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Status of Women: **Studies and Reflections in the** **Dominican Republic and Latin America**

OPD-GFDD/Funglode 2011-2014 Documents



**Status of Women: Studies and Reflections in the
Dominican Republic and Latin America**

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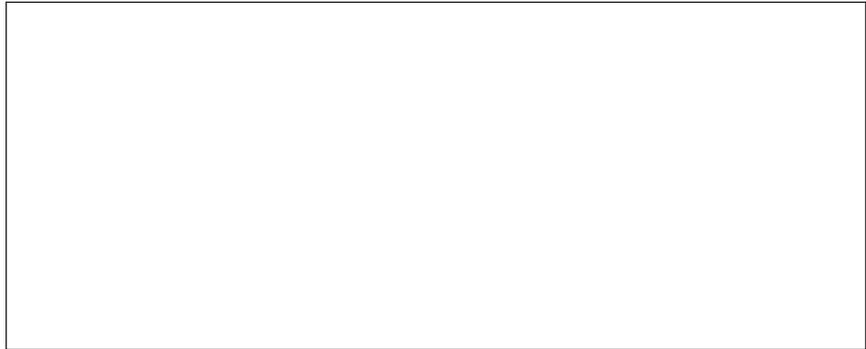
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STATUS OF WOMEN: STUDIES AND
REFLECTIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
AND LATIN AMERICA

OPD-GFDD/FUNGLODE 2011-2014 DOCUMENTS





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Preface

The Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (GFDD) in the United States of America and the Fundación Global Democracia and Desarrollo (Funglode), headquartered in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, are honored to present to the international English-speaking audience the studies developed by the Dominican Political Observatory (OPD by its Spanish acronym), under the guidance and leadership of the former President of the Dominican Republic and President of the foundations, Dr. Leonel Fernández.

GFDD/Funglode is dedicated to promoting research and awareness in areas crucial to the democratic, social, economic sustainable development of the Dominican Republic and the world. The two think tanks organize meetings and educational programs as well as generate studies and publications that contribute to the development of new perspectives, searching for innovative solutions and creating transformative initiatives.

On this occasion, GFDD/Funglode presents the publication entitled *Status of Women: Studies and Reflections in the Dominican Republic and Latin America* in which investigations are collected on the issues of femicide, political empowerment, domestic service, maternal mortality, female quotas and the Millennium Development Goals.

The selected works present scrupulous analysis, introduce innovative ideas, and transmit inspiration. We hope they will contribute to a

better understanding of the world, empowering readers to act in more informed, efficient, and harmonious ways.

Natasha Despotovic
Executive Director
GFDD

Introduction

The Dominican Political Observatory (OPD), an initiative of Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (Funglode), defines itself as an organization with the mission to “contribute to improving the quality of national political debate through the systematic study of the country’s socio-economic and environmental situation.” Its overall objective is to “investigate the country’s social and political situation from a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective with the aim of building and disseminating knowledge” in order to promote debate among different stakeholders.

From this viewpoint, the OPD continuously monitors issues and situations that are of crucial importance for the development of Dominican society, topics which, by their very nature, have a major impact on national life.

In accordance with the foregoing principles, and recognizing the growing importance that knowledge and its dissemination acquires day after day, the OPD presents this compilation of documents on Dominican women, prepared by its different units during the period 2011-2014. Issues such as violence, femicide, domestic service, the empowerment of women, maternal mortality, and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) related to women are presented chronologically and complement the booklet which forms part of the series: “Women Who in the Process of Giving Life, Lose Their

Own: A Qualitative Study on Maternal Mortality in the Dominican Republic.”

This compilation offers the public direct access to documents which, given their content, serve to generate debate and discussions leading to the design and implementation of public policies that make it possible to mitigate the negative effects of the issues presented in an efficient and effective manner.

Nathanael Concepción

Director

OPD

Women's Empowerment: Santiago Rises up against the Murder of Women

Dilenia Medina
**Civil Society Unit
Coordinator**

Diuris Betances
Assistant

July 11, 2011

The growing wave of femicides that have occurred in the country is an issue of major concern to civil society organizations dedicated to fight against impunity and to promote women's rights. The recent murder of a young woman, Glaydi María Muñoz Gómez, at the hands of Pedro Luis Báez Sánchez, is a case that has had a major impact in Santiago and throughout the country.

The decision by Judge Gabriel Marchena Adames (Permanent Court of First Instance), to release the killer on bail and to order a minimal precautionary measure in the amount of only 1,500,000 Dominican pesos (DOP)* —of which the aggressor would pay only 10%—

was regarded as inconsistent with the nature of the crime. In fact, the judge had considered “the case not serious enough to warrant pre-trial detention.”

Judge Marchena’s decision was rejected by different sectors of the country and prompted indignation among several organizations, such as *Tolerancia Cero a la Violencia contra la Mujer* (Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women); *Movimiento Vida sin Violencia* (Movida) (Life Without Violence Movement); *Núcleo de Apoyo a la Mujer* (Women’s Support Group); *Profamilia* (Pro-family); *Viceministerio de la Mujer* (the Vice Ministry of Women); *Mujer Iglesia Fundación* (Church Women Foundation); *Coordinadora de Mujeres del Cibao* (Coordinating Group of Women of Cibao); and *Acción Callejera* (Street Action).

In response, journalist Susy Pola, organizer of the movements *Vida sin Violencia* and *Núcleo de Apoyo a Mujeres*, led a protest at the end of which a document was handed in to Judge Marchena Adames, to Prosecutor Jenny Berenice Reynoso, and to the Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal, Vielka Calderón. In it the organizations condemned the crime committed by Báez Sánchez and demanded that the Supreme Court of Justice investigate the decision by this judge, who had repeatedly released on bail individuals accused of committing serious crimes (even with proof of *flagrant disregard*).

For her part, Prosecutor Reynoso appealed the Judge’s ruling. She argued that murdering a woman is a serious crime and that the accused should remain in prison, thereby challenging the judge’s decision. She pointed out that there was evidence that before committing the crime, the killer had made death threats to the woman. Reynoso’s stance won her great support among women.

Magistrate Josefa Disla of the Judicial District of Santiago’s Court of Appeal overturned the decision allowing the criminal responsible for the young woman’s murder to be released on bail. She ruled instead that the accused should be remanded in custody for one year since there was sufficient evidence to keep him in jail. She also noted that the killer had made death threats to the victim’s husband. This change was welcomed by the young woman’s family and by feminist groups in

Santiago. Furthermore, the head of the Ministry of Women's Provincial Office in Santiago, Miguelina Mendoza, stated: "We believe that judges should be questioned by the Gender Commission of the Judiciary and by the Supreme Court of Justice itself."

A significant amount of pressure was exerted on the judicial system through this series of positive actions that protested against instances of civil injustice. These actions imply a process of empowerment that has lead women to organize themselves: with the objective of exercising autonomy through their rights as citizens, with the capacity to make their own decisions, highlight cases of discrimination and contribute to their elimination.

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*On March 2015 the rate was 44.70 Dominican pesos per dollar.

Debate on Public Policies for Combating Violence against Women

Leopoldo Artiles
**Public Policy Unit
Coordinator**

Victor Mateo
Collaborator

November 25, 2011

1,153 women were murdered by their spouses or former spouses between 2005 and 2010

The Minister of Women issued a surprising statement admitting that most police stations in the Dominican Republic do not have the necessary material and human resources to enable them to respond efficiently when women report mistreatment or abuse by their partners or when they seek protection.

Minister Alejandrina Germán released statistics showing that 1,153 women were murdered by their spouses or former spouses between

2005 and 2010. These figures were compiled by the Attorney General's Office. Moreover, according to the same information, between January and September 2011, 174 women had lost their lives as victims of violence.

As a way of raising awareness about this disturbing situation, in November 2011, the Attorney General's Office of the Dominican Republic and the Ministry of Women organized three marches in the Dominican Republic against violence toward women, with the aim of preventing violence and educating people about the issue.

Also, in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the National School for Electoral Training and Civil State (EFEC), the academic institution of the Central Electoral Board (JCE), organized a Gender Panel on the topic of "Public Policies on Gender Violence." The event was organized in coordination with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Permanent Commission on Gender Equity of the Chamber of Deputies, and the Ministry of Women, with the objective of promoting public policies for eradicating gender violence in all its forms.

During this activity Alejandrina Germán, Minister for Women, launched the campaign "Unite to Put an End to Violence against Women." She also referred to the "role of the media in the eradication of gender-based violence: good practices in Latin America," a topic discussed by Liliana Hendel.

Gender expert María de Jesus Pola Zapico (Susi Pola) also discussed the issue of violence against women in the Dominican Republic, while Magistrate Jenny Berenice Reynoso, Prosecutor of Santiago Province, shared her experiences on the various measures adopted to combat this type of violence.

Similarly, on behalf of the Permanent Commission on Gender Equity of the Chamber of Deputies, its president, Magda Rodríguez, outlined a number of public policies to combat violence against women.

Finally, it is important to recall that the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is celebrated on November 25. On this date, various activities are organized in memory of the

three Mirabal sisters who were brutally murdered by the dictator Rafael Trujillo. The United Nations General Assembly approved Resolution 50/134, on December 17, 1999, to remind the world about the struggle to eradicate violence against women. The proposal to declare November 25 an official annual United Nations commemoration day was put forward by the Dominican Republic and approved thanks to the support of over 60 UN Member States.

Domestic Service and Social Exclusion

Dilena Medina
Civil Society Unit
Coordinator

April 23, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Domestic service is a type of work that involves a range of tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, providing personal assistance, and other activities in a residential setting. This work is of vital importance to families, especially nowadays, given that both men and women have to leave their homes in search of jobs to support their families.

At one time, women carried the sole burden of reproducing children, and taking care of men and children at home while only men were expected to work outside the home. Later, household chores continued to be carried out by women in addition to their jobs outside the home, giving rise to the double working day. Unfortunately, this concept has remained as a remnant of patriarchy and domestic service is considered “natural” work for women, that is, something immanently female.

This work does not require a high level of education, special training, or skill. In fact, from the time they are girls, women learn to do domestic chores; depending on cultural origin, this generally occurs automatically within the family unit.

According to recent estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and based on national studies or censuses in 117 countries, there are at least 53 million domestic workers worldwide. Because this type of work is often hidden from view and unregistered, however, the total number could be as high as 100 million. In developing countries, domestic service accounts for between 4% and 12 % of all paid employment. Around 93% of these workers are women or girls, and many are migrants (ILO, 2011).

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Domestic workers do not enjoy the benefits provided by the general system established in the Dominican Republic's Labor Code, but rather they are subject to a special regimen. According to Article 263 of the Labor Code, domestic work is not subject to statutory limits regarding working hours. However, the Code does require a daily rest period of at least nine uninterrupted hours, and a weekly rest period of 36 consecutive hours. Domestic workers are entitled to two weeks paid vacation annually and to the Christmas salary or bonus, yet they do not have the right to severance pay.

In response to this situation, a law was promulgated on May 6, 1999, which modifies Articles 258-265 of the Labor Code, establishing labor rights for domestic workers. What are the rights granted by this new legislation? Aside from the provisions of the articles mentioned above, there are no other provisions that favor them.

In this regard, Max Puig, Labor Minister stated:

In the Dominican Constitution, Article 55, paragraph 11, paves the way for an appraisal of domestic work in a broad sense, based on the recognition that it creates added value and produces wealth and social

well-being, which would favor the inclusion of paid domestic work in public and social policies and even in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

2. DOMESTIC SERVICE IN LATIN AMERICA

According to the ILO report released in 2011, domestic service in Latin America is a predominantly urban and female phenomenon: at the time of the report around 14 million women were listed as domestic workers.

The specific representation of domestic workers in female employment of the region stands at around 14% of the figure cited. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay, the percentage of domestic service is similar or higher than the regional average. In Paraguay, one-fifth of women workers are employed in domestic service; in Uruguay, more than 18%; in Argentina and Brazil, 17% of women are employed in domestic work; and in Chile, 14% (RPP, 2011). The majority of these workers are young men and women who range in age between 18 and 40 years old.

According to the ILO report, most women who do this type of work live in conditions of poverty or very close to it. They normally tend to earn low wages, barely above the poverty line, and in some cases are below it. Moreover, the report notes that "domestic workers have always had less access to social security than the rest of the wage-earning population. The regional average for female domestic workers who pay contributions into a pension system is barely one-third of the total of employed women."

It is important to note that the demand for domestic service has increased in recent years, especially with a growing number of middle-class women joining the labor market.

Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women (2011), stressed that the deficit of decent jobs for domestic workers "can no longer be tolerated," and recalled that these workers "keep the economic engine and the social wheels of society moving."

In certain Latin American countries, unions represent domestic service workers and have made efforts to regulate the sector's working conditions, working hours, and relations within employer households. In Chile for example, union organizations that represent workers in private homes have existed since 1926 (Centro de Estudios de la Mujer, CEM, 2010). According to the National Employment Survey of the National Institute of Statistics, the objective of these unions is to ensure that their members receive respect, are given dignified work, and are employed in conditions of equality with other workers.

Furthermore, in 2011, the Chilean Congress began debating the possibility of increasing maternity leave for domestic workers, noting they are the only women excluded from this legally established right. In Chile, as well as in Paraguay and Argentina, domestic service workers now have the possibility of being included in the social security system. Uruguay is exemplary because of its legislation. Peru, Bolivia and Costa Rica recently approved laws that protect domestic workers, although it is difficult to enforce them; consequently, women continue to receive minimum wages. Discrimination in this sector is especially evident in the case of indigenous women, particularly in Mexico and Guatemala (ILO).

In Argentina, in the context of International Women's Day, President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner announced that a bill had been sent to the Argentine National Congress with the aim of granting more rights to domestic workers, including the right to receive notice of dismissal and compensation, double pay for overtime, as well as vacations (De la Cruz, 2010).

There is also progress outside of Latin America. From July 2011, in Spain, specifically in Madrid, domestic workers have been able to pay between 19.84 and 164.6 euros per month in social security contributions, as a result of a reform that allows their inclusion in the General Social Security Scheme (*El Mundo*, 2011).

Despite achieving some labor rights, the ILO/CINTERFOR (1963) notes that most people who work in this sector of the informal economy find themselves in particularly precarious working conditions, characterized by

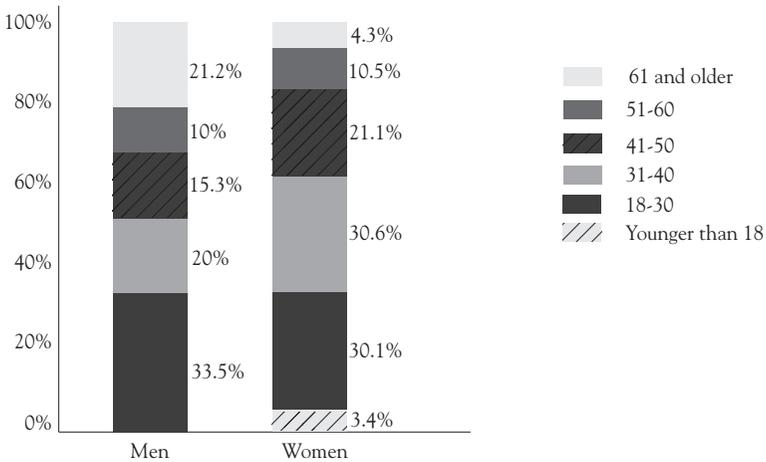
- a) An unregistered employment relationship
- b) No access to social security benefits (health, sick leave, retirement)
- c) Low qualifications
- d) Low wages
- e) Lack of occupational projects enabling workers to choose and decide on their own working career

In this regard, it is important that legislators and others working for change within the Dominican Republic remember the pre-conditions that are needed for gender equality to determine whether such characteristics are present in the sector under consideration.

3. DOMINICAN CASE

According to figures obtained by the National Survey of Household Incomes and Expenditures (ENIGH [per its acronyms in Spanish])

FIGURE 1 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER, 2007



Source: ONE National Survey of Domestic Income and Expenditures. ENIGH 2007.

2007), women in the Dominican Republic constitute 96.5% (206,355) of those who perform domestic work as their main job. Only 3.4% (7,367) of domestic workers are men (*Panorama Estadístico*, 2009). (See Figure 1)

It is noteworthy that the male group age 18-30 represents the largest percent (33.5%) of domestic workers. According to this graphic, there are no male domestic workers under 18 years of age. If one adds the group age 31-40, which accounts for 20%, one obtains 53.5%. The female groups age 31-40 and 18-30 account for 30.6 % and 30.1% respectively. The sum of both groups shows that 60.7% of this segment is composed of women.

