

STRATEGIC NOTE

Bolivia

2023-2027





Photo: UN Women

INTRODUCTION

BOLIVIA'S GENDER EQUALITY LANDSCAPE

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Bolivia is a lower middle-income country, located in the heart of South America with a population of 12.1 million and annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 3.48 percent in 2022.¹ Bolivia is facing complex challenges arising from the multiple crisis of the political and social upheaval, the COVID-19 pandemic, and its socio-economic impacts. A high level of socio-political polarization between government and opposition forces, which is also manifested in civil society organizations, is stressing the social climate. Furthermore, the second half of 2023 has been characterized by a lack of foreign currency. These crises have exacerbated gender gaps and women's vulnerability to poverty, exclusion, and violence.

Bolivia is a signatory to most of the international legal instruments on human rights, including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), its Optional Protocol, and the Inter-American convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women. Despite Bolivia's significant progress in the recognition of women's human rights in its national legal framework, women in Bolivia are not recognized as economic agents and are overburdened with caregiving tasks and the violence against women and femicide locate the country as the second most violent against women in South America. They, especially indigenous and rural women, face challenges to fully participate in decision-making spaces, and experience persistently high levels of violence.

1. *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2023). Producto interno bruto trimestral. [Online](#).*



Photo: UN Women/ Iván Canelas Lizárraga

GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

Bolivia has taken important steps towards gender equality, developing a normative framework favourable to women; however, there is still a gap between the existence of norms on women's rights and their application. For instance, a law to guarantee parity of participation in parliament, municipal councils, and departmental assemblies was approved in 2010 which translates into 49 percent of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly (Congress) and 50 percent of women councillors in local governments.² However, women in politics continue to experience violence and political harassment, especially indigenous and rural women.

Most of the Bolivian population works in the informal sector; a slightly higher proportion of the women's population do so than the men's (83% compared with 80%, respectively).³ During the pandemic crisis, there was an increase in women's workload due to care work, still considered exclusively female.

Bolivia is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change worldwide, ranking second among South American countries, and the fifth least-prepared in the continent to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.^{4,5,6} On one hand, it is known that women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change; on the other, women have adaptive responses to these effects, especially rural women.

Violence against women continues to be one of the main challenges for the country. In 2021, Bolivia had one of the highest rates of femicide in South America, with almost two out of 100,000 women in the Bolivian territory murdered in the course of that year.⁷ In a 2016 study, 75 percent of women living in urban areas and 71 percent in rural areas reported having suffered some type of violence by their partner.⁸ There is a high level of impunity due to structural deficiencies in guaranteeing women their right to a life free of violence and their right to access to justice.

2. *Legislative Assembly of Bolivia (2010). Electoral Regime Law. Available [online](#).*

3. *ILO (2019). Statistics on the Informal Economy. [Online](#).*

4. *Germanwatch (2019). Índice de Riesgo Climático Global 2021. [Available online](#).*

5. *Development Bank of Latin America (2014). Índice de vulnerabilidad y adaptación al cambio climático en la región de América Latina y el Caribe. [Available online](#).*

6. *Notre Dame University (2021). Program ND-GAIM Country Index. [Online](#)*

7. *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2022). Bringing an End to Violence against Women and Girls and Femicide or Femicide: A key challenge for building a care society. [Online](#).*

8. *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2017). Encuesta de prevalencia y características de la violencia contra las mujeres 2016: Resultados. [Available online](#).*

BOLIVIA'S GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

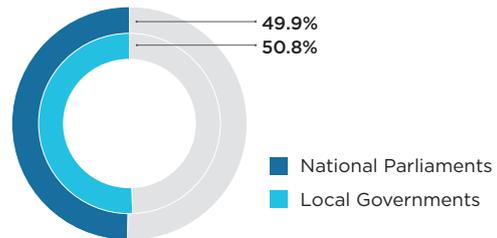
figure 1
Gender Inequality Index



UNDP (2022). Human Development Report. (Note: Figure provided is for 2021)

figure 2
Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

Governance and Participation in Public Life

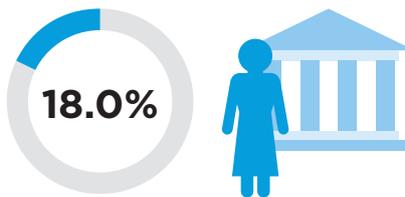


ONU Mujeres Bolivia (2020). Mujeres en la asamblea legislativa de Bolivia 2020. (Note: Based on Plurinational Electoral Organ data from 2020 election results)

