

# **Paid domestic workers in the Southern Cone of Latin America: a struggle to overcome a history of exclusion**



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# Paid domestic workers in the Southern Cone of Latin America: a struggle to overcome a history of exclusion<sup>1</sup>

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# Introduction



# Introduction

During the twentieth century, the 1980s became an important decade in the region due to the increase of the production of knowledge about domestic work, a greater awareness of paid domestic work, and the creation of new domestic workers' organizations at the national and regional levels. However, it is during the beginning of the twenty-first century when changes to laws related to domestic work started to be made in the region, and when equality with other types of employment became the objective.

After a long absence of legal reforms to rectify discrimination that weighed heavy upon one of the main forms of employment for women in the countries of the region, advances have been made over the past two and a half decades in the recognition of paid domestic workers' rights in Southern Cone countries.<sup>2</sup> One of the fundamental pillars of this progress is the rebuilding and expansion of the political subject claiming its rights: the domestic workers' or household workers' organizations.<sup>3</sup> Despite the magnitude of the sector, taking this key step was not easy. On average, 6.7% of the urban economically active population (EAP) in the countries analyzed do paid domestic work,<sup>4</sup> and studies show that more than 90% of those who are employed as domestic workers are women.<sup>5</sup> They make up, on average, 14.95% of the female employed urban EAP.<sup>6</sup> Although the responsibility for social reproduction and for sustaining the economic, social, and political life of the countries rests on so many of these women, this has not prevented centuries of curtailment of their labor rights, or that the work they did, many times in exploitative conditions, frequently went unseen in the eyes of society.

In fact, despite the weight this type of employment has in the regional workforce, and in the female workforce in particular, until the beginning of the twenty-first century the majority of the countries in the region had laws that discriminated against domestic work in one, various or all labor related conditions. Specific laws or regulations in general established that domestic workers had longer workdays, lower salaries and, usually, limited rights to social security, vacation time and contracts, among others disadvantages. Even though some countries already had existing organizations, some formed as early as in

the first half of the twentieth century, and although many had been making isolated and intermittent demands, a uniformly, sustained, and cogent process for making demands could not be envisioned. Women domestic workers' situation and the particular conditions this type of employment entails were, and continue to be, obstacles for sustained and significant actions for these organizations.

During the twentieth century, the 1980s became an important decade in the region due to the increase of the production of knowledge about domestic work, a greater awareness of paid domestic work, and the creation of new domestic workers' organizations at the national and regional levels. However, it is during the beginning of the twenty-first century when changes to laws related to domestic work started to be made in the region, and when equality with other types of employment became the objective. The topic, practically absent from public and state agendas in these countries, took on importance and was included in parliamentary agendas until the discriminatory laws were changed. In most of the countries, domestic workers are given full legal equality. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Uruguay gave rights almost equal to those of other workers, whereas in Chile, in a gradual process that began in 2008, domestic workers were given the same general minimum wage in 2011, and in 2015 workday discrimination and other differences were repealed. In Paraguay, the demand for equality for domestic work is on the public and social agenda, and the Domestic Work Law, which establishes various improvements for the sector, was passed at the beginning of 2015 while maintaining a lower minimum wage.

Given this context, how were these changes achieved in the Southern Cone countries?




What role have the domestic workers and their organizations played? What strategies were used by the organizations in making demands for equal rights? And did women from feminist and other women's movements play a role? What was the reaction to these demands in the countries analyzed? Who opposed and who supported the demands?

These and other questions are addressed in this document, which analyzes the events that took place in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay, by examining the role domestic workers' organizations played and the methods they have developed in their fight for labor rights. The document also discusses the similarities and differences in strategies used in the different countries, the participation of allies, and the main opposition to equal rights for domestic workers. In addition, the relationship among the workers' organizations in the different countries is analyzed, and an attempt is made to identify if these struggles have had any impact

on stimulating discussion about the care economy, the system of care, and the family responsibilities in the countries studied. For comparative purposes, the paper also gathers information about domestic employment in other countries in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, except Cuba, providing an overview of the 18 countries in the region.

The analysis is based on secondary sources, national and regional studies and publications, as well as on quotes from domestic workers taken from the reports that fully document the following meetings held in Paraguay in 2013: the Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, that took place in Asunción on June 28, and the Conference for Exchange: Challenges for Domestic Workers' Organizations - Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, that took place on June 29 and 30.





Paid domestic work in the region: a job for women who are poor, young, migrants, and from groups historically discriminated against



# Paid domestic work in the region: a job for women who are poor, young, migrants, and from groups historically discriminated against

The International Labour Organization (ILO) *2014 Labour Overview*, compiled from data from 2013, indicates that between 2000 and 2013, in the six Southern Cone countries studied, percentages of domestic workers for the employed urban EAP have varied between 11.1% in Paraguay in 2005 and 2.9% in Bolivia in 2011. In 2013, there is data for five of the six countries —Bolivia is the exception— and the percentages run from 4.2% in Chile to 8.3% in Paraguay.<sup>7</sup>

The data indicates, as well, that, on average, 14.95% of the female employed urban EAP of the six countries was employed as a domestic worker. In Argentina and Paraguay, the female employed urban EAP reached 17% in 2013. In Bolivia, the National Federation of Household Workers of Bolivia (FENATRAHOB) also registers that domestic workers make up 17% of the female workforce (FENATRAHOB, n.d.).<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 1

**Domestic employment as a percentage of total employed urban EAP and female employed urban EAP in Latin America, 2013**

Country	Domestic employment as a percentage of total employed urban EAP	Domestic employment as a percentage of female employed urban EAP
Argentina	7.2	17.0
Bolivia	...	17.0 <sup>a</sup>
Brazil	7.1	15.3
Chile	4.2	10.0
Paraguay	8.3	17.1
Uruguay	6.6	13.3

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from ILO (2014) and data on Bolivia consulted in FENATRAHOB (n.d.).