The youngest portions of both gender populations comprise domestic workers.

The same graphic also shows that men of age 61 and over represent 21.2% of the total number of men working in the domestic worker sector, while women of the same age account for 4.3% of their gender group, that is to say that men work longer than women in the domestic service sector. As the age of each group increases, the percentages for men increase, while those of women decrease.

Domestic workers face serious problems in the Dominican Republic: an extended workday that interferes with rest periods and employers who require their workers to be permanently available to do chores. According to former Labor Minister Max Puig, “working conditions of domestic workers and limited regulation must be assumed as a challenge, in order to guarantee them all the benefits implied by a decent job (*Primicias*, 2010). “ That domestic employees are not registered with the Labor Ministry because they fall into the category of independent workers is part of the challenge. According to *Panorama Estadístico*,

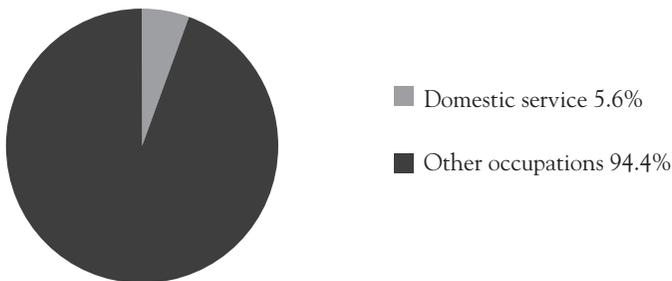
Domestic work has several [sic] manifestations: unpaid work and work performed in exchange for a salary (paid domestic work). The information on paid domestic work has suffered from a lack of comparability and precision. This is due, in large measure, to the high percentage of undeclared domestic work, which is not reflected in surveys and to the lack of

standardization in the definitions used to measure it. Nevertheless, the most reliable figures show that domestic workers represent a significant proportion of the workforce, particularly in developing countries (No. 19, September 19, 2009).

Work performed in exchange for room and board raises other more serious issues. The concept of “household workers,” known in our country as “live-in workers,” often spend their entire working lives in their employers’ homes and often have only one free day per week, resulting in prolonged work days and decreased free time. In this way, work takes up nearly all of their time; consequently, it reduces the time available for their private life. Union leader Eulogia Familia, Vice President of the National Confederation for Labor Union Unity (CNUS [per its acronyms in Spanish]) in charge of gender policies, explained: “There are many women who work behind closed doors, who do not leave the houses and who work morning, noon, and night and do not even receive Christmas pay or medical insurance.” (2011).

Familia’s comments are reflected in Figure 2, which shows that the majority of the employed population, 94.4%, work in other jobs, while 5.6 % are employed in domestic service.

FIGURE 2 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: PERCENTAGE OF THE EMPLOYED POPULATION WHOSE MAIN JOB IS DOMESTIC SERVICE



Source: ONE National Survey of Domestic Income and Expenditures. ENIGH 2007.

Familia adds that the working conditions for domestic servants could be described as “semi-slavery” since these workers do not enjoy the benefits established in the Labor Code. Moreover, she explains that these workers do not have the protection of social security. The number of domestic workers who join unions is minimal. They often live in conditions of extreme poverty, to which low wages contribute.

FIGURE 3 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: PERCENTAGE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS



Source: ONE National Survey of Domestic Income and Expenditures, ENIGH 2007.

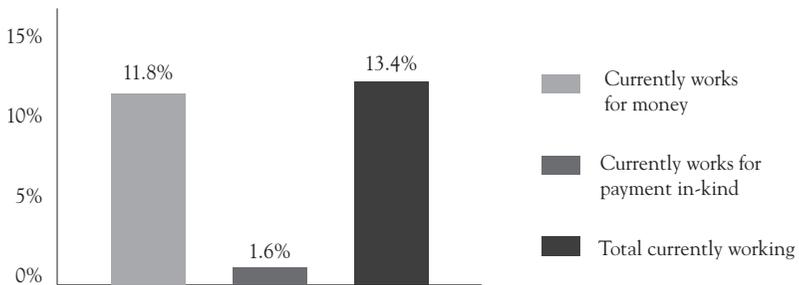
Another problem to consider is the work carried out by girls and adolescents in this sector. In many cases, these groups suffer physical, psychological, and sexual abuse: Father Luis Rosario (*El Caribe*, 2012), Coordinator of the Catholic Church’s Youth Ministry, criticized the exploitation which these girls face in many households. Further, he rejected the idea that children and adolescents are forced to sacrifice activities and other life experiences typical for their age group in order to dedicate their time to domestic work. He believes that people who request these services take advantage of the economic situation of young female workers and their families. According to the ILO (cited

by *El Caribe*), an estimated 48,700 girls¹ and boys perform domestic work in the Dominican Republic, in violation of Law No. 136-03 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. Referring to the term “child labor” *Panorama Estadístico* states:

Child labor is defined as “any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and psychological development.” It refers to work that is dangerous and harmful to children’s physical, mental or moral well-being and interferes with their education, depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine study with heavy work that takes up much of their time (March 2010).

According to estimates presented in the National Multipurpose Household Survey (2011), 15.5% of children and adolescents age 5 to 17 in the Dominican Republic are engaged in child labor.

FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 10-14 YEARS INVOLVED IN SOMO TYPE OF WORK ACTIVITY, 2006



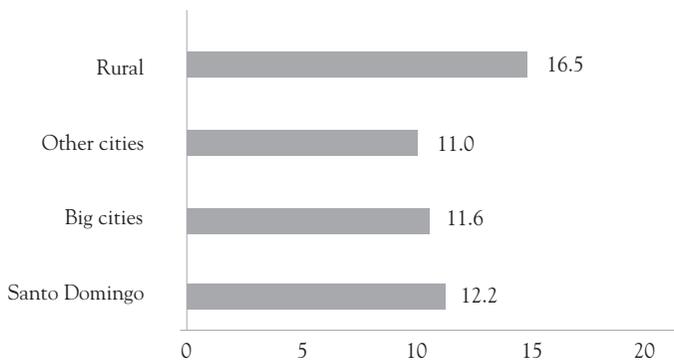
Source: National Survey of Homes for Multiple Purposes. ENIGH 2007.

¹ *El Caribe* presents the figure and cites the ILO, but does not specify the date.

The above table (Figure 4) also gives an idea of the remuneration received by the age group indicated. Of the 13.4%, 11.8% of children age 10-14 employed in domestic service work received monetary payment for their work; the other 1.6% received non-monetary remuneration.

Figure 5 shows the percentage distribution by geographic stratum: at 16.5% the largest number of working children is concentrated in rural areas. Santo Domingo occupies second place with 12.2 %.

FIGURE 5 PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS AND BOYS AGED 10-14 YEARS WORKING IN 2006, BY GEOGRAPHICAL STRATUM



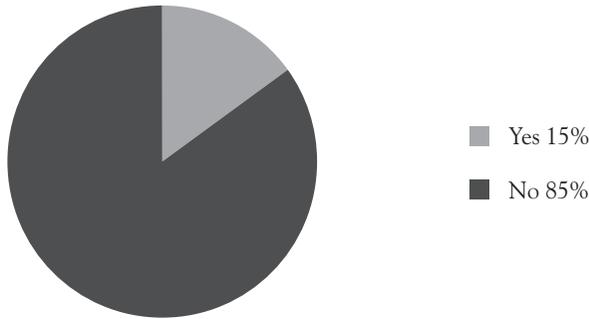
Source: National Multi-Purpose Household Survey, 2006.

4. DOMESTIC SERVICE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Law No. 87-01 of the Dominican Social Security System establishes the right of domestic workers to social security. However, this new system has created confusion since employers assume that workers in family homes are not entitled to the benefits of this new legislation.

Figure 6 from the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey shows that only 15% of domestic workers are covered by social security, while 85% do not benefit from this right.

FIGURE 6 PERCENTAGE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS ENROLLED IN A HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME, 2007



Source: ONE National Survey of Domestic Income and Expenditures, ENIGH 2007.

As explained by Washington González, National Labor Director of the Labor Ministry: “What happened is that there was confusion in the interpretation of Law Number 87-01, and many people thought that a domestic worker is a home-based worker, and that is not so” (De los Santos, 2008).

González explained that under this law, homeowners have the duty to enroll their workers in the social security system. With this measure, domestic workers who become sick or disabled due to an accident, will benefit from the rights established under the Social Security Law. He added: “Obviously, they are not entitled to bonuses. Furthermore, the Labor Code establishes that 50% of a domestic worker’s salary includes board and lodging. On average, domestic workers earn \$4,500 pesos monthly... (De los Santos, 2008) “According to figures obtained by the survey, employers are not including domestic workers as on the list of recipients for social security.

Union leader Eulogia Familia considers that “domestic workers work in conditions of semi-slavery: their rights to social protection, social security and freedom to join a union are violated, and their salaries are among the worst. (Reynoso, 2011.)” In addition, she described as:

“... shameful, the fact that many domestic workers who live in their workplaces, working more than 12 consecutive hours, are only paid half of their wages in cash, and on the employer’s whim, the other half they are charged, in a certain way, for board and lodging in the same place where they work, in conditions of exploitation.”

Familia also revealed that there are around 325,000 domestic workers throughout the country who represent 5.6 % (ONE, 2007) of the workforce, and that their salaries do not exceed, in general, 6,000 *POD* per month (Morel, 2012). She emphasized, “thousands of Haitians are in an equally bad or worse situation, because their migratory status means they do not dare complain.” Familia expects that the situation would change if an international agreement protecting coworkers’ rights promoted by the ILO is approved, which would imply the protection of those workers’ rights.

For the Dominican Republic, incorporating domestic workers into the social security system is a challenge. At present, this system covers around 4,000,300 people, approximately 43% of the Dominican population. A significant fact is that the publication *Dominicana en cifras 2011* includes domestic service under the heading of “Other services” in Table No. 4.4-02 entitled Dominican Republic: Economically Active Population (EAP) and Unemployment by Year, according to the Economic Activity Division, 2006-2010. The fact that these figures are not broken down means that it is not possible for union leaders to obtain an accurate idea of the number of people engaged in domestic work.

5. DOMESTIC WORK AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

While domestic workers in no way form part of the family, they, nevertheless, take on many personal and familial responsibilities, including: child care, cooking, washing dishes, cleaning, laundry, as well as other lighter chores (for example, watering plants and flowers). The following statement by Tahira Vargas confirms this point:

The presence of domestic workers in middle-class homes creates internal relationships that are a mixture of familiarity and social discrimination. The domestic worker is not treated as an “employee” since her working hours and wages are not regulated, but vary from one household to another, depending on the decisions of the heads of the household. Domestic workers find themselves immersed in a continuous situation of social inequality which is expressed, for example, in their exclusion from eating meals at the family table or sharing in family activities. The expressions of discrimination are also reflected in the language, with the use of pejorative terms, such as “maid” or “servant.” In some cases, domestic workers suffer sexual abuse from male family members (mainly fathers and sons), which is kept hidden (Hoy, 2012).

At present, domestic workers feel excluded from the benefits of the legislation that protects them, because their enrollment in the social security system is not enforced. This situation is compounded by their lack of knowledge of their rights under law. In addition, they feel that their services and contributions to the economy are not valued.

An instrument to measure their economic contribution to GDP is long overdue.

Trade union organizations and the domestic workers themselves have approached the Labor Ministry to demand ratification of ILO Convention 189 (2011), which upholds the rights of domestic workers, as well as their contribution to the national economy. Such action would be consistent with the ILO’s commitment to promote decent paid work with all the rights established in that Convention. Organizations promoting such action include the National Confederation of Dominican Workers (CNTD), the National Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CNUS), and the Dominican Federation of Domestic Workers (FENATRAHOGAR). The Labor Minister Francisco Domínguez Brito has acknowledged the valuable contributions made by domestic workers and has not only defended their right to a Christmas bonus, but also the other rights established under the Labor Code, such as the

right to breastfeeding arrangements for nursing mothers, and the right to rest periods.

The trade union organizations handed in a document to Domínguez Brito calling for the ratification of the Convention, citing the benefits that it would bring not only to domestic workers, but also to the country as a whole. The Convention will enter into force once it has been ratified by at least two countries. Its proponents are carrying out campaigns aimed at highlighting the productive contribution of domestic workers.

Domestic workers are also represented by the Dominican Association of Household Workers (Liriano, 2011). Referring to this issue, the association's leader, Victoria Ramírez explained: "We domestic workers have rights, but in this country they are not recognized." She "retired" from her job as a domestic worker because of her age at 70, and now heads the association. Together with 325,000 women, she is demanding that the State ratify ILO Convention 189, which establishes the international legal framework for the defense of their rights.

Equally important is recent action by trade union organizations to push legislative action, in fact, these organizations submitted a document to Domínguez Brito calling for the ratification of the Convention, citing the benefits that it would bring not only to domestic workers, but also to the country as a whole. The Convention will enter into force once it has been ratified by at least two countries. Its proponents presently are carrying out campaigns aimed at highlighting the productive contribution of domestic workers.

Labor Minister Francisco Domínguez Brito has acknowledged the valuable contributions made by domestic workers and has not only defended their right to a Christmas bonus, but also the other rights established under the Labor Code, such as the right to breastfeeding arrangements for nursing mothers, and the right to rest periods.

Some of the issues raised by the ILO are part of the daily existence of domestic workers in the country:

- a) An unregistered employment relationship, which explains the variation in figures related to the number of domestic workers.

This is a weakness in the Labor Ministry, which should keep records of such workers.

- b) Lack of access to social security benefits. These benefits are defined as fundamental rights in Article 60 of the Constitution of the Republic: healthcare, sick leave and maternity leave, retirement.
- c) Low incomes. A wage policy should be established for this sector, including consideration of the comparable worth of domestic work and that of other workers, a task that is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and its National Salary Committee.²
- d) Finally, two of these issues - low qualifications and the absence of occupational projects that enable domestic workers to choose and decide on their own work career - are closely linked.

To paraphrase Ruth Díaz, President of the National Federation of Women Workers (FENAMUTRA), because “the majority of domestic workers do not have access to basic services such as health, education, food, decent housing, and social security [,] these conditions reproduce a cycle of family poverty and vulnerability.” (Acento.com.do, 2012). However, an effort is being made by the Special Training Center in Domestic Services (CEFESD) to break this cycle. Its mission is to provide training and to disseminate information about the rights and duties of domestic workers. In doing so, it seeks to benefit both employees and employers (Acento.com.do, 2012).

In recent years various domestic service agencies have established themselves in the country. These companies provide cleaning services for homes and businesses, and also offer deep cleaning services, janitor or caretaking services for businesses, carpet cleaning, floor polishing,

² A tripartite organization, attached to the Ministry of Labor, in charge of establishing the minimum national wage for workers from the different sectors of the Dominican Republic’s workforce (see Articles 452, 453, 455, 456, 459 and 460 of the Labor Code of the Dominican Republic).

fumigation, gardening and plumbing, etc. This service has a monthly cost of \$7,500.00 to \$12,000.00³ pesos.

6. ILO CONVENTION 189

ILO Convention 189 recognizes the need to promote new legal standards for household workers, domestic workers, and workers in private homes, and considers the following situation:

- a) Domestic work is invisible and undervalued
- b) Legal protection is inadequate
- c) Domestic workers are vulnerable to abuses of their fundamental human rights

In response, the ILO recognizes that the following must be provided:

- a) Productive and secure work
- a) Respect for labor rights
- a) Adequate pay
- a) Social protection
- a) Social dialogue, freedom to join a union, collective bargaining, and participation (2001)

This Convention establishes basic standards of protection for those engaged in paid domestic work, one of the occupations with the highest deficit of decent jobs in the world. In addition, on October 7, 2011, World Day for Decent Work, Dominicans demanded that the Government ratify ILO Convention 102, concerning the inclusion of domestic workers in the Social Security system.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, a comprehensive review of the national Labor Code⁴ is essential and must include amendments to existing regulations, with

³ Despite efforts, it was not possible to obtain data from these companies about the rights granted to domestic workers.

⁴ In fact, it is already being reviewed.

the aim of establishing the rights to which these workers (men and women) are entitled. Domestic service workers must enjoy the same status as other workers, including participation in the national social security system and pay equity.

From that perspective, it should be emphasized that domestic work deserves the same respect as any/all other work. Proposals that promote equality and reappraise the value and dignity of work will require the participation of all stakeholders in Dominican society.