UNDESA (2022). SDG Indicator Global database. Accessed on Dec 2022. (Note: Refers to administrative data on most recent election results (2021))

figure 3
Proportion of positions held by women in executive/ministerial positions (cabinets)

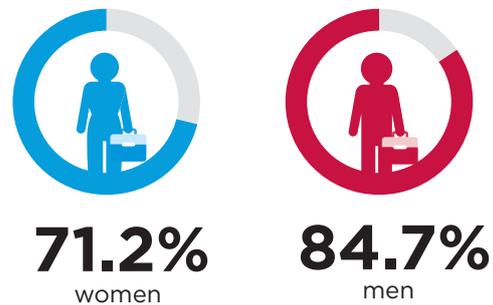
Governance and Participation in Public Life



ONU Mujeres Bolivia (2021). Perfil de país en Igualdad de género, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2016 al 2020. (Note: Figure provided is for 2022)

figure 4
Labor force participation by sex

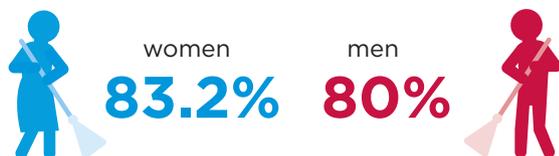
Women's Economic Empowerment



ILO (2022). ILOSTAT (ILO Database for labor statistics). Online. Accessed on Dec 2022. (Note: Figure provided is for 2021 and refers to individuals aged 15+)

figure 5
Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sex

Women's Economic Empowerment



ILO (2022). ILOSTAT (ILO Database for labor statistics). Online. Accessed on Dec 2022. (Note: Figure provided is for 2019)

figure 6
Proportion of partnered women and girls aged 15+ subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by her current intimate partner

Ending Violence against Women



Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2017). Encuesta de prevalencia y características de la violencia contra las mujeres 2016: Resultados. (Note: prevalence figures for any physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence also include economic violence)

UN WOMEN STRATEGIC NOTE: A roadmap to gender equality

The Strategic Note (SN) articulates the multi-year strategy, rationale, envisioned results, targets, and resource requirements for a UN Women Office. In essence, the SN provides a roadmap for improving the lives of women and girls in the context where UN Women operates. It is developed in consultation with key partners and in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UN Women's Strategic Plan and key national, regional, and global gender equality priorities. SNs are funded by a combination of core (loosely earmarked) and non-core resources (earmarked).

UN Women's SN is similar to a Country Programme Document (CPD) used by other UN entities.

UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

UN Women has significantly contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment in Bolivia. This has strengthened the enforcement of parity in elections and the adoption of complementary norms, and achieved high percentages of women in decision-making spaces. Following the political crisis in 2019, UN Women contributed to ensuring the participation of women in consultation processes and reconciliation dialogues.

UN Women compiled evidence and generated knowledge about the situation of women in the financial sector, producing the first studies on financial inclusion in the country.

UN Women has also strengthened Bolivia's response to violence against indigenous women and girls through an integrated and more adequate response in remote rural areas. These models were based on studies conducted with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) under a joint programme to increase access to the justice system by mapping and linking existing municipal services.

Furthermore, UN Women has produced evidence on the number and type of action by women's organizations in climate action to integrate them into the debate and decision-making mechanisms in coordination with the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth.⁹

9. This is the focal point institution for the COP.

UN WOMEN BOLIVIA COUNTRY OFFICE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2022)

257 FEMALE CANDIDATES in subnational elections, representing 9 departments, have increased knowledge on existing legal frameworks on women's rights.

520 WOMEN LEADERS have knowledge and tools to effectively contribute to peace dialogues and to the national reconciliation strategy after the socio-political crisis.

EVIDENCE ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION produced through 3 studies to support the approval of public policy and the design of financial products with a gender perspective.

263 WOMEN INDEPENDENT INFORMAL WORKERS are better able to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. A third of them are under 35.

137 AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS can implement Law No. 243, with a standardized criteria for the prevention, response, and protection of women victims of harassment and political violence.

A **GENDER PERSPECTIVE** has been included in the guidelines of the national **CITIES POLICY** and in 14 guidelines for its implementation.