Note: EAP refers to economically active population.

<sup>a</sup> This piece of information, taken from FENATRAHOB (n.d.), refers to female workforce. Disaggregation by urban-rural residence is not specified.

If we take into account the 18 Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,<sup>9</sup> and we divide them into three regions: the Southern Cone, which includes the countries being analyzed: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay; the Andean Region, which includes Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela; and Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, encompassing

Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, the data shows that the Southern Cone is the region that has, on average, the highest percentage of women doing domestic work, as can be seen in table 2: in effect, the percentage of 14.95% is higher than the average for the entire region (14.2%).

TABLE 2

**Regional and sub-regional averages for domestic employment as a percentage of total employed urban EAP and female employed urban EAP, 2013**

Region	Domestic employment as a percentage of total employed urban EAP	Domestic employment as a percentage of female employed urban EAP
Andean Region	3.25	6.8
Central America and Spanish-speaking Caribbean	4.7	10.23
Southern Cone	6.7	14.95
Latin America	...	14.20

Fuente: Elaboración propia sobre la base de datos de OIT (2014).

Nota: La sigla PEA se refiere a la población económicamente activa.

The characteristics of women who do domestic work are similar in each of the countries. They are poor, young, migrants from other countries or from rural to urban areas. For example, according to the studies consulted, in Argentina, “migrant domestic workers in the City of Buenos Aires make up almost half of the domestic workers coming from bordering countries and Peru, this being their preferred niche for entry” (Ceriani et al., 2009, p. 152), and according to Arriagada and Todaro (2012, p. 19), “the majority of Peruvian women in Chile (70%) work in private homes doing domestic and care labor”. In Paraguay, studies show that domestic work is one of the main entries to employment for young women migrating from the country to the city (Soto, 2014).

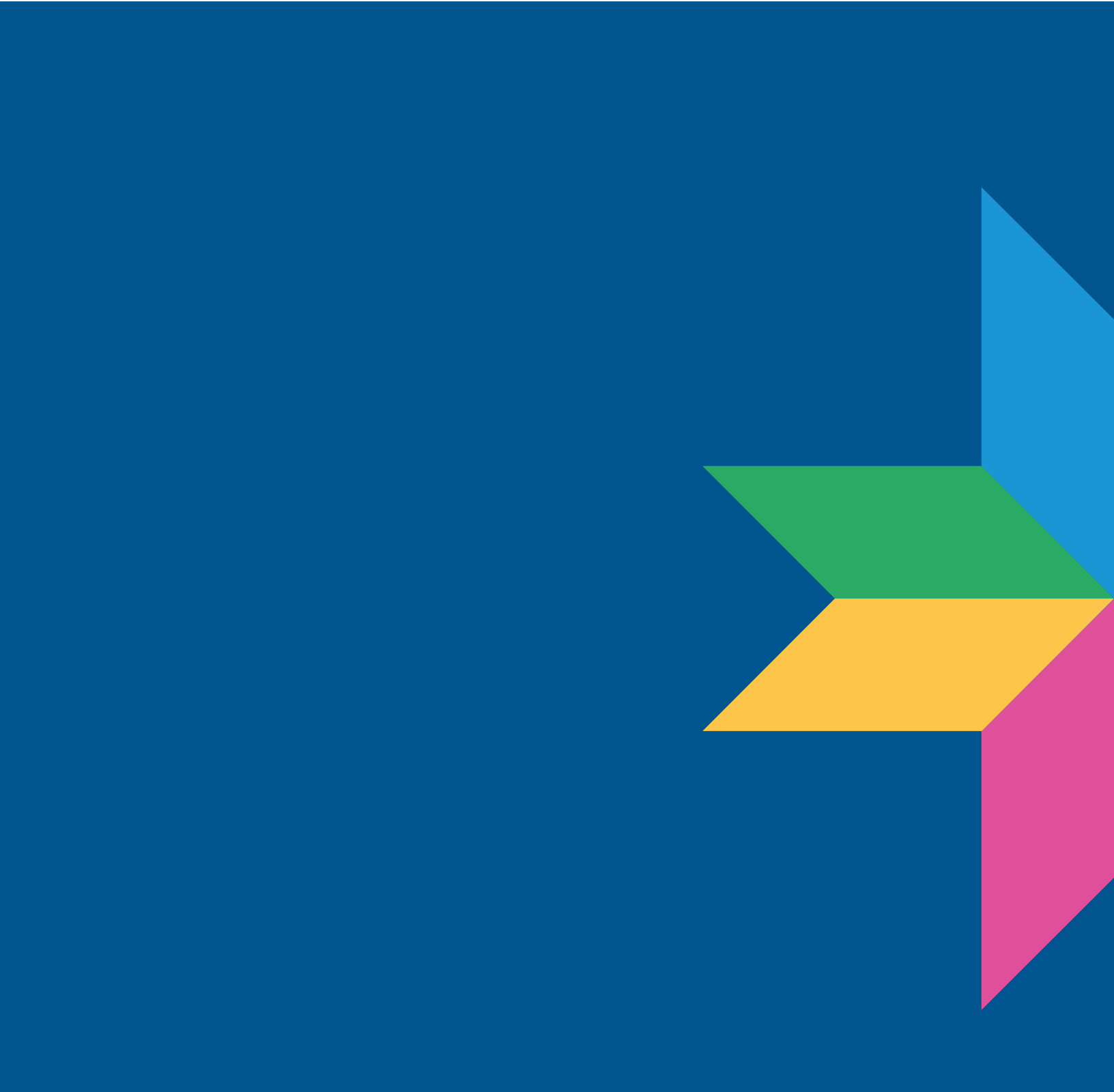
Domestic work is also the labor sector where there is an overrepresentation of women from historically excluded groups such as black women in Brazil and Uruguay. A study carried out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in Uruguay in 2013 shows that “Afro-descendent domestic workers make up 12.6% of the total employed Afro-descendants, almost double the proportion of domestic workers to the total employed (7.0%). This indicates a bias for Afro-descendants who are employed to a greater extent than the average population in domestic work” (MTSS, 2013, p. 17).