Decision making must be predicated on knowledge, which will require clear and accurate statistics and comprehensive, accurate record keeping. This will be achieved only through social studies and research that examine the issues from different perspectives and that develop appropriate assessment instruments. There is clearly a crucial need to modernize this sector of the economy.

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Electoral Quotas for Women in Dominican and Latin American Legislation^{5, 6}

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The so-called quota laws reserve a minimum of candidacies for elective office for a specific segment of the population. When the provision is meant to promote the participation of women as contenders in electoral contests, it is often called the “quota for women.”

This is a type of affirmative action that pursues equality between men and women in the exercise of political power. While some suggest that differentiated treatment is contradictory to the posed objective

⁵ This work is the sixth contribution to the series titled “Toward a political party law in the Dominican Republic.” It was originally published on page 7 of the newspaper *El Caribe* on the date indicated.

⁶ For this work the electoral and party rules of the countries that are analyzed in the series were consulted directly through the links contained in the electoral legislation and parties of Latin America matrix of the Observatorio Político Dominicano.

itself, others argue that the preexisting conditions of inequality can only be leveled by these kinds of positive actions.

In the words of the deceased sociologist Isis Duarte, affirmative actions are based on the empirical observation that even though most modern constitutions enshrine the principle of non-discrimination, in practice there are cultural barriers and strong historical constraints that keep this principle from materializing.

TABLE 1 ELECTION OF CANDIDATES IN DOMINICAN ELECTORAL LAW AND IN THE DRAFT POLITICAL PARTIES LAW OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE)

Law	Realm	Number of candidates (%)
Law No. 275-97	Total congressional and municipal candidates	25
Law No. 12-00, which amends No. 275-97	Congressional and municipal candidates, except mayors and senators	33
Law No. 176-07 Municipal and National District Law	Candidates for mayor and vice-mayor	50 (With mayor/ vice-mayor alternation)
	Councilpersons and their alternates	33
Draft Political Parties Law	Congressional and municipal candidates, except mayors and senators	33
Draft Electoral Reform Law	Congressional and municipal candidates, except mayors and senators	50 (With alternation on the slate for deputies and mayors)

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode.

Law No. 275-97, enacted on December 21, 1997, determined for the first time that the political parties in the Dominican Republic will grant a percentage of their candidacies to women. The law defined that a minimum of 25% of the candidates for elective positions of the parties must be women. Subsequently, on March 30, 2000, this law was

amended by No. 12-00, which increased the percentage to 33.33%, with the specification that this does not include the elective offices of senator and *síndico* (mayor as of the 2010 Constitution).

However, Law No. 13-00 was enacted the same day amending the old Municipal Law No. 3455, which stipulated that the parties should include at least one woman among the candidates for mayor or vice-mayor of each municipality. This means that when a party submits a male candidate for mayor, it should submit a female candidate for vice-mayor and vice versa. This device was kept in Article 34 of the new Municipal Law No. 176-07.

The draft Political Parties Law would not amend the current legal framework with regard to the percentage of women candidates that each party must submit because it makes reference to the Electoral Law and the 33% of women candidates the latter stipulates. However, the draft details the way the quota for women will be implemented, which until now has been done via resolutions of the Central Electoral Board (Spanish acronym JCE). This means that on multimember slates of candidates, when women precandidates do not obtain sufficient votes to establish themselves as candidates in 33% of the positions on the list, the male pre-candidates with the fewest votes will be replaced by women precandidates with the most votes. This way, the principle of alternation applied in the resolutions of the JCE, which in 2010 established the placement of a woman in each of three positions, would be avoided. According to the draft Political Parties Law, women would always be the last on the lists.

However, months after the JCE submitted the draft Political Parties Law, the draft Electoral Reform Law was introduced to Congress. The draft includes significant changes in the quota for women, which should be seen as a variation of the original proposal for the electoral body.

In this case, 50% of the candidates for deputies and councilpersons must be women. Even more significant is the provision that “all the candidate nominees will use the mechanism for alternation by gender; in other words, woman-man or man-woman, in such a way that two people of the same sex cannot be nominated consecutively.”

Alternation on the lists not only ensures that 50% of the nominees are women, but also that they will actually be elected in a very similar proportion, provided that the lists are closed and locked. This modality is opposed to the preferential voting (closed and unblocked lists) that was eliminated by a resolution of the JCE in October 2010, after the elections. Closed and unblocked lists are contemplated in the draft Electoral Reform Law of the JCE.

THE QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATION OF LATIN AMERICA

Of the 17 Latin American countries included in this analysis, only Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala (24%) do not stipulate in their legislation a minimum of candidacies that must be awarded to women. In Colombia, a quota law requiring women to represent 30% of party candidacies was declared unconstitutional in 2001; despite this advancement there remains another quota law in force in that country requiring women to make up 30% of the government's administrative positions.

Among the countries that have quotas for the submission of candidate slates for elected office, Uruguay simply states that the slates must comprise people of both sexes and does not specify a percentage. This way, a literal interpretation of the rule indicates that the minimum is at least one candidate.

Of the remaining 12 countries, nine apply the quota for women at legislative as well as municipal levels. Argentina, Mexico, and Nicaragua are exceptions. In Argentina and Mexico, the provision is limited to the legislative level. In Nicaragua, the law was amended just this past March, to institute the female quota law at the municipal level. It should be noted that Nicaragua, without having a quota law in the legislative realm, is the one country of the 17 considered in this study with greater legislative representation of women. This is according to the Women in Politics Map of the United Nations, January 2012.

Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela have taken the step proposed in the draft Electoral Reform Law, establishing 50%

of candidacies for each sex based on the principle of alternation on the slates. In the case of Venezuela, a resolution of the electoral body established this as an interpretation of the 2008 Constitution. In the case of Nicaragua, as mentioned, it is limited to the municipal level.

As is to be expected, the preceding countries with the exception of Ecuador, use closed, blocked lists for the multi-member slates (such as those that involve the municipal councils in the Dominican case).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of the quota for women in the Dominican Republic and in other countries has meant an increase in the number of representatives effectively elected, confirming that its implementation contributes to promoting the participation of women in politics. Nevertheless, its implementation reveals great complexity in the electoral and party system. Often there has been considerable public outcry regarding the fairness of a male precandidate being stripped of his candidacy by a female precandidate with fewer votes.

However, the complexity exceeds that particular aspect and extends the debate, on the one hand, to the concepts of democracy on which it is based and, on the other hand, to the rules of the game that the electoral system sets.

In this way, the debate starts with the concept of social justice, which prioritizes equality between citizens versus the liberal concept of democracy, which prioritizes free elections. Although these two concepts are not opposed and should complement one another in a kind of codependency, in practice taking one or another perspective has led to the great philosophical—political and economic— antagonisms of the last centuries.

Finally, the contrast between the two draft JCE laws is evidence of the complicated legislative process that is now taking place in the Congress of the Dominican Republic. The fact that the draft Political Parties Law has been submitted before the Electoral Reform Law, and the media coverage that political actors have obtained as a result can

undermine the coherence of the reform process. Indeed, the percentage of the quota for women is a good example of this.

TABLE 2 QUOTA FOR WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	REALM	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES (%)
Argentina	National parliament and provincial legislatures	30
Bolivia	Senate and deputy seats of the Multi-national Assembly, departmental and regional assemblypersons, municipal councils, and other elected, named and alternate authorities	50 Principle of equivalency (alternation)
Brazil	National and municipal legislature	30
Chile	Not contemplated	N/A
Colombia	Not contemplated, the old law was declared unconstitutional.	N/A
Costa Rica	All the positions for popular election	50 Principle of alternation
Ecuador	Multiperson elections (legislative and municipal)	50 Principle of parity and alternation
El Salvador	Not contemplated	NA
Guatemala	Not contemplated	NA
Honduras	National Congress, Central American Parliament and municipal level, excluding uninominal offices	30
Mexico	Candidacies for the senate and the chamber of deputies elected by proportional system, excluding those that correspond to election by relative majority	40
Nicaragua	Municipal offices	50 Alternation
Panama	Offices for popular election	30

Paraguay	Offices for popular election	20 Alternation every five positions
Peru	Offices for popular election	30
Uruguay	Includes people of both sexes	N/A
Venezuela	Legislative and municipal offices	50 Parity and alternation (40% in cases where it wouldn't be possible)

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode.

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Maternal Mortality, a Multifactorial Problem

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NATURE AND TYPES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY

Maternal deaths should not be considered isolated and individual events, since they are related to a set of socioeconomic factors that have an impact on the overall development of women: educational level, economic situation, reproductive behavior, clinical history, level of access and quality of health services received, especially services for maternal care and family planning. In fact, death from causes related to gestation processes (pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum), constitute an indicator of the degree of sanitary, cultural, and economic development of the populations.

In operational terms, the *Manual for International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Problems Related to Health* (CIE-10) defines maternal mortality (MM) as deaths that occur while in a process of pregnancy or

within 42 days after delivery, independent of the duration and site of the pregnancy, due to any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy itself or its care, but not due to accidental or incidental causes.

In the manual referenced (CIE-10), these deaths are classified as direct and indirect. Direct deaths result from obstetric complications during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum; or from interventions, omissions, incorrect treatment, or from a chain of events resulting from any of the previously mentioned circumstances. These include the obstetric hemorrhage or hypertensive disorders in pregnancy.

Indirect deaths result from a disease that existed prior to the pregnancy or one that evolves during the pregnancy, deaths which are not due to direct obstetric causes but are aggravated by the physiological effects of the process, such as a cardiac complication or a pre-existing renal disease.

Another classification addresses the time when the death occurs. These are late maternal deaths produced by direct or indirect obstetric causes, 42 or more days after delivery, but prior to one year from the delivery. Death from sequelae are those with direct obstetric causes that occur one year or more after delivery.

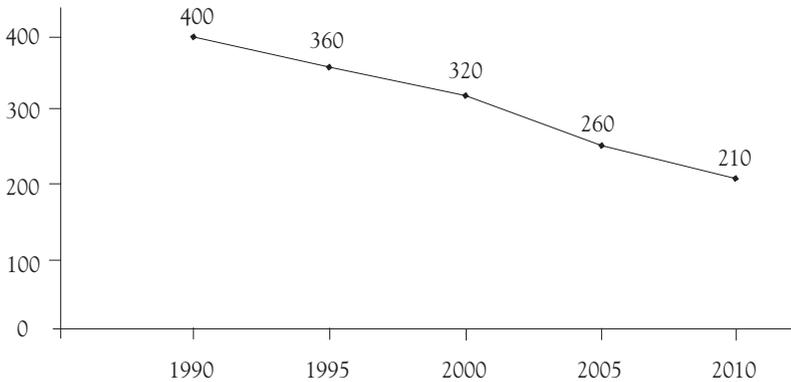
REGIONAL TRENDS (1990-2010)

Maternal mortality is a global public health issue. In the study entitled *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2010*, it was estimated that 543,000 maternal deaths occurred in 1990, whereas 287,000 were reported in 2010. These data indicate a 47% reduction between the years indicated. However, despite this level of reduction, the occurrence of maternal deaths in the world continues to be significant.

The deaths recorded during 1990 (534,000) are equivalent to more than 1,487 deaths per day. This figure fell to 786 in 2010, but it is still considered high.

It is important to indicate that 99% of all maternal deaths recorded for both years (1990 and 2010) occurred in regions with low levels of development.

FIGURE I TRENDS IN MATERNAL MORTALITY ESTIMATION (MATERNAL DEATHS PER EVERY 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS) IN THE WORLD IN PERIODS OF 5 YEARS (1990-2010)



Source: Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2010.

During 1990, the regions that reported the highest number of maternal deaths in absolute terms were South Asia, 233,000; Sub-Saharan Africa, 192,000; and North Africa, 85,000. The latter two regions accounted for 51% of the total recorded for that year. For its part, the region comprising Latin America and the Caribbean recorded a total of 16,000 deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes.

In 2010, a worldwide decrease was verified in the occurrence of these kinds of deaths. Despite this advance, the number recorded in developing regions remains high.

The data presented in the study cited indicate that the deaths reported in 2010 are Sub-Saharan Africa, 162,000; and South Asia, 83,000, figures that represent 85% of all maternal deaths in that year. Meanwhile, in Latin America and the Caribbean, a decline was recorded in comparison with 1990, going from 14,000 to 8,800 deaths.

TABLE 1 ESTIMATES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (MMR), MATERNAL DEATHS PER 100 000 LIVE BIRTHS), NUMBER OF MATERNAL DEATHS, AND LIFETIME RISK BY UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL REGION, 2010

Region	1990		2010		% change in MMR between 1990 and 2010	Average annual % change in MMR between 1990 and 2010
	MMR	Maternal deaths	MMR	Maternal deaths		
World	400	543 000	210	287 000	-47	-3.1
Developed regions ^b	26	4000	16	2200	-39	-2.5
Developing regions	440	539 000	240	284 000	-47	-3.1
Northern Africa ^c	230	8500	78	2800	-66	-5.3
Sub-Saharan Africa ^d	850	192 000	500	162 000	-41	-2.6
Eastern Asia ^e	120	30 000	37	6400	-69	-5.7
Eastern Asia excluding China	53	610	45	400	-15	-0.8
Southern Asia ^f	590	233 000	220	83 000	-64	-4.9
Southern Asia excluding India	590	70 000	240	28 000	-59	-4.4
South-eastern Asia ^g	410	50 000	150	17 000	-63	-4.9
Western Asia ^h	170	7000	71	3500	-57	-4.2
Caucasus and Central Asia ⁱ	71	1400	46	750	-35	-2.1
Latin American and the Caribbean	140	16 000	80	8800	-41	-2.6
Latin America ^j	130	14 000	72	7400	-43	-2.8
Caribbean ^k	280	2300	190	1400	-30	-1.8
Oceania ^l	320	630	200	520	-38	-2.4

Source: Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990-2010.

As observed consistently from 1990 to 2010, all regions have recorded declines in their maternal mortality rates, which on average vary between the order of 1.7 to 4.6% per five-year period, with the exception of North America, which has recorded an increase of 2.6% per year, according to data from the study consulted.

According to an Amnesty International report entitled *Deadly Delivery: The Maternal Health Care Crisis in the USA* (2010), this increase in North America is mainly due to differences in access to health services. Not all women have the same level of access to quality health services in this country. The cited report indicates that “gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status, [and] income level, can affect women’s access to quality health care.”

TABLE 2 TRENDS IN ESTIMATIONS OF MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (MMR, MATERNAL DEATHS PER 100 000 LIVE BIRTHS), FOR 5-YEAR PERIODS, 1990-2010 BY REGION

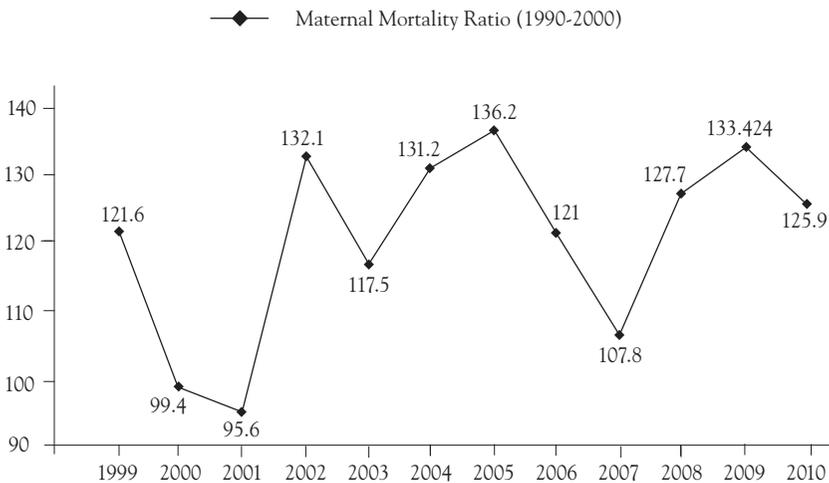
Region	MMR					% change in MMR between 1990 and 2010	Average annual % change in MMR between 1990 and 2010
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010		
Africa	760	740	670	570	460	-39	-2.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	850	820	740	630	500	-41	-2.6
Asia	380	310	260	190	150	-61	-4.6
Europe	36	27	21	16	15	-57	-4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	140	120	100	88	80	-41	-2.6
Northern America	12	11	14	17	20	68	2.6
Oceania	130	120	120	110	93	-29	-1.7
World	400	360	320	260	210	-47	-3.1

Source: Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990-2010.