To learn more about the work and results of UN Women Bolivia, visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

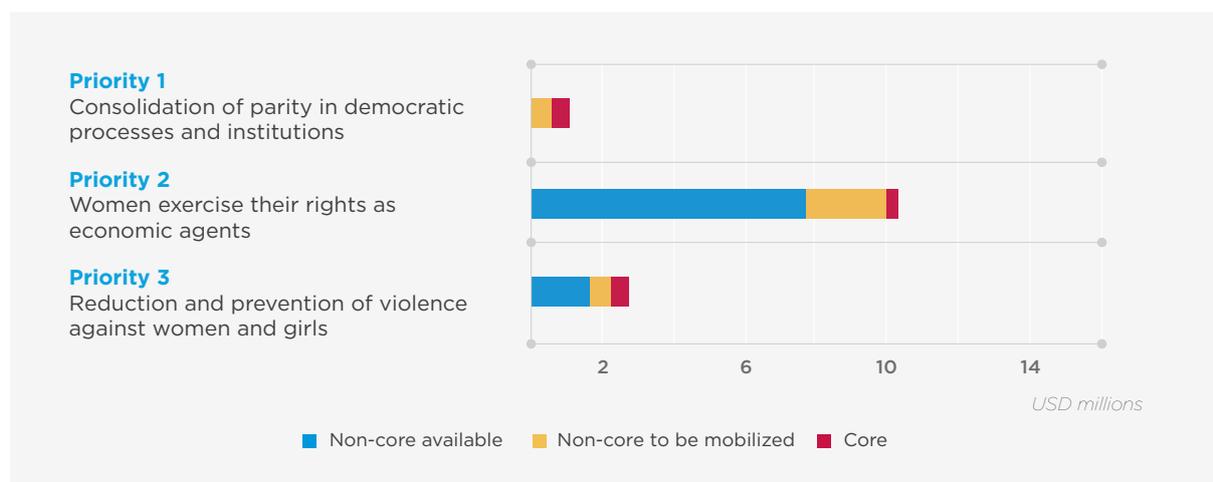
BOLIVIA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The UN Country Team (UNCT) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have agreed on a set of strategic development priorities. These are set forth in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#) and are based on an analysis of the Bolivian context; a shared understanding of key national priorities, opportunities, risks, and persisting inequalities. UN Women Bolivia's

Strategic Note (SN) pursues **three priorities** contributing to the UNSDCF and national priorities. These have been decided collectively with other UN Agencies and partners, based on what UN Women is uniquely positioned to contribute to. They are also aligned with [UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#).

figure 7

BOLIVIA RESOURCES 2023-2027



Data displayed are indicative estimates based on expected resource requirements and available funds as of December 2022. For more up-to-date resources data please visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

AS A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS,
UN WOMEN CONVENES AND INFLUENCES A RANGE OF
PARTNERS FOR A GREATER AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT

IMPACT

Women are empowered, and patriarchal norms in national, local and indigenous autonomies are diminished, as well as those in private sector and social organizations

COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION
(priority results)

CONSOLIDATION OF PARITY IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND INSTITUTIONS

Strengthen institutions to guarantee the full exercise of **women's political rights free of violence** and positioning the agenda around women, peace and security

UN WOMEN SOLUTIONS*

Strengthen women leaders', candidates' and elected authorities' knowledge and skills to participate in decision-making spaces

Incorporate a gender perspective in indigenous autonomies' self-government systems

CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women, especially indigenous/rural women, are underrepresented in decision-making spaces and subjected to harassment and political violence

WOMEN, ESPECIALLY INDIGENOUS, RURAL AND AFRODESCENDANTS EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS AS ECONOMIC AGENTS

Improve public policies to recognize, redistribute and reduce care work, with a focus on rural, indigenous, and low-income women

Empower women to participate in decision-making spaces in the private sector, to lead enterprises that generate income, and to access decent work

Strengthen the capacity of women's movements and key institutions in climate action to **link gender in the responses to effects of climate change** and environmental issues

Norms that support women's exclusion from the economy and unequal distribution of care work

REDUCTION AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND HIGH-QUALITY, COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Strengthen government and civil society's capacity to implement and to demand the **enforcement of legislation**

Improve access to and availability of **quality essential services** on violence against women

Promote favourable social norms, attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence against women and girls in the community

Normalization of violence as a socio-political means to repress women and lack of enforcement of existing regulations

*UN Women solutions are aligned to UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

UN WOMEN'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

UN Women is recognized as the lead agency of the United Nations System for gender issues in the country. This leadership is the result of its expertise in gender equality, recognized by the UN System, the government, civil society, the bilateral and multilateral cooperation as well as by private sector.

Its partnership capabilities are further boosted by a regional network of technical expertise in different areas. This enables UN Women to respond to the country's emerging needs and the government's demand for support in a timely and effective manner.

UN Women has the mandate of state parties to accelerate measures and actions for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This implies having the capacity to clarify the concepts and objectives agreed upon by the States Parties regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UN Women has a unique capacity to convene diverse actors and create synergies to bring about transformative change for women and girls.