Leaders of domestic workers in these countries concur. Creuza Maria de Oliveira, president of

the National Federation of Domestic Workers of Brazil (FENATRAD), says: “we are mainly black women, young women, women who are heads of family”.<sup>10</sup>

The characteristics for domestic workers in the Southern Cone are similar to those in other regions in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. León (2013) affirms, regarding domestic work in Colombia, that “domestic service is exercised by women from popular sectors, which increases and enhances its undervaluation. The presence of rural women, indigenous and Afro-descendants is important”. Lerussi (2008) states that Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica mainly do paid domestic work, and the document *The Sociocultural and Legal Institutionalization of Inequality: Paid Domestic Work. Summaries of studies in Central America and the Dominican Republic* states that “a large number of women who emigrate find paid domestic work in receiving countries, which are generally more developed countries than the country of origin” (COMMCA-SICA, 2010, p. 9). Studies in Mexico also show that this is work done by poor women, with limited education and overrepresentation of indigenous women.<sup>11</sup>

The demographic characteristics of women engaged in domestic work are key when analyzing the difficulties that the sector faces in organizing and mobilizing in order to make their demands.





# The rights of paid domestic workers in the region: a history of exclusion with advances in recent decades



# The rights of paid domestic workers in the region: a history of exclusion with advances in recent decades

The establishment of fewer rights for domestic workers has a long history in the region. In Paraguay, domestic work was one of the first types of regulated employment,<sup>12</sup> while in Argentina “it was one of the last categories to be incorporated into social protection institutions and labor laws, through the Statute of Domestic Service, enacted in 1956” (Tizziani, 2013). However, in all the countries the legislation passed gave limited rights to this type of employment. A study by Pereira and Valiente (2010) on the legal status of domestic work in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) shows that until the 2000s all the countries had laws that in some way discriminated against domestic employment in terms of salary, workday, right to social security, or some other aspect.

A series of legal reforms with the aim of achieving equality was initiated at the beginning of this century. In Argentina, Law 26844, or Special Regulations for Hiring Private Household Employees of 2013, gave domestic workers equal rights. In Bolivia, the Household Workers Law of 2003 established parity in salary and other areas. Domestic workers in Brazil have equal workdays, salary and other rights since 2013, after the passage of Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 478/10. Oliveira remembers: “We began to win rights in 1972, when domestic work was formally recognized, then in 1988 the Constitution was ratified and 25 years later, at the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, with the PEC, more rights were won, but regulations still need to be put in place.”<sup>13</sup>

Before Law 20279 was passed in Chile in 2008, the salary was 75% of minimum wage as compared to all other types of employment. Consequently, it was progressively raised until 2011, when the salary reached 100% of the minimum wage. In January 2015, Law 20786/2014, which modified discriminatory conditions in the workday, among others, went into effect. In Paraguay, the previous Labor Code established a salary that was 40% of the legal minimum wage for other jobs and multiple discrimination regarding the workday, the right to overtime wages, social security and others. At the beginning of 2015, the Domestic Work Law was passed: it improved certain conditions and raised the percentage of the salary compared to minimum wage, but did not make it equal. An article in legislation referring to the minimum age for paid domestic work was vetoed in order to raise the minimum age to 18,<sup>14</sup> and the law was returned to the Senate and finally passed. In 2006, Uruguay established equal rights for domestic workers. Nora Pacheco<sup>15</sup> said: “In Uruguay we have a Law, the Law 18065, which helped us to change little by little the way society saw domestic work. There is still a lot to do. Many of our fellow workers are not yet informed about the law, neither are employers; the workers minds are not still open enough to be able to fully understand each article yet”.

Table 3 shows the most recent legal changes in the region and the most important changes they produced.



## CUADRO 3

## Reformas legislativas recientes en el Cono Sur

Country	Most recent legislation passed	Year	Most significant changes	Status of law
<b>Argentina</b>	Law 26844, or Special Regulations for Hiring Private Household Employees	2013	It recognizes equal rights.	In effect.
<b>Bolivia</b>	Law 2450 Regulations for Salaried Household Work	2003	Equal rights except for workday.	In effect.
<b>Brazil</b>	Constitutional Amendment N° 72 derived from Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 478/10	2013	It recognizes equal rights.	In effect.
<b>Chile</b>	Law 20279/2008 and 20786	2008 and 2014	They recognize equal rights.	In effect.
<b>Paraguay</b>	Domestic Work Law	2015	Right to pension and 8 hours workday for live-in, among others. It maintains lower minimum wage.	It returned to Parliament by presidential veto of article about minimum wage for domestic work. It finally passed, establishing 18 years as the minimum age for doing domestic work.
<b>Uruguay</b>	Law 18065. Domestic Work	2006	It recognizes equal rights.	In effect.

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from national laws.

