in its capacity to attract, develop, and retain the best talent. **To be effective in addressing transnational organized crime, we must embrace gender diversity, and bring together the best talent, skills, and knowledge to form a more effective workforce based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.**

Thus, since January 2018, the CICAD Executive Secretariat has been implementing **the Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies (GENLEA)**, with the goal of increasing gender equality in OAS member states' counterdrug law enforcement agencies in order to strengthen their capacity to combat narco trafficking.



Lieutenant Viviana Forero, Blackhawk pilot, Colombian Army and participant of the GENLEA Program

GENLEA is financed by the government of Canada in accordance with its Feminist International Assistance Policy. The GENLEA program is producing positive results, which the CICAD Executive Secretariat has presented in technical and policy meetings on the drug problem, including at sessions of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the global forum on the issue of drugs.



Ambassador Adam E. Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD, refers to the GENLEA Program at the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (March 2019)

Our first step was to hold round-table discussions, as well as group and individual interviews, with officials of different drug control agencies in the region in order to collect information on factors that may impact the promotion of gender equality. We conducted national workshops in Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The workshops offered the opportunity for significant discussion among the participating government agencies, international experts, and representatives of organizations working to promote women's rights and gender equality. We also held our first **Regional Conference on Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies**, which took place on June 12-13, 2019, in San José, Costa Rica.

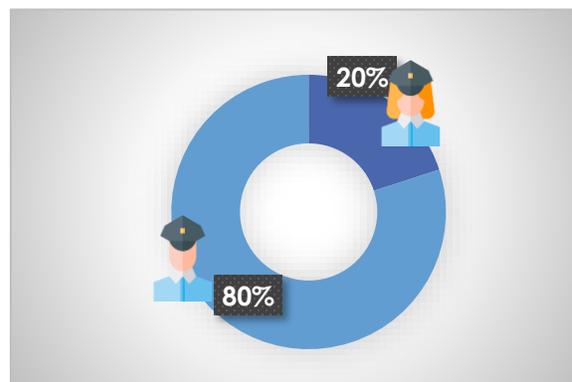
Building on that conference, in the second half of 2019 we will publish a set of guidelines that will bring together the best practices identified in the first phase of the GENLEA program, such as the establishment of gender offices or units in counterdrug law enforcement agencies.



Dialogue at GENLEA Regional Conference (June 2019)

INCORPORATING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO COUNTERDRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

During the first phase of the GENLEA Program, we collected key information on the significant challenges that drug trafficking poses for the region. As drug markets expand and synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS) proliferate, the Internet and other technologies are being used to market and sell drugs and precursors, and that postal services are being used to distribute them to customers.



Female personnel in counterdrug law enforcement agencies in the region does not exceed, on average, 20% of the workforce.

It is therefore important that we continue our efforts to address drug trafficking on all fronts and to strengthen the region's counterdrug law enforcement agencies, particularly in the fields of collection, analysis and dissemination of counterdrug intelligence; control of chemical precursors; synthetic drugs and NPS; and maritime interdiction and enhanced port security.

In much of the Western Hemisphere, counterdrug agencies have tended to be attached to the armed forces and/or to the police — bodies that were traditionally staffed by men. Women joined these agencies only gradually, first in separate units where they largely performed administrative work, but, subsequently, they gained the right to work in all areas, including drug trafficking control. **Experience has shown that women are particularly successful in counterdrug investigations and operations, handling informants, and serving as undercover agents.** On the other hand, available data suggest that female officers represent, on average, twenty percent or less of the workforce of counterdrug law enforcement agencies in the region, and that few hold leadership positions.

Thus, it is important to promote female leadership and equal opportunity in such institutions, which has the **added value of**

increasing their credibility, legitimacy and trust among citizens.

THE PATH FORWARD...

Through the GENLEA program, the OAS is taking the lead in providing training and sensitization sessions for counterdrug law enforcement agencies in the Hemisphere, to help them ensure gender equity and equality in their workforces. **This pioneering effort has been made possible thanks to the support of international and regional organizations** such as the Inter-American Commission for Women (CIM); the Council of Europe's Pompidou Group; the Cooperation Program between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (COPOLAD); the European Union's Law Enforcement Agency (EUROPOL); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System (RSS); the University of Michigan; the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP); and the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Also of great importance has been the leadership of the two counterdrug intelligence schools that were set up with the support of the ES-CICAD, namely the Regional Counterdrug Intelligence School of the Americas (ERCAIAD, by its Spanish language acronym) in Bogotá, Colombia,

and the Caribbean Counterdrug Intelligence Training School (CCITS), located in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. These two counterdrug intelligence schools are key to training counterdrug professionals in the Hemisphere, and we will continue to receive their support in promoting equal opportunities in counterdrug law enforcement agencies in the region.



"GENLEA Champion"
pin awarded to
participants committed
to strengthening gender
mainstreaming in the
Americas

The Secretariat for Multidimensional Security will continue to support our member states' efforts to assess, prevent and respond to threats to their security, and **to encourage counterdrug agencies to recruit more women into key jobs, thus fulfilling the OAS' vision of "more rights for more people."**