Photo: UN Women



UN WOMEN BOLIVIA'S STRATEGY

PRIORITY RESULT 1:

Consolidation of parity in democratic processes and institutions

UN Women's work will focus on political empowerment, strengthening the capacities of women leaders, candidates and elected, especially rural and indigenous women, so they can exercise their political rights, especially the right to participate in politics. To achieve this, it will be necessary to increase women's knowledge, empowerment, and support their organizations.

Strengthening the capacities of public institutions to ensure that women can exercise their political rights in a substantive manner, free from violence and political harassment, is a key strategy in UN Women's work within the framework of its SN. To this end, through technical assistance, UN Women will contribute to the development of practical tools that enable institutions to better implement and enforce existing regulations for women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes, in elections and as authorities, free of political harassment and violence.

UN Women will also focus its work on indigenous and rural women, providing technical support to indigenous autonomies to develop normative and protocols, as well as an awareness process to ensure women's participation in compliance with parity and the inclusion of a gender perspective in their autonomous government systems, according to Bolivia's international commitments.

PARTNERS

At the government level, UN Women will maintain and strengthen its partnerships with: the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (at national and local level); the Plurinational Legislative Assembly; the Ombudsman; the Plurinational Women's and Depatriarchalization Service; the Vice-ministry for Equal Opportunities; State Autonomies

Service; the Vice Ministry of Autonomies; and the rural national indigenous autonomies and sub-national governments.

At the civil society level, UN Women will maintain alliances with the Association of Women Council Members and Mayors of Bolivia, Bolivia's Association of Women Departmental Representatives, and other women's organizations; in addition the Agency will develop alliances with political movements and organizations.

Within the UN, UN Women will work closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and will maintain its alliance with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), especially to continue working on women's participation within the electoral system, and on peace building.

UN WOMEN
DRIVES RESULTS
ADVANCING
NORMATIVE
STANDARDS,
COORDINATING
ACTION ACROSS THE
UNITED NATIONS,
AND **OPERATING**
ON THE GROUND

PRIORITY RESULT 2:

Women, especially indigenous, rural and afrodescendants exercise their rights as economic agents

Based on the results obtained through the implementation of the previous SN, UN Women will continue to contribute to empowering women, strengthening their capacities to lead productive entrepreneurship and business initiatives, and to improve their conditions, and their access to decent work and secure income. It will also promote greater participation of women in strategic decision-making spaces in the private sector and the recognition of women as economic agents.

UN Women will work to ensure that public policies recognize women's contribution to the country's wealth through care work, promoting the reduction and redistribution of care work, especially for low-income, rural and indigenous women.

To respond to the challenges posed by climate change, UN Women will pay particular attention to women and their organizations working on climate change, especially indigenous and rural women, in order to strengthen their capabilities to mitigate and adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Together with the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth, UN Women will promote women's participation in decision-making processes on public policies to respond to the effects of climate change, especially those on women's livelihoods.

PRIORITY RESULT 3:

Reduction and prevention of violence against women and high-quality, comprehensive services

Fighting violence against women and girls is a key national priority for Bolivia. UN Women will work to enhance the capacities of civil society and government institutions to tackle violence against women.

UN Women will work with women and social organizations to demand adequate responses by government institutions to violence against women and girls, especially rural and indigenous women.

UN Women will also strengthen government institutions at national and local levels to implement current

PARTNERS

Partnerships will be strengthened with governmental institutions such as: the Ministry of Labour; the National Statistics Institute; the Ministry of the Presidency; the Plurinational Women's and Depatriarchalization Service the Ministry of Justice; municipal governments and departmental governments; the Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy; the Vice Ministry of Micro and Small Business; Pro Bolivia (agency supporting various manufacturing and agro-industrial sectors); the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth; and the Plurinational Legislative Assembly.

UN Women plans to nurture strategic alliances with civil society organizations such as the National Care Platform, and businesswomen and entrepreneur's organizations such as the Committee of Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen of Bolivia and the Chamber of Businesswomen of Bolivia.

UN Women will continue to work with other UN Agencies in the economic empowerment area, including UNDP, the IOM, and the ILO.

legislation to end violence against women and other forms of discrimination, ensuring quality, available and accessible services for women and girls who have experienced violence. In line with this, UN Women will support efforts to develop new models of joint responses to violence, especially for indigenous women and girls living in dispersed rural municipalities across the country, by ensuring access of women to the justice system.