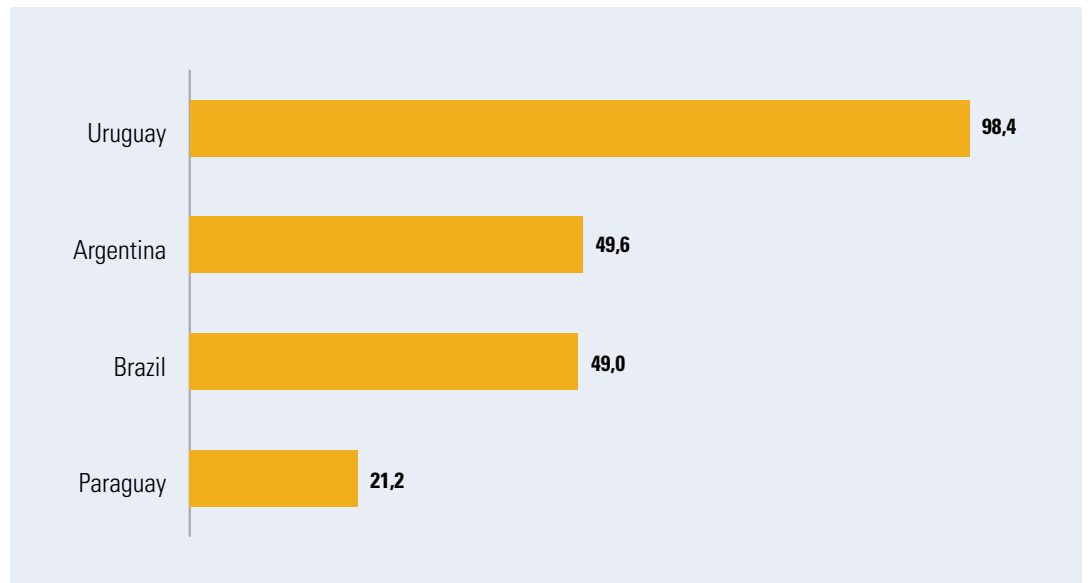
As can be seen, in four of the six countries legislation has given domestic workers the same rights as other workers; the countries where discrimination still exists are Bolivia and Paraguay.

This historic discrimination has left women domestic workers without legal protections in several areas such as healthcare and the right to a pension. The legal

discrimination has left unprotected domestic workers, and has impacted heavily on the exercise of basic rights. According to data gathered by the ILO for 2103 for four Southern Cone countries, only Uruguay fully covers almost all women paid domestic workers in healthcare and pensions, whereas Brazil and Argentina only cover 50%, and Paraguay barely more than 20%.

FIGURE 1

**Women domestic workers coverage of health and/or pensions (percentages) in the Southern Cone, 2013**



Source: Prepared by the author based on data from ILO (2014).



A comparative view  
with the Andean Region,  
Central America, and the  
Spanish-speaking Caribbean



# A comparative view with the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean

The situation of fewer rights for domestic workers in the Southern Cone, until well into the twenty-first century, was no different than the situation of domestic workers in the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. A 2004 study by the ILO on child domestic labor in six Central American countries<sup>16</sup> and the Dominican Republic shows legally established workdays of 12 to 16 hours (ILO, 2004, p. 18), among other discrimination, which made it comparable to forced labor. According to the study, “evidence indicates that many times the life and working conditions of women domestic workers —not only tolerated but promoted by legislation that had a markedly servile bent— are not far from fitting within a modern concept of forced labor” (ILO, 2004, p. 21).

Since that time, it can be seen that rights for domestic work in the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries have also improved. In the Andean Region, Ecuador, in 2012, passed a reform to the Work Code, called the

Defense of Labor Rights Law,<sup>17</sup> which gave domestic workers equal rights. While some discrimination remains in Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, such as payment in kind and the absence of workday limits in Colombia; less vacation time and year-end bonus pay in Peru;<sup>18</sup> and unlimited workdays for live-in workers along with the absence of various other benefits in Venezuela, decrees and laws have improved regulations in these countries.

In Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, progress has been moving at a slower pace. Of the eight countries in the region, excluding Cuba, Costa Rica is the only one to give equal rights to domestic workers in 2009, under Law 8276. Other countries in the region have not established specific laws and, in general, follow labor codes that contain exceptions for domestic workers.<sup>19</sup> Table 4 summarizes the current regulations in force for domestic work in the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean along with differences as compared to rights given to other types of work.

TABLE 4

## Legislation in force on domestic work in Central America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and the Andean Region, 2015

Region	Country	Most current law	Year	Some differences in rights for paid domestic workers as compared to other types of work
Andean Region	Colombia	Substantive Labor Code and Court Ruling (C-372, June 21, 1998) that limits workday <sup>20</sup>	1956 and Court ruling 1998	Payment in kind up to 50% of salary and 30% of minimum wage, workday for “indoors”, night work and limited rest periods.
	Ecuador	Organic Law for the Defense of Labor Rights <sup>21</sup>	2012	It recognizes equal rights.
	Peru	Household Workers Law 27986 <sup>22</sup>	2003	Equal for most rights, but discrimination persists: half of vacation is computed, and bonus, compensation and social security contributions are estimated based on half of the salary.
	Venezuela	Supreme Court Ruling that interprets the extent of Article 275 of the Organic Labor Law and special regulations for domestic workers	2009	Given most equal rights, different workday for live-in workers is maintained.
Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean	Costa Rica	Law 8726. Modifications to Chapter 8 Title 2 of the Labor Code. Paid Domestic Work Law	2009	It recognizes equal rights.
	El Salvador	Labor Code	1972	Longer workday, different causes for termination, no overtime pay.
	Guatemala	Labor Code	1947	Longer workday.
	Honduras	Labor Code	1959	No defined workday, excluded from Minimum Wage Law.
	Mexico	Federal Labor Law	1931/1970	Payment in kind up to 50%. Not included in the general pension plan. <sup>23</sup>
	Nicaragua	Law 666 Reforms and Additions to Chapter I of Title VIII of the Labor Code of the Republic of Nicaragua	2008	Payment in kind up to 50%. No limits for workday.
	Panama	Labor Code	1972	No limits for workday, discretionary termination, lower minimum wage.
	Dominican Republic	Labor Code	1999	Unlimited workday, less maternity protections, less vacation time, 50% of payment in kind.