MATERNAL MORTALITY TRENDS IN THE DR (1998-2011)

The Millennium Development Goals for the Dominican Republic pose a 75% reduction in the maternal mortality rate between 1990 and 2015, according to the United Nations Development Programme in the Dominican Republic (2012). By 1990, the maternal mortality rate was estimated at 229 cases per 100,000 live births, whereas the target set for 2015 is to decrease to 57 cases per 100,000 live births (Ministry of Health, 2011). Although this is positive news, this indicator has continued to fluctuate, with a lowest value of 95.6 in 2001 and a highest of 133.4 in 2009, showing a 6% reduction for 2010 from the previous year. To account for this fluctuation and achieve the target set for 2015, the country should therefore reduce the rate by 54% compared to 2010.

FIGURE 2 TRENDS IN MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO (MMR, MATERNAL DEATHS PER 100 000 LIVE BIRTHS) IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (1990-2010)



Source: http://ais.paho.org/phis/viz/cip_maternalandinfantmortality.asp.

TABLE 3 CAUSES OF MATERNAL DEATHS BY PERCENTAGE, BY YEAR (1998-2011)

Causes of death	Year Recorded													
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Direct obstetrics	72.0	67.0	72.0	64.0	69.0	72.0	69.0	74.0	72.0	74.9	77.0	69.0	80.0	66.3
Toxemia	30.0	27.0	19.0	25.0	21.0	28.0	21.0	23.0	19.2	26.0	26.1	24.7	25.0	16.8
Delivery and postpartum Hemorrhaging	15.0	10.0	18.0	13.0	20.0	28.0	14.0	17.0	10.2	9.5	12.0	11.4	15.0	9.2
Miscarriage	10.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	10.0	5.0	8.0	9.0	11.9	13.3	7.0	8.0	9.5	8.7
Postpartum complications (including postpartum sepsis)	6.0	10.0	23.0	10.0	13.0	6.0	21.0	17.0	21.0	15.0	21.0	15.8	20.0	19.0
Other direct obstetrics	11.0	13.0	4.0	9.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	8.0	10.0	8.0	10.9	9.0	10.5	12.6
Indirect obstetrics	28.0	33.0	28.0	36.0	31.0	28.0	31.0	26.0	28.0	25.1	23.0	31.0	20.0	33.7

Source: Dominican Social Indicators System (SISDOM by its acronyms in English).

MAIN CAUSES OF MATERNAL DEATHS IN THE DR

The main causes of maternal deaths in the Dominican Republic, according to the records of the Epidemiological Surveillance System (SINAVE), are of the direct obstetric type, related to levels of quality and medical care that pregnant women are capable of accessing.

On average, the percentage of these deaths during the period 1998-2011 was 71.3%. The complications recorded were toxemia, hemorrhages, and postpartum complications, among others. Similarly, SINAVE records indicate that 70.6% of maternal deaths occurring in the country in the last fifteen years could have been avoided.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is no coincidence that the regions with the lowest levels of development recorded 99% of the maternal deaths occurring in 1990 and 2010. There is a close link between underdevelopment and this kind of mortality, indicating that “the lower level of access to general education services, especially for sexual and reproductive health and family planning, and less timely access to quality health services before and during delivery and postpartum, the greater the number of maternal deaths.”
2. Maternal mortality rates are an indicator that conclusively demonstrates the differentiated levels of quality of life of the population between countries and regions. Developed regions record maternal mortality rates that do not reach 30 cases per 100,000 live births, whereas in developing regions studies reflect about hundreds of cases per 100,000 live births.
3. It is important to indicate that even though the Latin American region records maternal mortality rates that are lower than those for Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia, the rates are high. The ideal situation would be to significantly reduce the occurrence of this phenomenon in all regions of the world, with the understanding that these deaths are preventable.

4. The problem of maternal mortality transcends figures and statistical estimates; despite providing an overview of the situation, these fail to show the human and social drama that each one involves. Each preventable death is a tragedy that has negative, and in many cases irreversible, repercussions in family and community life.

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Women and Their Political Participation at Local Level

One of the constant demands of the movement for women's rights in the Dominican Republic has been its need to have greater involvement in politics. This paper analyzes the nature of this involvement, based on elections at the municipal level with special emphasis on three recent elections (2002, 2006 and 2010).

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WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Studies such as AmericasBarometer have shown that public perception in the Dominican Republic towards the political participation of women is far from being favorable toward either their active involvement or their performance. In its 2012 edition, the study revealed that 47.9% of the population agrees with the statement that men make better political leaders than women. This is the highest

percentage among Latin American countries. According to the document, when asked whether a man or a woman would better handle the economy, 20.4% said a man, 40.6% said a woman, and 39% had no preference.

TABLE 1 BELIEF THAT MEN ARE BETTER POLITICAL LEADERS THAN WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage
Dominican Republic	47.9	Chile	34.6	Panama	32.0
Bolivia	39.7	Nicaragua	33.6	Guatemala	31.8
Venezuela	38.2	Argentina	33.5	Colombia	31.4
Honduras	37.4	Peru	33.1	Costa Rica	30.2
Paraguay	36.5	Mexico	32.2	Brazil	28.0
El Salvador	35.6	Ecuador	32.2	Uruguay	26.6

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the 2012 AmericasBarometer.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), stipulates in paragraph 190 (b) that governments will take measures in their electoral systems that tend to integrate women into public elective and non-elective positions in the same proportion and in the same categories as men. Similarly, Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁷ states that Member States will make commitments to take the necessary measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life.

In this regard, the current Dominican Constitution assigns these prerogatives in Article 39, section 5, which states: “The State shall promote and ensure the balanced participation of women and men on slates of

⁷ Ratified by the Dominican Republic on September 2, 1982.

candidates for popularly elected positions for direction and decision entities in the public sphere, in the administration of justice and in bodies for State control.”

Therefore, procedural laws have established mechanisms for the inclusion of women in elected positions at municipal level. Law No. 13-00 of March 30, 2000, in its preamble, recognizes the marginalization that Dominican women have suffered in the exercise of their political rights, one of which is to be elected to public office of municipalities and municipal boards. In that vein, it states, “for all parties in the positions of mayor or vice-mayor, a woman must be included on the municipal ballot” and in municipalities where “only five councilpersons are elected, all candidate slates must include a minimum two women.”

Similarly, Article 34 of Law No. 176-07 of the National District and Municipalities, enacted on June 17, 2007 and effective as of August 17 of the same year, provides for gender alternation in candidacies for mayor and deputy-mayor⁸ by ordering that 33% of candidacies for councilpersons and alternates submitted by the parties and political movements⁹ to the Central Electoral Board be occupied by women.

PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN MAYORSHIPS^{10,11}

Between 1970 and 1998, women had barely achieved an average representation of 2.50% in mayorships, even though there had been

⁸ This means that when the mayoral candidate is a man, the deputy mayor candidate must be a woman and vice versa.

⁹ Electoral Law No. 275-97 established a minimum of 25 % in the allocation of female candidates, a percentage that went up to 33 % with Law No. 13-00.

¹⁰ The term “mayorship” refers to the position of mayor; it should not be confused with “municipal council,” which refers to the local administrative entity. “Mayorship” also refers to the office of the mayor, with respect to the local terminology for governmental administration in use.

¹¹ Prior to the enactment of Law No. 176-07 of the National District and Municipalities, the mayorships (*alcaldías*) of today were known as *sindicaturas*; those who occupied the executive functions of the municipal councils were called *síndicos* or *síndicas*. With Law No. 176-07, they became known as mayors, and the directors, sub-directors and *vocales* of the municipal districts are elected by popular vote.

a significant percentage increase since 1986.¹² After the elections of 2002, a significant increase in women elected as mayors occurred, putting that year at 8% (10 women for a total 125 mayorships). In 2006, 17 municipalities out of 151 (11.26%) were headed by women, the highest number reached to date. In the 2010 elections the percentage dropped to 7.74%, since only twelve women attained the position of mayor.

TABLE 2 PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Year	Number of mayorships	Women mayors	%
1998	115	2	1.74
2002	125	10	8.00
2006	151	17	11.26
2010	155	12	7.74

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode using data from the JCE.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION: QUOTA LAWS AND THE SITUATION TODAY

Gender quota laws have been implemented since 1991 in Latin America. The division between men and women is lower in those countries that have established this legal mechanism for inclusion.

Gender quotas have been considered an effective means for incorporating women into politics. Studies have shown that people of the Dominican Republic agree with these measures¹³.

¹² As of 1986, the percentage of women mayors elected averaged 4%. In the four prior elections they barely reached 1 to 2%.

¹³ According to the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey, 78.5% of those surveyed were in agreement with gender quotas. This was the second highest percentage in Latin America. One of the reasons that it is debated is that the issue has been on the public agenda election after election ever since quotas for women were established in the electoral law of 1997.

1. IN THE COUNCILS

Women occupied 8.55% of council positions until 1990, a percentage that increased by 296.61% (nearly triple) in the period 1994-2010 compared to the average of the period 1970-1990.¹⁴ These encouraging results are contrasted with those of the last three elections, when the percentage of women elected decreased by 24% on average with respect to women candidates. This did not happen with the men, whose percentages of councilmen elected increased an average of 15% with respect to candidates for councilman, as shown in Table 3.¹⁵

TABLE 3 PERCENTAGES OF ELECTED POSITIONS V. CANDIDACIES (SEGREGATED BY SEX) IN ELECTIONS 2002-2010. MUNICIPAL LEVEL (COUNCILMEN)

Election	Men Candidates	Elected	Women Candidates	Elected
2002	61.49 %	72.05 %	38.51 %	27.95 %
2006	63.36 %	73.21 %	36.64 %	26.79 %
2010	59.36 %	66.75 %	40.64 %	33.25 %

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode using data from the Central Electoral Board (Spanish acronym JCE).

These data show further efforts to increase women's participation on the councils: In the three periods studied, the provisions set forth in the Quota Law have been exceeded. Although the legal margin was exceeded in 2010, the election results show the opposite result.

With the addition of directors and speakers of the municipal districts as elected positions starting with the 2010 elections, the number of public posts subject to election by popular vote was extended. Of the 5,015 candidacies for councilperson, 2,038 (40.64%), were held

¹⁴ This percentage is obtained by dividing the average of the percentages of councilwomen elected in the period 1994-2010 by the average of the percentages in the period 1970-1990 to determine the corresponding percent increase.

¹⁵ Both percentages are obtained by averaging the increases or reductions of percentages of men/women elected vs. men/woman candidates for the last three elections.

by women. The candidacies for alternate councilperson were 4,919, of which 2,166 (44.03%), were held by women. In conclusion, these figures show a lower level of disparity at the local level in candidacies for offices that are supervisory in nature.

TABLE 4 CANDIDACIES OF COUNCILWOMEN AND THEIR ALTERNATES

Year	Candidacies		%	
	Total	Women		
2002	5,310	2,045	38.51	Councilwomen
	5,231	2,227	42.57	Alternates
2006	5,338	1,956	36.64	Councilwomen
	5,254	2,111	40.18	Alternates
2010	5,015	2,038	40.64	Councilwomen
	4,919	2,166	44.03	Alternates

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode using data from the Central Electoral Board (JCE).

2. IN MAYORSHIPS

In the 2002 elections, of the 869 candidacies for mayor, only 86 (9.90%) were occupied by women. Four years later, in 2006, of the 800 candidacies submitted, 98 (12.25%) were for women. Of the 614 candidates for mayor in the 2010 elections, 70 (11.40%) were women, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 5 PERCENTAGES OF POSITIONS ELECTED V. CANDIDACIES (SEGREGATED BY SEX) IN ELECTIONS 2002-2010. MUNICIPAL LEVEL (MAYORS)

Election	Men Candidates	Elected	Women Candidates	Elected
2002	90.10%	92.00%	9.90%	8.00%
2006	87.75%	88.74%	12.25%	11.26%
2010	88.60%	92.26%	11.40%	7.74%

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode using data from the Central Electoral Board (JCE).

Table 5 also reflects a decrease in the percentages of women elected as mayors with respect to the total candidates. The opposite happened with the men even though the percentages of men elected as mayors in the last three elections stood at an average of 2.46%¹⁶ with respect to the total candidates.

The fact that the percentages of women elected as mayors in the last three electoral contests have decreased 19.79%¹⁷ as a percentage of total female candidates offered, calls into question the effectiveness of and compliance with the Quota Law (13-00), in moving toward gender parity. What would be the reasons that the electorate does not consistently vote for female candidates? Analysis and future studies on the political participation of women should proceed on these issues.

Overall, despite having recorded a significant reduction of women mayors elected for 2010, compared to 2006 there has been an increase of 195%¹⁸ (almost three times higher) in the period 1994-2010, in contrast with the period 1970-1990. This overall increase is not entirely evidenced in the administrative functions of the municipal councils where the opposite holds true: for every ten mayors, only one is a woman.¹⁹

A different situation is seen in the supervisory positions of the municipal councils where there has been a steady path toward gender parity. The percentage of councilwomen elected in 1970 was 7.80%, while in 2010 it was 33.25%, thus achieving 33% of the minimum quota set by Resolution No. 4/2010 of the Central Electoral Board.²⁰

¹⁶ See note 8.

¹⁷ See note 8.

¹⁸ This percentage is obtained by comparing the averages of the women mayors elected per election with the total for the period 1970-1998, and the averages for the period 2002-2010.

¹⁹ This result is obtained by comparing the numbers of men and women mayors elected in the last three elections.

²⁰ The first article of Resolution No. 4/2010 establishes that “parties, party alliances and political groupings, when submitting their slates of candidates for the offices of deputies, councilpersons, and councilperson alternates, as well as speakers for municipal districts, must include a percent of no less than 33% women, assigned alternately, for the total offices proposed at each election level.”

CONCLUSIONS

The Dominican Republic has made progress on gender parity at the municipal level with women's participation increasing steadily over time. However, the executive tasks of local government administrations maintain a male face, including high-level positions in municipal representation bodies.

The biggest challenge for achieving gender parity is to move toward quality education in government, municipal public policy, and municipal public financial management. This preparation should be based on training and continuing education of the party grassroots and political movements.

The low percentage of women nominated as candidates at the municipal level shows that gender parity in political parties is still a pending issue. On one hand, the current electoral system has not established an appropriate mechanism to enforce the quota established by Law No. 13-2000: a minimum of 33% women in the submission of congressional and municipal candidates. Nor have procedures been adapted to secure this percentage in the electoral processes of the parties.

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ANNEX

Year	DETAILS OF CANDIDACIES AND ELECTED POSTS PER ELECTION									
	Candidates					Elected				
	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%	Total
Syndicates or Mayors										
1970					77	98.72	1	1.28		78
1974					77	98.72	1	1.28		78
1978					84	100.00	0	0.00		84
1982					92	97.87	2	2.13		94
1986					95	95.96	4	4.04		99
1990					98	95.15	5	4.85		103
1994					102	95.33	5	4.67		107
1998					113	98.26	2	1.74		115
2002	783	90.10	86	9.90	869	115	92.00	10	8.00	125
2006	702	87.75	98	12.25	800	134	88.74	17	11.26	151
2010	544	88.60	70	11.40	614	143	92.26	12	7.74	155
Deputy Syndicate or Deputy Mayor										
2002	83	9.55	786	90.45	869	13	10.40	112	89.60	125
2006	91	11.46	703	88.50	794	17	11.26	134	88.74	151
2010	69	11.24	545	88.76	614	13	8.39	142	91.61	155
Aldermen										
1970					390	92.20	33	7.80		423
1974					405	89.40	48	10.60		453

1978				423	87.40	61	12.60	484			
1982				561	96.06	23	3.94	584			
1986				598	93.88	39	6.12	637			
1990				561	89.76	64	10.24	625			
1994				555	85.65	93	14.35	648			
1998				571	75.53	185	24.47	756			
2002	3,265	61.49	2,045	38.51	5,310	567	72.05	220	27.95	787	
2006	3,382	63.36	1,956	36.64	5,338	705	73.21	258	26.79	963	
2010	2,977	59.36	2,038	40.64	5,015	767	66.75	382	33.25	1,149	
Substitute Aldermen											
1998											
2002	3,004	57.43	2,227	42.57	5,231	539	68.49	248	31.51	787	
2006	3,143	59.82	2,111	40.18	5,254	690	71.65	273	28.35	963	
2010	2,753	55.97	2,166	44.03	4,919	743	64.66	406	35.34	1,149	
Directors											
2010	697	87.13	103	12.88	800	218	95.20	11	4.80	229	
Deputy Directors											
2010	102	12.78	696	87.22	798	12	5.24	217	94.76	229	
Speaker											
2010	1,523	60.27	1,004	39.73	2,527	527	73.71	188	26.29	715	

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the Central Elections Council (JCE).