Changing socio-cultural patterns, social norms, attitudes, and behaviours that sustain violence against women is



crucial for progress in the prevention of violence against women and girls in the community. Therefore, UN Women, jointly with other UN Agencies and government entities, will put in place a communications strategy to accelerate social transformation and eradicate violence against women and girls.

PARTNERS

UN Women works with a wide range of partners in this field. Its work is strongly focused on working with national government allies such as the Ministry of Justice, the Vice-ministry of Equal Opportunities, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Government, the Special Forces to Combat Violence, the Plurinational Service of Women and

Depatriarchalization. The Ombudsman and the judiciary are other important partners. At local level, key alliances have been developed with municipal governments.

Working with civil society organizations is a key component of UN Women's strategy. The alliances established with the Association of Women Council Members and Mayors of Bolivia, the Federation of Municipal Associations of Bolivia, women's grassroots organizations, and academies, are all priorities.

Within the UN system, working with UN Agencies with similar mandates on violence against women and girls such as UNFPA and UNICEF.

BECOMING A FUNDING PARTNER

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 calls for transformative, collaborative action. Strategic, innovative, and efficient funding partnerships are essential to realize UN Women's vision of a gender-equal world, articulated in the SN.

HOW CAN FUNDING PARTNERS ENGAGE WITH UN WOMEN'S SN?

Partners may provide **SN direct funding**, which is softly earmarked by geography (regional or country SN). These funds are **flexible** and catalytic; they enable UN Women to choose the highest-impact use of the funds in the country in which it operates. SN funding is also **predictable**, as commitments are often made for the full SN time span, better enabling transformative results for women and girls.

Importantly, SN direct funds strengthen UN Women's ability to respond to emerging needs in response to unforeseen contextual changes, including humanitarian needs (e.g., to prioritize the safety of women and girls in

a crisis or in response to the adverse effects of natural disasters).

Furthermore, these funds can be reallocated when emerging evidence suggests a new approach is needed to produce the desired result more efficiently or effectively. They can be used for diverse types of costs and can therefore draw funds to areas that are often unfunded—yet crucial—such as advocacy for behavioural change, UN coordination, etc., supporting the organization's effectiveness.

Funding partners may also **provide project funding**, which is tightly earmarked for a specific project or initiative in the SN. These funds are not flexible. Reporting on the use of such funds is done against the specific project but not against the full SN.

SN funding represents an ambitious, targeted, and smart investment in gender equality and women's empowerment.

To learn more about UN Women Bolivia's funding partnerships visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

UN SYSTEM COORDINATION

Coordination with the other agencies enables UN Women to lead processes of knowledge creation, evaluation, and co-creation of solutions for gender equality, such as the UN System-wide Accountability Plan and the Country Gender Equality Profile. Leveraging its coordination role, UN Women has stewarded the UN system towards eliminating violence against women (EVAW), leading the EVAW Results Group and ensuring the inclusion of a stand-alone output in the UNDSCF. Beyond the UN system, UN Women led the development of Bolivia's National Strategy to Combat Violence bringing together government and UN agencies, as well as other relevant institutions.

UN Women has proven know-how in working together with the agencies of the United Nations system as stated in its coordination mandate. This mandate requires influencing the work of other agencies and their target

populations to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in their plans and programmes and in the definition of actions for the empowerment of women as a strategy to achieve gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this context, UN Women has contributed to the successful design, management, and implementation of joint strategies and programmes, adding value to participating agencies' own mandates, through the inclusion of a gender perspective.

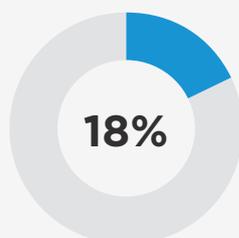
UN Women is also leading the Gender Team within the UNCT, which will oversee the mainstreaming of gender in programming, providing normative advice, tools, the generation of indicators, implementation of gender markers and gender-sensitive budget labelling systems, among others.

JOINT PROGRAMMING

figure 8

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE FROM JOINT PROGRAMMES:

SN 2018-2022



A total of **6 out of 17** programmes were Joint Programmes

- **Funding guidelines for the response to violence against women and children**, led by UN Women and implemented with UNICEF (2020-2023)
- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights and ending sexual and gender-based violence for vulnerable women and girls** (proposal to the Embassy of Canada), to be led by UN Women and implemented with UNICEF and UNFPA (2024-2028)
- **United Nations Peace Consolidation Initiative** (proposal to the Peace Building Fund), to be led by UN Women and implemented with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Development Programme (2-year proposal)

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



UN WOMEN BOLIVIA

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