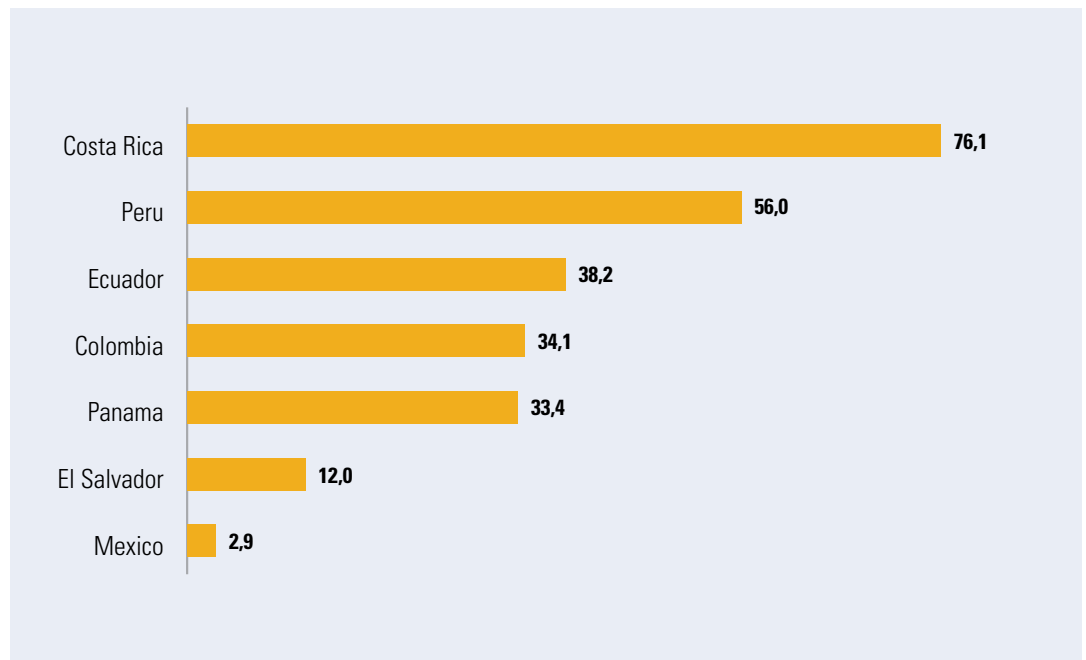
Source: Prepared by the author based on data from national laws and from COMMCA-SICA (2010).

In terms of effective exercise of rights, the situation of domestic workers in countries in the regions beyond the Southern Cone is not encouraging. Data from the *2014 Labour Overview* for 7 out of the 13 countries that make up the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking

Caribbean shows very disparate and extremely unequal healthcare and pension coverage: in Costa Rica 76% of domestic workers have some sort of healthcare and/or pension, while in Mexico only 2.9% of workers have these rights (ILO, 2014).

FIGURE 2

**Women domestic workers coverage of healthcare and/or pensions (percentages) in the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, 2013**



Source: Prepared by the author based on data from ILO (2014).

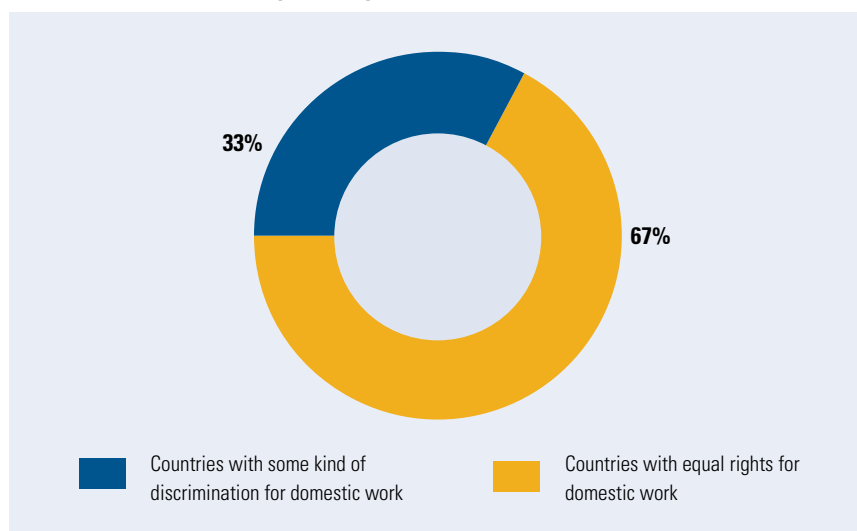
A comparison with the Andean Region, Central America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean shows that there has been more progress in the recognition of equal rights for domestic workers in the Southern Cone, as four of the six countries have established full equality. Of the four countries that make up the Andean Region, only Ecuador has equality for all labor rights, while limitations still exist in the other countries. Central America

and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean have advanced the least in terms of legislation for domestic workers. Costa Rica is the only country that has given full equal rights to domestic workers. Discrimination still exists in the other seven countries in the region. In all, only 6 of the 18 countries have given equal rights to domestic work: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Costa Rica.

It is also notable a clear difference in the effective access to rights that were historically restricted for domestic workers and that of other women workers in all the regions of Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The data from 11 of the 18 countries shows that only Uruguay has no gap in access to healthcare and/or pension protections for women workers in general and women domestic workers in particular, where almost 100% of working women, including domestic workers, have these rights. Peru is the second country with the least gap in this area with a difference of 6.1%. The gap is greater in other countries, with Mexico and Panama having a difference of more than 40 percentage points between domestic workers' access to healthcare and/or pensions as compared to the rest of women workers.