The Elimination of Violence against Women

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1. BACKGROUND

On December 18, 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW). Its entry into force as an international treaty took place on September 3, 1981, after being ratified by 20 countries. On its tenth anniversary (1989), around 100 nations expressed their desire to adhere to its provisions.

The Convention was the culmination of over 30 years of work by the Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to

monitor the status of women and promote their rights. The work of the Commission has helped to shed light on all the spheres in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for the advancement of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the central and most comprehensive document (CEDAW, 1979).

Last November 25 (2013), the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was commemorated, after being declared as such on December 17, 1999, by Resolution No. 54-134, of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). In the resolution, governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were urged to carry out activities aimed at raising public awareness about the problem of violence against women on November 25.

The date was originally chosen to commemorate the 1960 murder of Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa Mirabal (otherwise known as the Mirabal sisters), who were Dominican political delegates assassinated upon the orders of the dictator Rafael Trujillo. On December 20, 1993, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN, 1993).

Article 1 of the UN declaration defined the concept of violence against women in a broad framework:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN, 1993).

In this regard, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) gives priority to initiatives and actions aimed at eliminating health inequities (García-Moreno, 2000).

Violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights violations. This multicausal and structural phenomenon, which

responds to patriarchal patterns and a chauvinistic culture, demonstrates the complexity of a social problem that is already considered a pandemic.

CEDAW is a legal tool for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which allows the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields, an indispensable condition for the full development of a country, global welfare, and the cause of peace (UN, 1979). It is based on three basic principles: (a) Equality of results, (b) Nondiscrimination, and (c) State responsibility. In this regard, the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* states the following:

Gender violence, in this case violence committed against women by men, is manifested through physical, sexual or psychological violence occurring within the family and in the community, in general it includes beatings, sexual abuse of girls, marital violence, violence related to female genital mutilation (in other cultures), and other non-traditional practices harmful to women such as non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, forced prostitution and violence perpetrated or condoned by the State (UN, 1993).

An outstanding effort for monitoring progress was reflected in the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, held from March 4 to 15, 2013, in New York. This international meeting was characterized by the presentation of member country progress reports in the area of women's rights and gender equality. Its main theme focused on preventative and multisectoral responses to violence against women and girls (UN Women, 2012).

It should be clarified that female scholars who have worked on the issue of violence against women have coined the terms *femicide* and *feminicide* to establish conceptual differences. The first concept originated in England when in 1976 Diana Russell defined "femicide" as "the

murder of women by men motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure or a sense of ownership of the woman” (Garita Vilchez, 2012).

Notwithstanding this, it was in Mexico (1994) over the last two decades, that the debate was generated on femicide with the anthropologist Marcela Lagarde, as she assumed the definition of Russell and Harmes who stated:

... it is the set of crimes against humanity consisting of criminal acts, kidnappings and disappearances of girls and women in a context of institutional collapse. It is a fracture of the rule of law that favors impunity. Therefore, femicide is a state crime. It should be clarified that femicide exists in conditions of war and peace (2006).

2. OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA

Data provided by the UN indicates that 70% of women in the world are victims of different types of violence. The Organization also notes that so far in 2013, about 1,800 women have lost their lives because of gender violence in Latin America. Unfortunately, on a national level in large countries like Mexico and Brazil, there are no updated figures to show the magnitude of the problem and, therefore, it is not possible to determine the actual number of dead and battered women.

In addition, according to data contributed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 45% of women in the region reported having received threats from their partners (ECLAC, 2013).

The Center for Information and Development of Women of Bolivia (CIDEM) recorded 89 deaths of women due to male violence in the first ten months of 2013. It should be noted that there could be many more cases, since those are just the ones that were reported by the media. “In the period January/October, the Manuela Observatory recorded 125 women killed: 82 femicides and 43 crimes due to a lack of public safety and other motives” (ICW, 2013).

According to UNDP figures cited by the UN Women Programme, Bolivia is the country where at least seven out of every ten women are victims of abuse in their own homes or outside. The annual average number of murders of women in that country is 92 cases, 21 of which occur in La Paz. The figure represents 22.6% of crimes driven by two causes: alcohol and jealousy (Sánchez, 2013). Colombia follows with 39%: In the first half of 2013, there were 514 femicides, while 15,640 women were victims of domestic violence and another 5,545 reported sexual abuse (*El Herald*, 2013).

In Ecuador, in the first ten months of 2013, there were 47 femicides, according to the Ecumenical Commission for Human Rights (CEDHU), which at the same time warned that these cases “are increasingly cruel” and sometimes “the bodies of the victims appear tortured, mutilated, and with signs of sexual violence.” In this Andean country where there is “structural discrimination” against girls and women, according to the NGO Plan International, 78% of girls reported receiving some form of abuse in their households (*El Telégrafo*, 2013).

Peru ranks third in Latin America in terms of the number of femicides. According to the National Program against Domestic and Sexual Violence of the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP), in the period January-October of this year there have been 99 cases of femicide, surpassing the 2012 figure (82). Moreover, the record for attempted femicides is 122 cases, with consequences ranging from serious harm to permanent disability. In 2012 only 99 cases were reported (Peru.com).

According to data from the “Adriana Marisel Zambrano” Observatory of Femicides of the NGO Civil Association Casa del Encuentro, 1,236 women and girls have been killed in Argentina in the past five years; 255 of these cases occurred in 2012 alone. During the first nine months of 2013, 209 cases of femicide were recorded (M1nuto One, 2013).

Francia Jamett, member of the Chilean Network against Domestic and Sexual Violence, indicated that from January to October 2013, 51 cases of femicide were reported in Chile, and 40% of the victims had

restraining orders against their aggressors at the time (Agencia Púlsar, 2013).

In Uruguay, “the Uruguayan Network against Domestic and Sexual Violence notes that so far this year femicide cases reached 27, plus there were seven attempts to kill women by their partners” (Republica.com.uy, 2013).

In Paraguay, the data are disaggregated so that there are no comprehensive records for 2013.

In Central America, where according to UN Women (2013) two out of three women are killed for the mere fact they are women, the figures are startling. This year so far, 656 women have been killed in Guatemala, 606 in Honduras, and 203 in El Salvador, all due to gender violence. The figures from Nicaragua (53), Panama (36), and Costa Rica (14) are much lower.

3. STATUS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In the Dominican Republic, Law No. 24-97 for the Protection of Women is the result of a January 1997 reform of the Criminal Code, which until then had not sanctioned violence against women. An amendment was also introduced in order to provide mechanisms for aggressors to get help.

Despite this advancement, Sergia Galván, Coordinator of the Women and Health Collective, expressed serious concern that “... there is no system in the country for the rehabilitation of aggressors, and the only option offered by the system is jail where no one is educated, which is considered a deficiency of the State” (*El Nuevo Diario*, 2013).

For her part, the Deputy Prosecutor for women’s affairs in the country, Roxana Reyes, said that 80% of Dominican women who died as victims of gender violence had not reported their aggressors previously, compared with the 20% who did. She added that from January to November 2013 a total of 54 female murder victims were reported in

the country. Despite this figure, it meant that extreme violence against women motivated by sexism had decreased by 33% (*El Caribe*, 2013).

Reyes spoke of a gradual plan for the joint implementation of strategic partnerships with the UN system and international and local NGOs in order to run an efficient service for the safety of female victims and their children. In turn, it is understood that the decrease in violence against women was due to the 50,000 complaints recorded so far that year, meaning that the partnerships had facilitated a quicker response to save lives (Efe, 2013). Although Sergia Galván noted that a high percentage of women had withdrawn their complaints about gender and domestic violence, she felt that the more than 50,000 complaints to which Reyes referred remained a serious problem.

The prosecutor also reported on the bill, expected to be approved, for prevention, treatment, punishment, and eradication of violence against women in the Dominican Republic. She noted that it is “a second generation bill and when it is approved, we will have one of the most modern laws in Latin America on this matter.” The law is not limited to criminal matters. It also has a section devoted to education, health and culture, and it criminalizes femicide, symbolic violence, economic violence, and computer crime, acts which previously have not been recognized as crimes under Dominican legislation (Efe, 2013).

According to data from the Attorney General’s Office, 198 casualties were reported for the entire country in 2012. The figure represents a decrease from 2011, when 230 murders occurred (Observatorio de Ejercicio Ciudadano de las Mujeres. Women and Health Collective, 2012).

According to Table No. 1, of the 198 femicides, the highest number that occurred in 2012 took place in Santo Domingo (60), followed by Santiago (18), La Vega (13), and San Cristóbal (12). In the National District, 11 femicides were recorded, in Puerto Plata 8, and in La Altagracia 7 deaths from gender violence. The number of femicides decreases from six to one homicide for the remaining provinces, with no femicides recorded for Pedernales and Independencia.

TABLE NO. 1 NUMBER OF FEMICIDES PER PROVINCE IN 2012

Provincia	No.	%
Santo Domingo	60	30.30
Santiago	18	9.09
La Vega	13	6.57
San Cristóbal	12	6.06
Distrito Nacional	11	5.56
Puerto Plata	8	4.04
La Altagracia	7	3.54
San Pedro de Macorís	6	3.03
Duarte	5	2.53
Peravia	5	2.53
Sánchez Ramírez	5	2.53
Valverde	5	2.53
Dajabón	4	2.02
Hermanas Mirabal	4	2.02
La Romana	4	2.02
Monte Plata	4	2.02
Baoruco	3	1.52
Barahona	3	1.52
El Seibo	3	1.52
Elías Piña	3	1.52
San Juan de la Maguana	3	1.52
Españillat	2	1.01
María Trinidad Sánchez	2	1.01
Montecristi	2	1.01
Azua	1	0.51
Hato Mayor	1	0.51
Monseñor Nouel	1	0.51
Samaná	1	0.51
San José de Ocoa	1	0.51
Santiago Rodríguez	1	0.51
Independencia	0	0.00
Pedernales	0	0.00
Total	198	100.00

Source: Observatorio de Ejercicio Ciudadano de las Mujeres. Women and Health Collective, 2012.

The country currently has 17 care units for dependent battered women as branches of the Ministry of Women, plus two shelters. This, however, appears to be insufficient for providing prompt and effective attention to the 55,000 complaints and grievances.

MAP I NUMBER OF FEMICIDES PER PROVINCE, 2012



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode based on data from the Observatorio de Ejercicio Ciudadano de las Mujeres. Women and Health Collective.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In short, violence against women is a social problem that requires solutions. Nevertheless, the legal framework is based on laws that regulate the problem, giving rise to the punitive aspect.

Since reforming Law No. 24-97 for the protection of women, progress has been made on legal matters that give more protection to Dominican women. These advances include attention to victims as well as aggressors. Although this is encouraging, the battered women’s shelters and behavioral intervention centers for aggressors are still not sufficient to provide the required care.

The country has statistics that show a high number of victims each year. In spite of this, civil society organizations and the State have made progress in reducing the number of femicides in the country. Various entities aim to raise awareness and to continuously battle all forms of violence against women. The outcome includes education, publicity campaigns, prompt assistance, and prevention programs in communities.

Therefore, prevention programs with families, schools, popular education entities, and community organizations must be increased. Diverse sectors should also be involved in order to develop processes for rehabilitation and interventions that enable a change in the mindsets of citizens, establishing a culture of respect and peace. One important strategy is the inclusion of gender perspectives in all sectors.

In this regard, women's movements and feminist and human rights organizations have before them a key role in developing and implementing initiatives that contribute to the eradication of the problem. The State also faces a great challenge that involves designing policies to foster the elimination of attitudes that reproduce patterns of discrimination and violence against women.

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Femicide Rates in 2012

Santo Domingo and Santiago have the largest number of femicides while Dajabón and Elías Piña report the highest rates of femicides.

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December 27, 2013

On December 17, 1999, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly declared November 25 of every year as International Day for the Eradication of Violence against Women. The initiative began as an effort to concentrate efforts and formalize actions for the creation of mechanisms to prevent and reduce the problem.

At the local level, efforts have concentrated on the enforcement of Law No. 24-97, which modifies the Dominican Penal Code reformed in January 1997. This legislation penalizes domestic and intrafamily violence against women both within and outside the home. For the first time, it also criminalizes sexual violence between partners, which represents progress in strengthening the defense of human rights. At

the same time, it facilitates mechanisms for preventing and/or dealing with victims and victimizers.

Along with the enforcement of this law, the National Congress ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women on May 25, 1983, and on March 7, 1996, it ratified the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem Do Para Convention). In both treaties the State commits to protecting all of the rights recognized for the female population.

NUMBER AND RATE OF FEMICIDES IN 2012

Violence against women is considered a human rights violation. The situation is addressed from different perspectives: On this occasion, data were obtained from the Attorney General's Office on femicides occurring in 2012 to determine the incidence rate of this problem in specific territories.

According to data obtained from the Attorney General's Office, 198 victims were recorded nationwide in 2012 of which 102 were intimate (committed within any kind of relationship) and 96 were non-intimate (robberies, brawls, rapes, and accidents) murders. The figure revealed a reduction compared to 2011, when there were 230 murders (Observatorio de Ejercicio Ciudadano de las Mujeres. Women and Health Collective, 2012).

The study of rates has become a mechanism for generalizing to larger populations. The data calls for further examination of the nature of femicide and its prevalence in certain communities, as well as for the examination of the socio-demographic risk factors.

Table No. 1 gives the incidence rates calculated for the female population using the 2010 Population and Family Census. The highest value of femicides is recorded for Dajabón, with 12.90; in second place is Elías Piña with 9.98; and Hermanas Mirabal province takes third place at 8.85. El Seibo had a rate of 7.42 within its territory.

The provinces of Sánchez Ramírez (6.84), La Vega (6.75), Bahoruco (6.42), Valverde (6.41), La Altagracia (5.38), Peravia (5.37), and Puerto Plata (5.08), followed with significant rates. After these figures the rates continue to decline from 4.96 to 0.99.

TABLE 1 RATE OF FEMICIDES, 2012

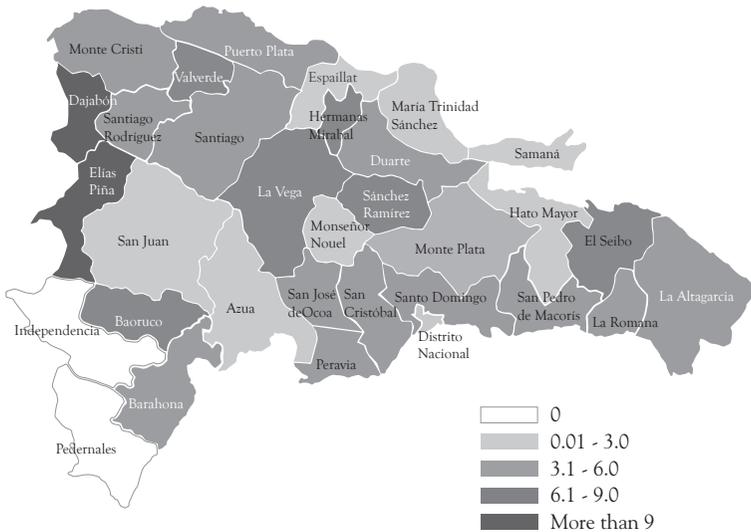
Province	No. of femicides	Female population (2010 Census)	Rate
Santo Domingo	60	1, 210, 413.00	4.96
Santiago	18	483, 316.00	3.72
La Vega	13	192, 568.00	6.75
San Cristóbal	12	284, 733.00	4.21
Distrito Nacional	11	504, 137.00	2.18
Puerto Plata	8	157, 418.00	5.08
La Altagracia	7	130, 200.00	5.38
San Pedro de Macoris	6	147, 058.00	4.08
Duarte	5	142, 150.00	3.52
Peravia	5	93, 045.00	5.37
Sánchez Ramírez	5	73, 082.00	6.84
Valverde	5	78, 012.00	6.41
Dajabón	4	31, 012.00	12.90
Hermanas Mirabal	4	45, 189.00	8.85
La Romana	4	124, 159.00	3.22
Monte Plata	4	89, 926.00	4.45
Baoruco	3	46, 750.00	6.42
Barahona	3	90, 306.00	3.32
El Seibo	3	40, 420.00	7.42
Elías Piña	3	30, 055.00	9.98
San Juan de la Maguana	3	109, 783.00	2.73
Españillat	2	113, 384.00	1.76
María Trinidad Sánchez	2	68, 424.00	2.92

Montecristi	2	51, 710.00	3.87
Azua	1	101, 426.00	0.99
Hato Mayor	1	41, 675.00	2.40
Monseñor Nouel	1	81, 771.00	1.22
Samaná	1	49, 088.00	2.04
San José de Ocoa	1	27, 310.00	3.66
Santiago Rodríguez	1	27, 449.00	3.64
Independencia	0	25, 582.00	0.00
Pedernales	0	14, 692.00	0.00
Total	198	4, 706, 243.00	

Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode.