FIGURE 3

**Countries with equal rights or legal discrimination to domestic work (percentages) in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, 2015**



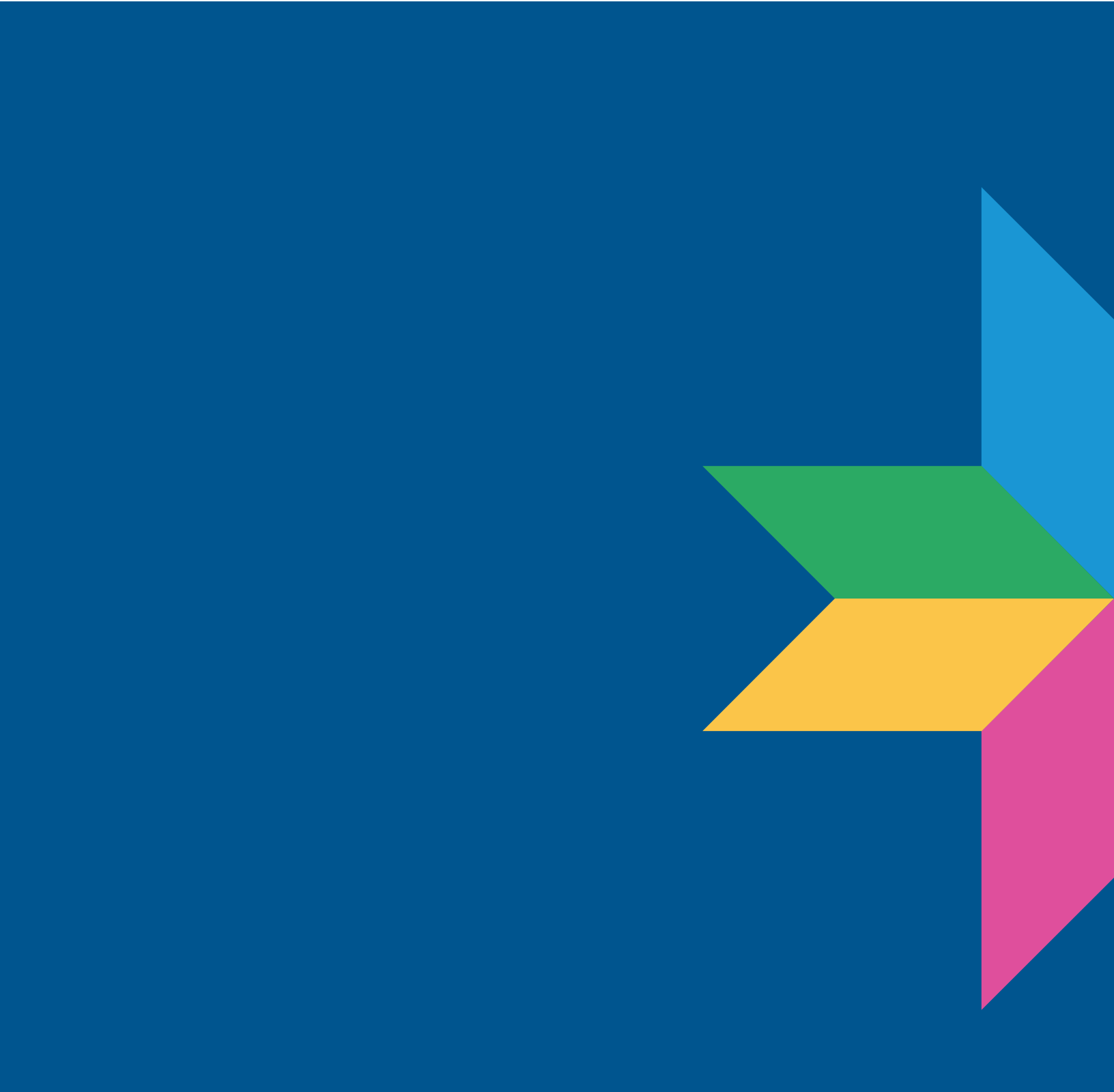
Source: Prepared by the author.

TABLE 5


**Access to healthcare and/or pensions for employed women and for paid domestic workers (percentages) in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, 2014**

Country	Employed women with healthcare protection and/or pensions (percentages)	Paid domestic workers with healthcare and/or pensions (percentages)	Difference in healthcare and/or pensions for paid domestic workers (percentages)
Uruguay	98,9	98,4	0,5
Costa Rica	90,5	76,1	14,4
Panama	77,1	33,4	43,7
Argentina	76,6	49,6	27,0
Brazil	72,8	49,0	23,8
Peru	62,1	56,0	6,1
Colombia	56,9	34,1	22,8
Ecuador	49,9	38,2	11,7
Mexico	46,6	2,9	43,7
Paraguay	46,2	21,2	25,0
El Salvador	43,7	12,0	31,7

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from ILO (2014).








# Actors in the advancement of domestic workers' rights in the Southern Cone



# Actors in the advancement of domestic workers' rights in the Southern Cone

The social agreement that domestic workers have fewer rights is old and was upheld for a long time by society's silence and few public demonstrations demanding equal rights and non-discrimination for this type of employment. This period of relative silence lasted for several decades until towards the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s there was a new dawning as domestic workers' organizations formed in each of the countries, and the regional organization, the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers (CONLACTRAHO), was created. These were all elements that gave renewed impetus for making demands. Nevertheless, it was not until the twenty-first century that

demands were made systematically and began to get a response. At this time, various actors entered onto the scene and would play a decisive role in social and political arenas, thus propelling an end to the social consensus to exploit women in domestic work. From 2000 onward, systematic support from international organizations, such as the ILO<sup>24</sup> and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), was significant in getting the issue of domestic work onto the regional agenda. Sustained efforts to gain equality translated into legal changes in several of the countries, along with recognition of and placing value on domestic work.



Key actors: the domestic workers' organizations, the CONLACTRAHO and others' support



# Key actors: the domestic workers' organizations, the CONLACTRAHO and others' support

In the fight for better working conditions, domestic workers' organizations are the key actors to demanding, making visible and communicating the claim for their rights. This striking feature of recent decades has brought this issue to the public and social agenda in the region, resulting in changes in discriminatory laws and the revaluing of domestic work.

There are domestic workers' organizations in each of the six countries under consideration. Some are quite old and others are newer. Their activity has fluctuated between periods of significant visibility and then withdrawal. The first domestic service organizations in the region appeared in Argentina during the twentieth century. The Union of Private Household Auxiliary Personnel created in 1901 is the first on record.<sup>25</sup> Since then several more have been established, and today the country has domestic workers' organizations in several provinces. Organizations in Chile (1929), Brazil (1936), and Uruguay (1963) followed. In Bolivia and Paraguay, the first organizations emerged in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s: in Bolivia, with the creation of various domestic workers' trade unions (Sopocachi in 1984, Cochabamba in 1987, San Pedro in 1992), that later formed the FENATRAHOB in 1993,<sup>26</sup> and in Paraguay, with the creation of the National Syndicate of Domestic Workers of Paraguay (SINTRADOP) in 1989. Some of the organizations had sustained activities, as in Argentina and Brazil, while others, such as in Chile, had very active periods, withdrew and then reactivated later on,<sup>27</sup> and still others only gained momentum in recent decades, such as the Union of Domestic Workers (SUTD) of Uruguay, which reactivated in 2005, or SINTRADOP of Paraguay, reenergizing in 2012.

There are various causes for the discontinuous efforts of many of the domestic workers' organizations. Undoubtedly, one of the main reasons is the difficulty in organizing. The demographic characteristics of women employed in domestic work clearly show that the majority of domestic workers are young; come from poor sectors, generally from rural areas or impoverished areas of cities, and have few years of schooling. This work sector also has a greater concentration of indigenous and Afro-descendant women in countries like Brazil, Uruguay, and Bolivia. These factors create obstacles for domestic workers' organizations because there are few opportunities for the women to learn about their rights or to access to information about organizing. Along with these conditions —fueling the disadvantages for organizing— are the typical circumstances of this kind of employment: working in private homes, behind closed doors and out of sight, with little opportunity to come into contact with other women while they are working, and long workdays that rob time from other activities are all limitations for organizing and collective activism. Marciana Santander, president of the Association of Domestic Service Workers of Paraguay (ADESP), said: “we work more than 12 hours; it's very hard to organize our colleagues.”<sup>28</sup>

Fear of losing an already precarious job is another issue mentioned by the women. According to Selva Benítez, from the SUTD of Uruguay, “Many women were afraid to even participate in a demonstration, or strike; nowadays they are letting go of that shyness, of the fear that has them in chains, that does not allow them to demand exactly what we deserve.”<sup>29</sup> Marciana Santander agrees: “A weakness we have in Paraguay is that the women are afraid to participate because they can be fired, they can lose their jobs.”<sup>30</sup>

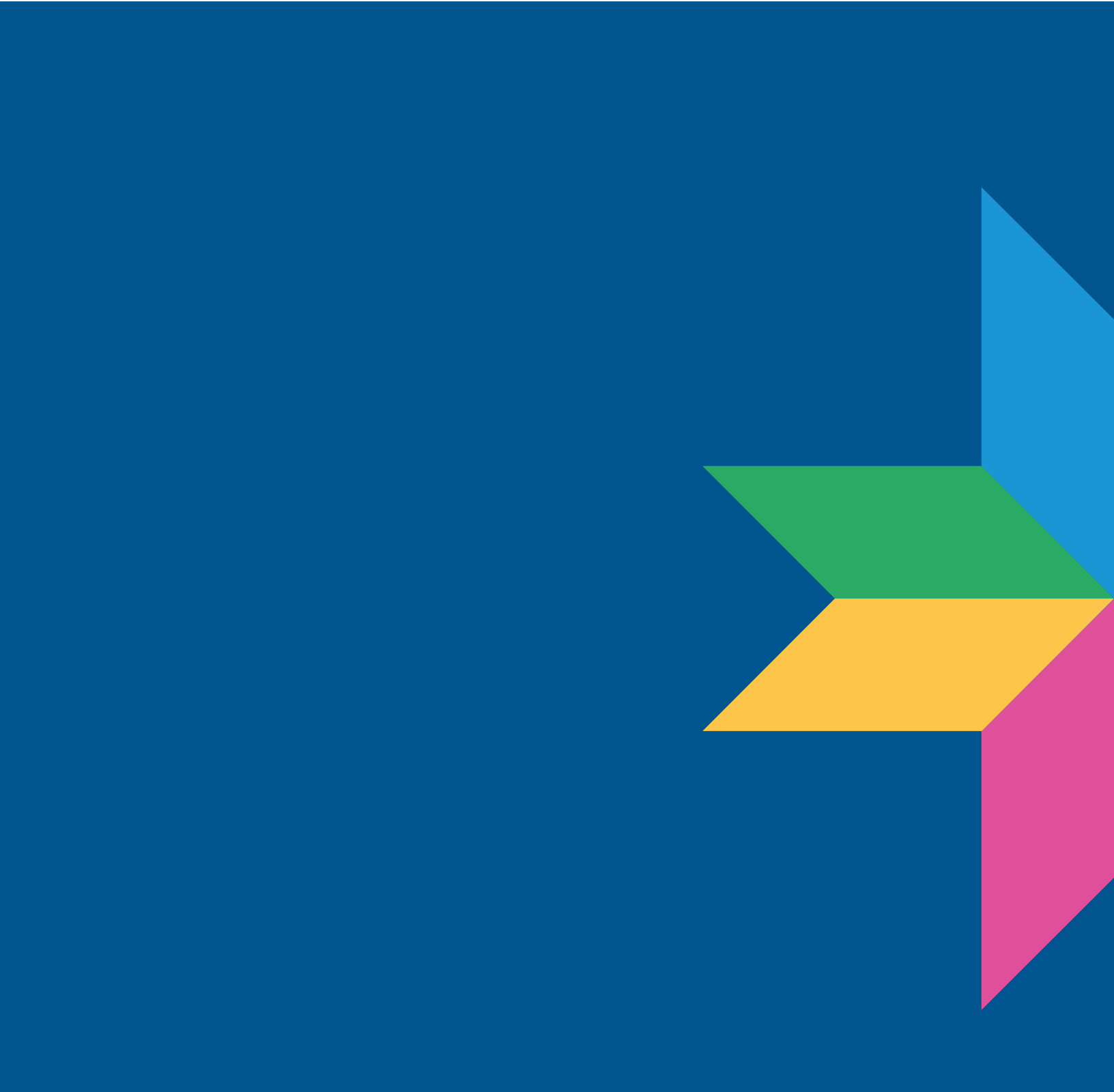
As the above-mentioned factors show, domestic workers have to exert a greater effort than other work sectors to organize and voice their issues and demands. But, slowly, they began creating the conditions to strengthen the organizations. Selva Benítez said: “It was very important to us that women took an interest, became informed, and began losing the fear of organizing, because for many years we were taught to be afraid to free ourselves to demand our rights”.<sup>31</sup>