The provinces of Independencia and Pedernales did not report cases of women’s deaths during this period.

MAP I RATE OF FEMICIDES, 2012



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode based on data from the Attorney General's Office of the Republic, 2012.

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Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women

(MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS SERIES, NO. 3)

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January 31, 2014

The third Millennium Development Goal seeks to improve the status of women, something which is understood by poor communities but often not acted upon by the decision makers themselves. Progress on this objective directly impacts the fulfillment of other goals, especially the first one (to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger). So how has the Dominican Republic performed so far?

TARGET 3.A

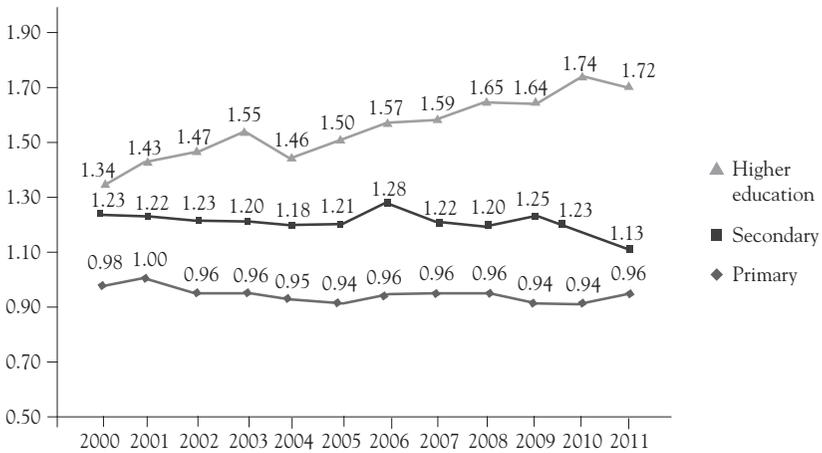
Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 3.A has three indicators: gender equality in education, the labor market, and in political participation.

GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

According to data from SISDOM, in 2001 the relationship between boys and girls enrolled in primary school was 1, which means that the Dominican Republic had achieved its expected parity at that point. This relationship, however, began to deteriorate starting in 2002 and remained at 0.96 until 2011: For every 100 boys enrolled at the primary school level, there were only 96 girls, slightly below the goal of 1. In this regard, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (MESCYT, [2010]) estimated that the parity recorded in 2001 could be restored with moderate effort.

FIGURE 1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL



Source: OPD with data from SISDOM.

According to the Follow-up Report (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, MEPYD, 2010), this indicator (0.96), is similar to the average reported for Latin America and the Caribbean.

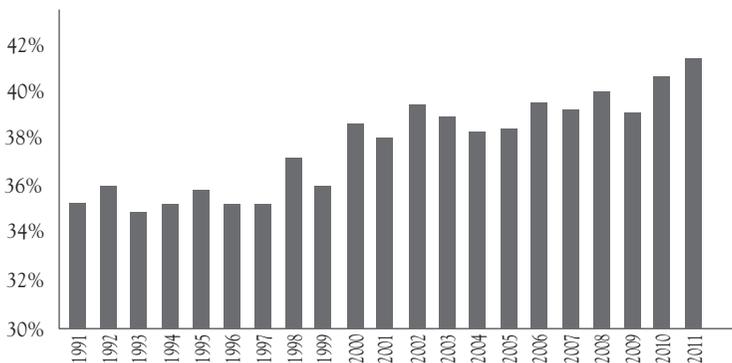
In fact, in terms of secondary education, the Dominican Republic has a parity index above the millennium goal: In the period 2000-2011, girls enrolled in school out-numbered boys by about 20%.

In higher education, the difference in favor of females is much higher: In 2011, for every 100 men enrolled, there were 172 women. These figures show that despite the setbacks at the primary level, the country is set to meet this goal by 2015.

The MEPYD and UNDP, however, are concerned about the trend in middle and upper levels where males appear to be disadvantaged in relation to females, especially at the higher level.

EQUALITY IN THE LABOR MARKET

FIGURE 2 PROPORTION OF FEMALE WORKERS OUTSIDE THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR



Source: OPD with data from SISDOM.

Figure 2 shows the pace of progress in this area has been slow. The percentage of women in paid jobs in the non-agricultural sector went from 38.6% in 2000 to 41.2% in 2011; meanwhile, male participation was 61.4% in 2000 and 58.8% in 2011. This means that the higher educational level achieved by women has not resulted in access to more

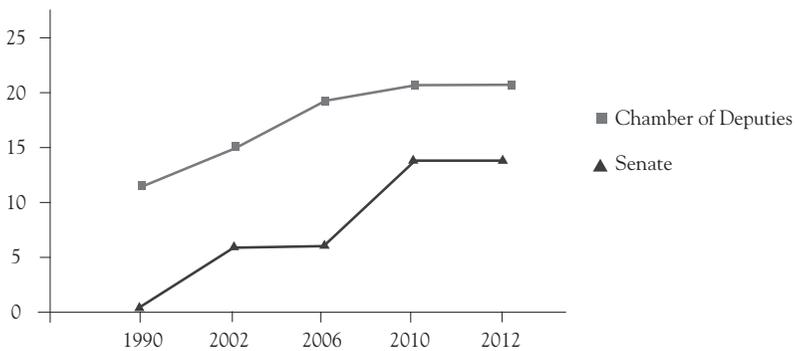
and better jobs. This level of female participation in the workforce is below the average of 44% estimated in 2011 for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN, 2013).

If current trends hold, the UNDP estimates that in 2015 female participation in the labor force will be 42%. It should be noted, however, that the average in developed countries is 48%; therefore, a 6% improvement would put the DR on a par with developed countries.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Inequality also exists in the participation and access women have to the mechanisms of power. The third indicator for meeting MDG3A is the proportion of seats held by women in the Chamber of Deputies: The target is gender parity, that is, 50% of the seats.

FIGURE 3 PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS (%)



Source: OPD with data from ONE.

Viewing this proportion as a measure of political empowerment, the numbers have increased but not enough. In 1990, the proportion of women in the Chamber of Deputies was 11.7%, which had been

increasing throughout the decade. The 2006 elections saw 35 female deputies elected —out of a total of 179— reaching a 19.5% participation rate. The average in Latin America for that same period was 20.5% (MEPYD, 2012).

By 2012, the percentage of women with seats in the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic was 20.8%, which is below the average of 24.5% in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN, 2013). In the Senate, progress has been much slower. In 1990 there were no women; by 2012, that number rose to 14.3%.

This situation occurred despite Law No. 12-00, which states that at least 33% of congressional and municipal seats must be filled by women and that municipal ballots of all political parties must include a woman in the position of delegate or deputy delegate.

Factors that affect the national lag in gender equality are obstacles of partisan, legal, and cultural natures, which ultimately support a system in Dominican society that accepts and justifies attitudes and practices that favor the predominance of men (Ministry of Women, 2005).

CONCLUSION

According to the data introduced, the Dominican Republic has virtually achieved its gender equality goal in the area of education with certain disadvantages for males in middle and upper level educational settings. However, if this trend holds up, MDG 3 targets will not be achieved by 2015: While women enter and remain more years in the educational system, this does not translate into more or better jobs.

Political representation will not undergo important changes unless law enforcement mechanisms, programs, and policies related to promoting gender equality are improved (MESCYT, 2010).

Reaching this target requires redistributive and inclusive policies on gender; its achievement is also related to the former, as women have fewer economic opportunities. Advances in the fourth (infant mortality), fifth (maternal health), and sixth goals (HIV/AIDS and other illnesses), are also affected by the vulnerability of women. Therefore,

it is necessary to guarantee women the exercise of their rights, to strengthen awareness of equal rights and gender equality, and to apply this perspective in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

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Improving Maternal Health

(MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS SERIES, NO. 5)

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March 7, 2014

The Fifth Millennium Goal, “improve maternal health,” has two main ideas: (1) maternal mortality and (2) women’s reproductive health. Progress is closely related to achieving previous targets concerning poverty, education, gender equality, and infant mortality. This article reviews the performance of the Dominican Republic in reaching the target, based on goals and indicators defined by the United Nations.

TARGET 5.A

Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between the period 1990 to 2015

Maternal mortality is a public health problem that exposes the most profound inequalities in living conditions of a large part of the

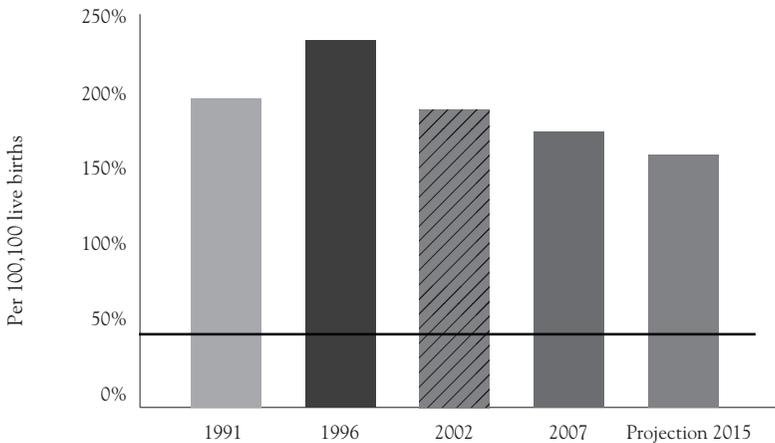
population. Similarly, it reflects the health of women of reproductive age, the state of health services, and quality of care provided: contraception, prenatal care, skilled delivery, and emergency obstetric care.

High rates of maternal mortality are concentrated in lower income groups, due to limited access to services, sexual health policies, poor reproductive health policies, and the lack of guarantees for comprehensive quality health services for women (Ortiz, 2002.)

MATERNAL MORTALITY IN THE COUNTRY

The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in the Dominican Republic is high: in 1991 there were 187.6 deaths per 100,000 live births, higher than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (180 in 1991). For the five years between 2002 and 2007, ENDESA estimated there were 159 maternal deaths. Despite being above the regional average of 130, this represents a reduction of 15%, with an average rate of 1% per year.

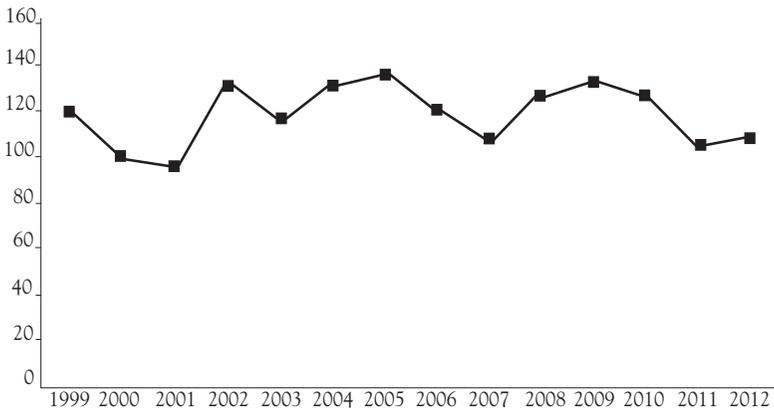
FIGURE 1 MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO



Source: ENDESA.

Figure 2 shows rates adjusted for underreporting, as estimated by the National Epidemiological Surveillance System, which reveals indicator trends year-by-year.

FIGURE 2 MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO ADJUSTED FOR UNDERREPORTING



Source: SINAVE-PAHO, basic health indicators.

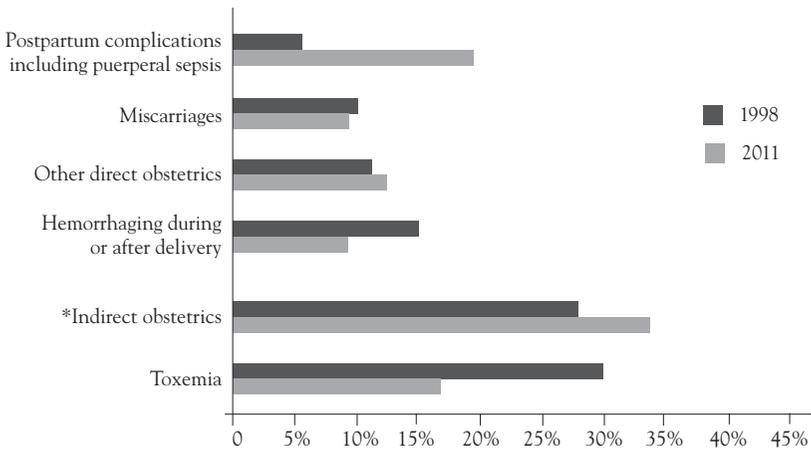
Progress in reducing maternal mortality ratios has been slow and irregular although 97.5% of pregnant women receive prenatal care from medical personnel, and 98% of deliveries are attended by skilled health personnel (ECLAC, 2013). PAHO (2013) estimated that for Latin America and the Caribbean, 82.8% of women had prenatal care and 92.5% childbirth care, but exhibited an average maternal mortality rate of 62.2. Care indicators for the Dominican Republic are higher than indicators in the majority of Latin American countries, but the results are worse: PAHO estimated 108 maternal deaths out of 100,000 live births for the Dominican Republic.

This contradiction between the high level of care available at institutional facilities and poor MM results suggests deficiencies in the functioning and quality of health services.

Further, the highest incidence of death occurs in the age group between 30 to 34 years of age (0.23 per 1,000 women), and with adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age (0.19 per 1,000 women), according to ENDESA (2007).

The main causes for maternal deaths are toxemia, hemorrhaging, postpartum complications including puerperal sepsis, and miscarriages (Figure 3). Evaluations like those undertaken by Cerda (2002) and De Lancer (2011) contend that these causes of maternal death are preventable and controllable if appropriate equipment and supplies (medicines and inputs), are available; if follow-up of intervention protocols are performed and if the facility has properly trained personnel.

FIGURE 3 MAIN CAUSES OF MATERNAL DEATHS, 1998 AND 2011



Source: SISDOM *Indirect obstetrics can be AIDS, pneumonia, mental problems, etc.

In fact, SINAVE follow-up indicators confirm Cerda and DeLancer’s reasoning: Indicators in 2011 show that at least 44% of these deaths were avoidable. In addition, the majority of the deaths are not being subjected to a preventability analysis, which is the responsibility of the hospital committee.

Along the same lines, according to medical audit reports from the Ministry of Public Health on the number of maternal deaths reported to the surveillance system since 1998, 80% of them could have been avoided. The report considers that care received by pregnant women in hospital facilities is inadequate and points to non-compliance of quality standards and personnel absenteeism (MEPYD, 2010).

Another report from the National Commission for Health Reform found that although the quality of care was a determinant factor, risk factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, lack of hospital resources, transport problems and multiparity pregnancies also contributed to the issue (Cerda, 2002).

Despite that fact that attention was called to the quality of medical services more than a decade ago, data shows no change in the rate of progress. MEPYD (2010) estimates that if current trends continue, the maternal mortality ratio will be approximately 141 by 2015 and Target 5.A will be met by around 2040.

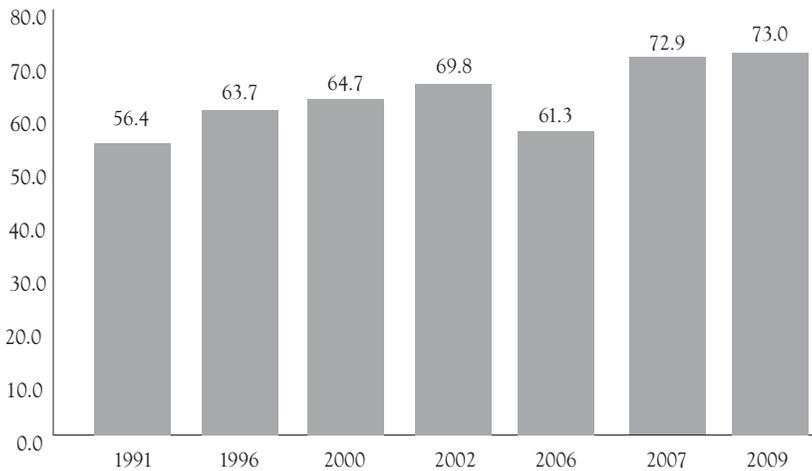
TARGET 5.B

To be achieved by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

According to ENDESA, in 1991, 56.4% of women with partners were using contraceptives. This proportion reportedly increased each subsequent year until it reached 72.9% in 2007 and 73% in 2009. The Dominican Republic was placed in the regional average, which is 72%.

Although the prevalence of contraceptive use is high, the number of methods being used is dropping, possibly due to access difficulties and lack of information, especially among the poorest portion of the population. This gap is evident in fertility levels, which are higher among illiterate or poorly educated women. Female sterilization continues to be the most common method of avoiding pregnancy and is used by 65% of all contraceptive users. Of these, a significant portion has regretted this irreversible decision.

FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AGED 15-19 WHO USE CONTRACEPTION



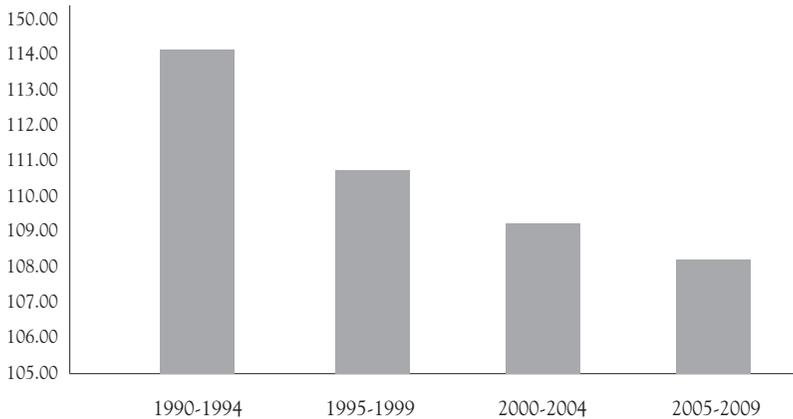
Source: SISDOM.

Adolescent pregnancy is especially important in terms of sexual and reproductive health. As such, adolescent fertility has remained relatively high in the last ten years: 23.3% of teens aged 15 to 19 have been pregnant, and 35.5% of 19-year-olds are already mothers (END, 2010).

Adolescent birth rates (specific rate of fertility), in the Dominican Republic are high and slowly decreasing: from 114 per 1,000 in 1990 to 109 per 1,000 in 2005 (Figure 5). These figures are much higher than the regional average. On this matter, it is important to stress that the number of births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean went from 77 in 1990 to 72 in 2005.

These pregnancies carry elevated health risks and contribute to the existing high maternal mortality in the country. ECLAC (2013) views them as both the cause and the product of socioeconomic and gender disparities. The majority of these mothers are in situations of exclusion and marginalization; their education level is strongly related to the probability of teenage pregnancy. In addition, the offspring of adoles-

FIGURE 5 ADOLESCENTS BIRTH RATE



Source: SISDOM.

cents are more likely to continue this same dynamic, perpetuating the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

One of the causes of high fertility is linked to the proportion of women who cannot access birth control. In 2007 this proportion rose to 11.4% overall and 28% among women aged 15 to 19. Among sexually active women, aged 15 to 19, only 30% reported having used birth control methods (MEPYD, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

The provision of medical care to mothers is the duty of the government, as guarantor of women's right to safe maternity. To that end, it is obliged to ensure the availability, accessibility, and quality of health services.

While the country has achieved broad coverage in maternal health services, poor maternal health results indicate that the quality of these services is questionable. This situation reflects major weaknesses in prenatal, delivery, post-partum, and perinatal care.

The National Development Strategy proposes, among its targets, modifying current trends and achieving a maternal mortality ratio of 72 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020 and 31 per 100,000 in 2030.

The 2013-2016 Public Sector Multi-Year Plan provides for an increased flow of public resources to finance health care for the poorest groups of the population, boosting pertinent and sustainable health care services to the target population as well as consolidating mechanisms for monitoring and result evaluation.

Finally, special attention to training and raising awareness among health workers to provide quality and compassionate care to women before, during, and after the pregnancy process must be an essential component of public policies to improve maternal health.

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International Women's Day 2014

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International Women's Day (IWD), initially called International Working Women's Day, is celebrated on March 8 every year. It is an important date for women worldwide. Celebrations vary in different regions around the globe: from initiatives of homage, appreciation, and love to recognition of women's economic, political, and social triumphs.

The beginning of the 20th Century brought great transformations in political and industrial spheres, which implied changes in the workplace and rising activism on behalf of women's rights: "the right to vote, hold public office, the right to work, receive professional training and the elimination of job discrimination." (UN Women). As a

way of revitalizing these demands, and with the passage of time, International Women's Day came about as a result of the first march organized by female workers, at a textile factory in New York on March 8, 1857. They marched to protest low wages and inhumane working conditions. Two years later, this group of women formed their first trade union.

Many years later in 1908, another group of textile workers went on strike to protest unacceptable working conditions. In August 1910, a meeting of the Second International Conference on Women was held in Copenhagen, and March 8 was formally declared "International Women's Day." Women from the United States submitted the proposal, presented by Clara Zetkin. Part of the proposal reads as follows:

In union, class organizations, political parties, and proletariat syndicates in each country, female socialists around the world will celebrate women's day every year. Its main goal is to obtain the right of women to vote. This demand must be raised around the world within the overall context of women's issues. Women's Day should be international and must be carefully prepared. (FIADASEC, 2014).

On March 19, 1911, over a million people participated in demonstrations in Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland. That same month, an event occurred that would seal the date of International Women's Day as March 8: A massive fire, considered one of the deadliest industrial disasters in the history of the United States occurred. According to a UN document,

... less than a week later, on March 25, more than 140 young workers, mostly Italian immigrants and Jews, were killed in the tragic fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. This occurrence had a significant impact on labor legislation in the United States and on subsequent International Women's Day celebrations; reference to the conditions that led to the disaster were often made (UN Women).

This disaster led to the regulation of work hours, decreasing them to ten.

Later in 1917, on March 8 (February 23 in the Russian calendar), working women and wives of soldiers in Petrograd, now St. Petersburg, took to the streets demanding food and the return of their husbands from war (International Women's Day. "100 years of struggle for equality." Gender Education, February 24, 2011). As a result, the February Revolution began that day, an event that contributed to the celebration of International Working Women's Day on March 8^r, now commemorated as International Women's Day.

March 8 is considered a barometer of women's struggle in societies ruled by men, where decisions are solely in the hands of men. An important piece of information is that the commemoration day that emerged from the struggles of working women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been exploited by dominant sectors that are using it to increase the sales of their products, thus losing the meaning of its commemoration.

Now, 102 years after the beginning of the gender equality struggle, the job in the country remains unfinished. On this topic, Dominican Minister of Women, Alejandrina Germán, spoke at a 2011 seminar entitled "Progress and Challenges":

... [XXX] does not mask the situation with speeches, it is conscious of advances for working, academic and professional women, but argues that women are earning lower wages than men in similar jobs, and violence against women continues despite mechanisms set up under the law so it demands an agreement between the civil society and the State to face these situations (Sosa, 2011).

In this sense, despite progress made so far in labor, political, and social arenas, challenges remain: The wage gap between men and women, domestic violence and the legal system's position regarding the same, discrimination, political participation, adolescent pregnancies, unemployment, and regulation of domestic workers are issues that

must be considered in the development and subsequent implementation of social policies.

Social policies that enable the direct participation of women in programs and projects that contribute to their empowerment in various fields and encourage equal opportunities are needed. Therefore, “it is essential to develop comprehensive, forceful and preventive policies that combine the health, education and legal sectors” (Disla & Medina, 2013).

Public policies should be channeled toward new achievements that promote gender equality and equal opportunities. In this regard, a relevant point is the linking of civil society and organizations with the government and other social groups. This would ensure actions that enable cultural development which could ultimately bring about a change in attitude among citizens.

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Public Policies to Tackle Femicide

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September 4, 2014

In the Dominican Republic femicide is becoming a serious and frequently occurring social problem with profound consequences, affecting harmony and causing the disintegration of families.

INTRODUCTION

Femicide, the targeted killing of women, is the last and most egregious example of the various forms violence against women. When murder is committed by a man with whom the victim has/had an intimate or domestic relationship, has lived with or is related to in a similar context, the murder is known as intimate femicide (ECLAC, 2007).

A variety of factors are associated with this type of crime. They include situations in which the victims may have come from violent homes or were socialized with the concept of unequal roles; victims may have

become involved in relationships with partners at a very young age or have low educational levels that translate into limited opportunities for improvement, thus leading to economic dependence on their partners.

The occurrence of femicide in the Dominican Republic is so common that at the end of June 2014, forty-five cases had been reported. The general perception is that femicide reports have steadily increased in recent years without having developed a way to address this complex situation.

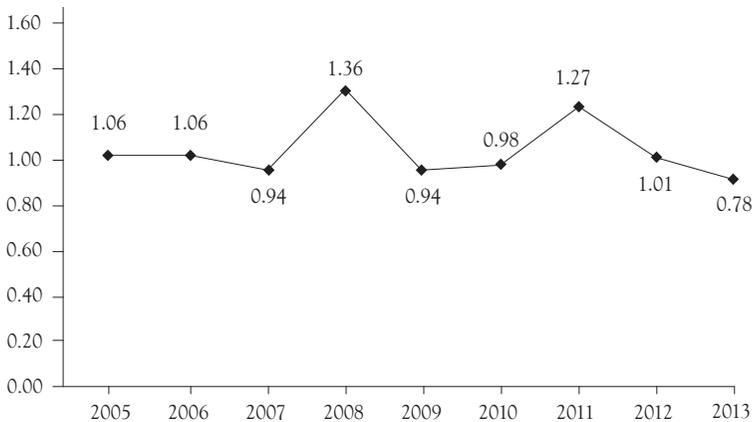
In view of available information, this document seeks to review the femicide situation in other countries in order to identify those that have reduced the incidence of femicide and through these cases to examine options enabling us to answer the question: What can we do?

The information in this analysis refers only to intimate femicide.

SITUATION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The highest rate of intimate femicide was recorded in 2008: 1.36 women per every 100,000 inhabitants, as is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: RATE OF INTIMATE FEMICIDE (2005-2013) (PER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND INHABITANTS)

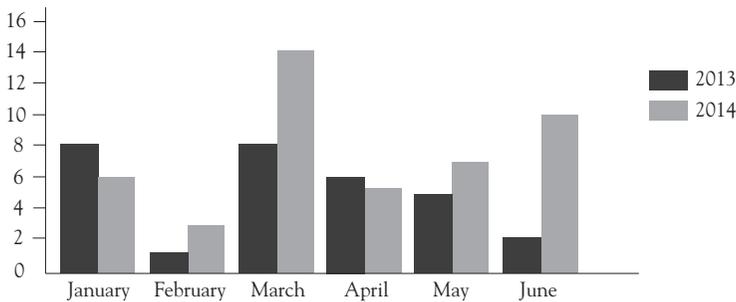


Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the Attorney General of the Dominican Republic.

After experiencing a significant reduction in 2009 (0.94), the rate resumed its upward trend and returned once again to worrisome levels in 2011. However, during the following years, a downward trend was observed, and there was a decrease of 49% in the last two years. According to the Public Ministry, the decrease was the result of increased responsiveness on the part of the 17 gender-violence units operating at a national level during those years (*Diario Libre*, 2014).

In contrast, information supplied in Figure 2 indicates that during the first six months of 2014, cases were on the rise once again. Data from the Attorney General's office shows an increase of intimate femicide: 45 cases as compared to 27 that occurred in the same period of 2013. This represents a 40% increase.

FIGURE 2 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: INTIMATE FEMICIDE REPORTED IN THE FIRST SEMESTER 2013-2014



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the Attorney General's Office of the Dominican Republic.

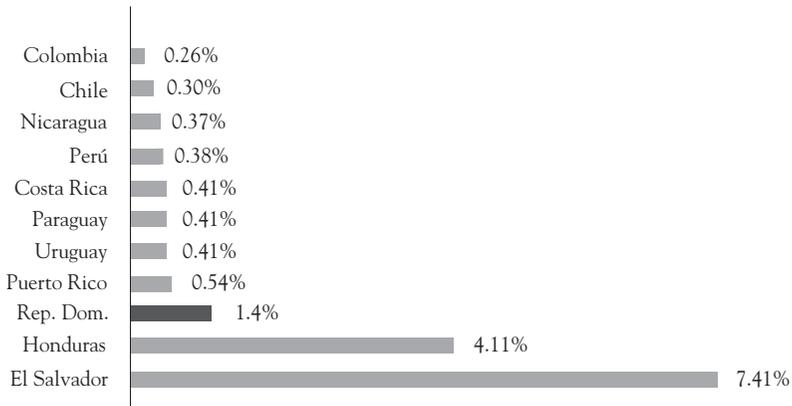
These statistics raises the issue: What factors could affect this problem and what policy options have worked well in countries with similar situations?

SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Latin America and the Caribbean seem to be the regions in which femicide is most prevalent. It is so serious in this hemisphere that fourteen countries in the region are among the 25 nations with the highest rates of femicide in the world. El Salvador tops the list, while the Dominican Republic is ranked number 24.

Figure 3 shows the average rate of intimate femicide in the period between 2005 and 2012 for eleven Latin American countries. The Dominican Republic is in third place (1.04), preceded by Honduras (4.11) and El Salvador (7.41). Colombia has the lowest rate: 0.26.

FIGURE 3 AVERAGE RATES OF INTIMATE FEMICIDE REPORTED BETWEEN 2005-2012 (PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the ECLAC. Uruguay and Peru, data begins in 2008.

The regional nature of feminicide also raises another issue about whether any of the countries in the region have reduced their femicide rates and, if so, how? It is a good idea to identify and analyze policies

implemented by these corresponding authorities to deal with this type of crime.

Of the Latin American countries included in this analysis, three have significantly decreased intimate femicide: Peru, Chile, and El Salvador. These are the nations that have implemented certain public policies, including categorizing femicide as a crime punishable under the full weight of the law. They are also formulating and implementing multi-annual plans to eradicate this evil.

With the passage of laws, these countries propose to develop legal policies with a gender perspective that will strengthen prosecution and punishment of those who commit violence against women and that will ensure reparation and compensation of victims. The goal is to reduce impunity so that the criminal justice system fulfills its role of preventing this crime.

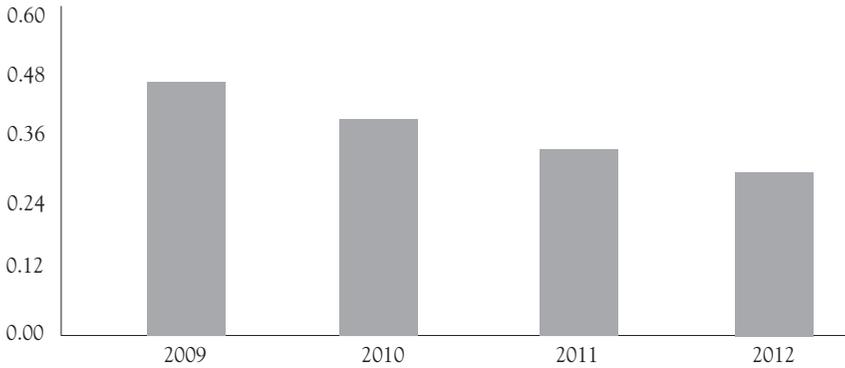
THE CASE OF PERU

Countries in the region that have achieved good results by implementing their policies to reduce intimate femicide are among those mentioned above. Peru tops the list, with a cumulative 16% decline in 2009-2012, as shown in Figure 4.

The main policy that helped reduce femicide in Peru was the National Plan against Violence towards Women 2009-2015. This program proposes the construction of a society that guarantees all women, regardless of age, marital status, socio-economic or educational level, ethnicity, ability, occupation, sexual orientation, et al, the right to a life free of violence through dignified treatment, the establishment of equal relationships between women and men, and the elimination of discriminatory socio-cultural patterns, within a framework of security and full respect for human rights.

In addition, Peruvian Law No. 29819 enacted in 2011, criminalizes femicide as an autonomous offense and imposes severe penalties, which could include life imprisonment in cases in which the victim is a minor.

**FIGURE 4 INTIMATE FEMICIDE RATE IN PERU
(PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)**



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the ECLAC.

The National Plan, approved on March 26, 2009, was created to provide continuity for government policies and actions in the eradication of violence against women, after the National Plan against Violence towards Women for 2002-2007 expired.

The latter plan was developed jointly with authorities and officials from various sectors, including the Ministry of Women and Social Development, Education Ministry, Health Ministry, Justice Ministry, Interior Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also incorporates contributions from specialists on issues concerning violence; community leaders; and civil society representatives from national, regional and local organizations. The resulting plan is a policy instrument that implies joint action on the part of government and society to achieve three strategic goals:

1. Guarantee implementation of political trends to confront the problem of violence. This target includes the following lines of action:

- a) Designing strategies for the struggle against femicide on various levels of government.

- b) Creating community social networks and civil society organizations to oversee social watch groups.
- a) Including comprehensive guidelines in regional government plans, development plans, and participatory budgets.

2. Guarantee access of women affected by violence to quality public services. The following lines of action were initiated:

- a) Implementing mental health services through which female survivors of attempted femicide can receive psychological orientation.
- b) Designing and implementing a model women's shelter for victims of violence.
- c) Including a training program and regular courses on gender and women's rights for the National Police of Peru, the Armed Forces, and the Academy of Judges and Public Ministry.
- d) Strengthening free legal services provided by the Lawyers' Union and Ministry of Justice.

3. Identify and promote changing socio-cultural patterns into new forms of relationships between women and men based on full respect for human rights. To accomplish this, the following actions were taken:

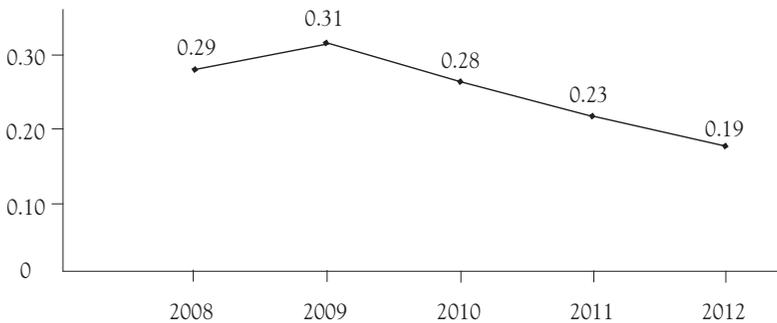
- a) Promoting the inclusion of systematic research on violence against women in the news media.
- b) Ensuring that content on the right to a life without violence was included in the National Curriculum Design for schools and educational centers.
- c) Including issues such as violence against women, harassment, and sexual abuse in guidelines, modules, and training programs directed at teachers, pupils, and higher education students.
- d) Undertaking a national campaign to stop all violence against women and girls.

- e) Training facilitators to canvas house-to-house, conducting campaigns against domestic and sexual violence.

THE CASE OF CHILE

Femicide in Chile has displayed a downward trend over the past three years, as shown in Figure 5. The OPD-GFDD/Funglode report depicts Chile as having the lowest rate of intimate femicide per one hundred thousand inhabitants for 2012 among the Latin and Caribbean countries reporting data.

**FIGURE 5 INTIMATE FEMICIDE RATE IN CHILE
(PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)**



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from the ECLAC.

Chile criminalized femicide under Law No. 20,480, which went into effect in December 2010 and imposed verdicts ranging from lengthy imprisonment with maximum sentencing to life imprisonment. Law No. 20,066 on Family Violence, enacted in September 2005, states that it is “the duty of the State to adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the life, personal integrity and safety of family members” (Article 2).

Along these lines, and in an effort to confront and decrease femicides, Article 4 of this law establishes that

... it will correspond to the National Women's Service to present public policies for compliance of this law to the President of the Republic. In coordination and collaboration with public and private organizations, it will formulate a national plan of action annually.

It is for this reason that in 2011, 2012, and 2013, the National Women's Service implemented national action plans for the prevention of domestic violence, aimed at designing, managing, and coordinating public policies to eradicate domestic violence; further, it called for processes that ensure prevention, care and protection to victims of femicide, and adequate access to legal assistance and justice.

The development of policy proposals in these plans has seen positive results in the fight against intimate femicide in Chile, resulting in a reduction of the country's femicide rate. Policies that provide for those plans include the following:

- a) Revision of educational material for the elimination of gender stereotypes and incorporation of inclusive language.
- b) Implementation of an Early Warning Program that emphasizes the prevention of violence within the family and detection of violent situations in a timely manner, providing specialized and comprehensive care that includes legal and psychosocial elements to ensure protection for potential victims of femicide.
- c) Launch of the Men for a Life without Violence Program that seeks to re-educate men who are, or have been, involved in domestic violence with their partners.
- d) Creation of shelters for women at high risk of violence; these are residential protection centers that provide support for women and encourage them to develop new life projects as a way to avoid being forced to return to the places where they suffered abuse.

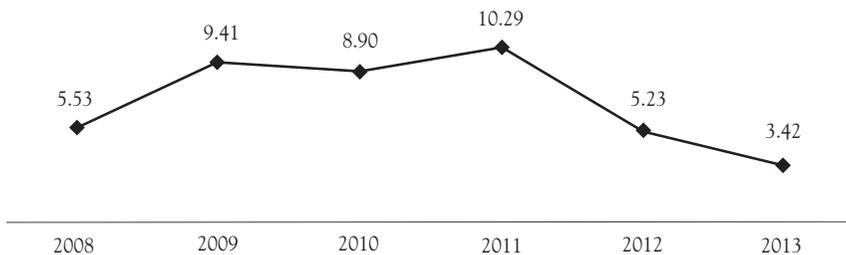
CASE OF EL SALVADOR

El Salvador is one of the most violent countries in Latin America. This state of insecurity has created the foundation that has made El Salvador the country with the highest rate of femicide, not just in Latin America, but in the world.

In view of this situation, El Salvador has joined the small group of Latin American countries that have approved legislation criminalizing femicide by enacting the Special Comprehensive Law for A Life Free of Violence for Women, No. 520, on November 25, 2010. The law, in effect as of January 1, 2012, punishes the crime of femicide with sentences up to fifty years in prison, depending on the severity of the case and the type of offense committed.

As shown in figure 6, after reaching its peak in 2011, El Salvador achieved a reduction of nearly 50% in femicide crimes committed in 2012 (the year the law went into effect). This reduction was even more significant in 2013, when 215 women were murdered—432 less than in 2011, a figure that put the rate at 3.42 per 100,000 inhabitants.

FIGURE 6 INTIMATE FEMICIDE RATE IN EL SALVADOR
(PER 100,000 INHABITANTS)



Source: OPD-GFDD/Funglode with data from El Salvador's Observatory on Gender Violence against Women (ORMUSA).

Figure 6 is an example of the seriousness of the problem in El Salvador, where despite considerable reductions in femicide, it continues to be the country where women are more likely to be killed by their current or former partner.

According to a report published by the Feminist Network on Violence against Women of El Salvador (RED-FEM) in May, 2013,

... the most influential factor in reducing the murder of women by their partners has been the application of the Law, which since it was enacted, has prompted government institutions to encourage the reporting of violations against women and for the Police to do a better job responding to these cases, thus giving women greater access to the legal system.

The progress El Salvador has experienced in the struggle against intimate femicide is remarkable. The country could have been even more successful, if other prevention policies had been put into place as a complement to sentencing policies laid out in the Law. One example includes a proposal that calls for “guidelines for the prevention of violence against women and mainstreaming the principles of equality and non-discrimination within El Salvador’s educational community,” made by the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women (ISDEMU), in May 2014.

The application of these guidelines reflect three lines of action: advocacy, outreach and raising awareness in the educational community, creating and publicizing detection mechanisms and referrals in cases of violence against women, and the formulation of educational plans and curriculum that deal with the prevention of violence.

CONCLUSIONS

The eradication of intimate femicide in Latin America and the Caribbean is a daily challenge for citizens and governments in the region, but it can be achieved over the long term with the elimination

of certain cultural factors, prejudices, and inequalities of power that sustain them. Therefore, it is essential to implement preventive policies in the short and medium term in order to induce a systematic and sustainable reduction of this crime.

At the moment, the most important thing is to anticipate violence against women with actions and strategies that are effective in preventing this crime.

Latin countries that have managed to stem the rise of femicide are examples that it is possible to obtain short and medium term results. Of these, the Dominican Republic can use the example of effective implementation of action plans to combat violence against women, as established by Peru and Chile. These countries have common policies that can be emulated: early warning systems, police and public ministry training on gender issues and domestic violence, specialized care to ensure protection for potential victims of femicide, and national education campaigns.

Similarly, the promulgation and application of effective laws that criminalize femicide is an important step that the country has not taken. Here the only related legislation is the Law against Family Violence, No. 24 (January 27, 1997), which punishes the murder of women but does not criminalize femicide in and of itself as the crime merits. As such, the sanctioning and restorative response on the part of the government continues to be deficient.

While it may be true that passing laws is not enough, the fact remains that with the scant legislation and poor compliance with provisions of the current law, protagonists who commit this type of violence do not seem to be afraid of being punished. For this reason, it is essential for authorities to enforce, to the letter of the law, the existing legislation and, at the same time, to strengthen channels for reporting these crimes and for providing the necessary follow-up.

It is also necessary to reform Law No. 24-97 because it allows for reconciliation as an alternative method to resolve disputes, leaving open the possibility of agreement between an abused woman and her abuser, without the abuser facing justice. It is urgent to change this be-

cause the woman often goes back to being abused after the reconciliation process and/or ends up dying at the hands of someone who should have been arrested and tried. The legal system, however, does not take into consideration the level of emotional vulnerability and economic dependence of many women.

In this regard, another action that would help reduce intimate femicide in our society is the implementation of policies geared toward improving living conditions for women, such as providing them with opportunities to increase their income. Primarily affecting the most disadvantaged, such as teenage mothers, domestic workers, informal sector workers, and elderly women, such policy would reduce their economic dependence on abusive partners.

The Ministry of Women should join forces with civil society organizations to eliminate femicide. It is necessary for every Dominican to be aware of and committed to eradicating this crime while recognizing the value and rights of women. Only then will the goal of the Public Ministry be achieved: “Everyday less, until we reach zero.”

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Political Empowerment of Women in the Dominican Republic

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Female quota laws reserve a minimum of candidatures for elected positions for women.

Throughout the history of the republic, Dominican women have gradually achieved recognition of their civil and political rights. In 1920, feminist movements began to gestate in a context of limited participation, especially in the areas of teaching and intellectual life, and

in rural settings where most policies were sustained by predominantly male civilian and military leaders and where the role of women was understood to be in the home.

In 1925, *Club Nosotras* was formed in Santo Domingo. Ostensibly a literary group, in 1930 one of its members attended the first conference of the Inter-American Commission of Women, held in Havana, Cuba. While there was great feminist fervor in the region, the Trujillo dictatorship was beginning in the Dominican Republic. That same year, the aspirations of feminists for their civil and political rights collided head-on with the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, and the feminist movement began to decline. Nevertheless, in 1931, the Dominican Feminist Action, composed of elite women and led by Abigail Mejía, hosted the First Dominican Feminist Manifesto demanding equal rights under the Constitution (Mayes, 2008; Méndez, 2008).

Dominican women won the right to vote in 1942 through constitutional reform that year established in Articles 9 and 10 of the Constitution. This marked an important opening for women in the areas of civil and political rights in the Dominican Republic. Research on authoritarianism, however, showed that right-wing dictatorships like Rafael Trujillo's opened the way for activism of conservative women with the goal of "organizing a totalitarian project" focused on a particular notion of the status of women and their interests (Mayes, 2008; Méndez, 2008).

Policies implemented by the government of Juan Bosch in 1963 allowed women to organize in their base communities and among other levels of society. Leaders from different places and regions around the country were joining centers, clubs, and neighborhood associations in urban areas. In rural areas, they formed associations of peasant women. Among the social organizations, worth mentioning is the Base Ecclesial Communities, in which women have been able to play a leading role (Pérez, C. y Artiles, L. (1992), and the National Confederation of Rural Women (CONAMUCA), created in 1986 with the idea of bringing together working peasant women.

These groups focused their actions on community improvement and incorporated into their work reflections from other women's groups in the Dominican society. Urban groups of housewives organized over their demands for basic services like water, hospitals, schools, and street repair, among other things. Their main focus was, and still is, their neighborhoods and the areas in which they reside. Meanwhile, neighborhood associations gained momentum from the civil strife that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, when cities began to grow and their outskirts became urbanized. These community organizations encouraged active participation of women in the social and political arena (Familia, 2011).

GENDER PARITY AS A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT TOWARD INCLUSION

Beginning in the 1990s, women's organizations in the Dominican Republic began to demand greater inclusion in public leadership positions and as nominees for elections.

During that time, the first female quota law in the Dominican Republic was enacted on December 21, 1997. It was Law No. 275-97 and established that at least 25% of all political party candidates for elected office had to be female nominees. Later in Law No. 12-00, this percentage was raised to 33%. Then Law No. 13-00 established that parties must include at least one woman on the ballot for syndicate or vice-syndicate in each municipality (mayor and deputy mayor starting after the 2010 Constitution) (Pérez, 2012).

These laws set aside a minimum of elected posts for women. It is a type of affirmative action that seeks equality between men and women in the exercise of political power. While some suggest that differential treatment is contradictory to the stated objective of equality, others argue that pre-existing unequal conditions can only be leveled by this kind of positive action (Pérez, 2012).

Sociologist Isis Duarte notes that the quota of gender parity has contributed to an increase in female representation, especially on town councils around the country, while the other two areas of governance,

the senate and the mayorship, are still not open for female participation. In other words, Duarte (2001) noted that women were elected to participate in decision-making processes in limited political and geographical spheres.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ITS SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPAL GENDER POLICIES

In 2007, the DEMUCA Foundation and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI) supported the creation of the Union of Dominican Municipal Women (UNMUNDO), with backing from the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU). The institution emerged as an initiative of a group of political and municipal officials to promote greater participation of Dominican women in the management of municipal affairs. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of municipal nature, comprising women who hold leadership positions in local governments around the country and/or who work in the capacity of officials and professionals in the municipal arena, including all women connected to the Dominican municipal system. It proposes development training of women for local management duties, with a view to increasing their representation in local bodies.

In May 2011, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) published the Municipal Gender Audit Program (MAG), with the aim of promoting gender mainstreaming in the development, management, and evaluation of municipal policies, applying this same perspective to Law No. 176-07.

CERTAIN GAPS ARE BEING BRIDGED

In the elections of the body responsible for directing the activities of the Chamber of Deputies, known as *bufetes directivos*, several women were elected last August 16 to the presidencies of chapter halls in the municipalities. This was the case in Santo Domingo Este, Santiago, Gaspar Hernández, San José de Ocoa, San Pedro de Macorís, and La

Vega. Santiago, in fact, elected the first women as president of the Chapter Hall in that city.

Similarly, last August 16, Cristina Lizardo became the first woman in the history of the country to be elected President of the Senate.

Despite these steps forward, from 2014 to 2016, only five of a total of 41 standing committees of the House of Representatives are presided over by women: Gender Equity Affairs, Education, Public Ministry, Presidency of the Republic, and Social Security.

By the same token, out of the 30 standing committees in the Senate for the aforementioned period, only three are headed by women: Administration and Interior, Family Affairs and Gender Equity, and Border Affairs.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The barriers impeding women's access to public life are growing weaker, according to a survey conducted by Culture Policy and Democracy (DEMOS): this survey has been conducted regularly in the Dominican Republic since 1994. The studies demonstrate that today Dominican women are more accepted. In fact, according to DEMOS' 2012 survey, 69.8% support Dominican women in politics.

This shows women are gaining representation. Proof of this is the presence of several women at the head of a few local governments, as President of the Chamber of Deputies and in the leadership of several committees in Congress, albeit in smaller numbers. It is in community spaces where women continue to participate actively, whether at open town hall meetings or in primary healthcare services, family planning or education, as well as in the area of sexual and reproductive rights.

Advances in access to education demonstrate that being a woman is no longer a factor that limits them in this area. An example of this is that in higher education, approximately 62% of university enrollment is composed of women.

While women are increasingly integrated into major leadership roles in various governing bodies, the fact remains that there is still a long way to go to achieve equal participation of women.

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In accordance with the foregoing principles, and recognizing the growing importance that knowledge and its dissemination acquires day after day, the Dominican Political Observatory (OPD) -an initiative of GFDD/Funglode- presents this compilation of documents on Dominican women, prepared by its different units during the period 2011-2014. Issues such as violence, femicide, domestic service, the empowerment of women, maternal mortality, and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goal related to women are presented chronologically and complement the booklet which forms part of the series “Women Who in the Process of Giving Life, Lose Their Own: A Qualitative Study on Maternal Mortality in the Dominican Republic.”