Although obstacles have been overcome and organizations have evolved, it is clear that there is a poor level of organization in the sector in some countries. In Paraguay, where there are more than 200,000 domestic workers, the three existing organizations have less than 1,000 affiliates. In Uruguay, the SUTD had 1,500 affiliated domestic workers in 2012. The organizations’ lack of expansion not only affects the conditions of workers in each country, but also affects what Dobrée, González and Soto (2015) call the “situation of helplessness” of domestic workers who, with little understanding of their rights and possible protections, migrate between the countries of the Southern Cone with no knowledge of the laws that can help them. “Of those interviewed, none manifested having had any links to a domestic workers’ organization or trade union in general, either in Paraguay or in Argentina. According to the authors, this is the story of many women who travel for the first time to live in Argentina and even some who have lived in the country for a while. That is why the word that might best describe the situation that they find themselves in, on the prospect of migrating, as well as that of

migrant work itself, is helplessness” (Dobrée, González and Soto, 2015).

The creation of the CONLACTRAHO at the first meeting of Latin American household workers in Colombia in 1988 was undoubtedly a catalyzing factor for organizing and making demands for domestic workers in the region. This organization brought together domestic workers’ organizations from 14 countries, and it enabled opportunities for networking and sharing experiences from throughout the entire region.

Another important factor for organizing was the support provided by national and international organizations in each country. These organizations furnished domestic workers with opportunities to participate in trainings and activities where they could share their experiences. They also funded actions to raise awareness about the inferior conditions of workers’ rights. In this sense, the ILO’s role since the beginning of the twenty-first century has been key in the resurgence and strengthening of the organizations, for example by publishing materials with data and analysis on domestic work in different countries. This information, along with the process for adopting Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers, which establishes the minimum labor conditions allowable for the sector ensuring equality on a par with other workers, were all important aspects of the support provided by the ILO. Workers’ organizations got input that supported their demands and actively participated in promoting a debate about the Convention, which gave them the visibility they needed to strengthen their roles as the protagonists in these actions.





# Strategies for struggle: similarities and differences



# Strategies for struggle: similarities and differences

The strategies deployed by domestic workers' organizations to get their demands on the public and social agenda, which resulted in concrete changes over the recent decades, were varied. Some coincided and others were

different. An interesting summary of the common strategies was outlined by domestic workers from Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay in 2013, among which were the strategies mentioned in table 6.

TABLE 6

**Strategies used by domestic workers for achieving better rights**

Strategies	Actors	Actions
<b>Alliances and networks</b>	Feminist and women's organizations Public entities International organizations Trade unions Universities Women members of Parliament Public figures and/or persons in positions of political power People with high visibility	Joint activities such as meetings and debates Favorable positioning for equality for domestic work
<b>Advocacy</b>	Legislatures Public entities	Round table discussions Lobby
<b>Positioning for public debate</b>	Media National and international cooperation	Organization representatives on radio and television programs, and in the press Public events
<b>Demonstrations</b>	Women domestic workers	Protest marches Presence at public events such as the Encounters of Latin American and the Caribbean Feminists
<b>Strengthening and expansion of organizations</b>	Organizations' leaders Women domestic workers	Active efforts by women domestic workers to expand organizations Carrying out own projects and self-finance

Source: Prepared by the author based on common strategies identified by women domestic workers from Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay at the Conference for Exchange: Challenges for Domestic Workers' Organizations - Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, June 29 and 30, 2013.



Another strategy highlighted by researchers is the production of knowledge about domestic employment by the academia or the research centers, and its utilization by domestic workers in the public debate (González Parini and Soto, 2009).

Without a doubt, alliances and networks are core strategies in this process. The existence of a multiplicity of voices that support the workers' demands strengthen the work that the organizations are doing and amplify actions from diverse spheres thus rallying public opinion. In addition, alliances with international cooperation organizations make it possible to get issues on international system stages, where instruments that allow for making demands nationally are issued. These alliances also support meetings for workers from different countries, which are forums for sharing experiences and important information. Maria Noemi, from the FENATRAD in Brazil, said: "Our trade union is not only national, we are involved in the international fight, I travel a lot and I am meeting new colleagues. Participation, solidarity, being united, responsibility, all bear fruit as more and more of my fellow domestic workers are participating in the fight at the international level."<sup>32</sup>

For domestic workers' organizations, massive mobilizations are not easy. Long workdays and the limited resources of workers and their organizations are factors that prevent this sector from carrying out large-scale events. In that regard, Creuza Maria de Oliveira said: "It is hard for us to mobilize, our group is spread out, everyone is stuck in an apartment or in a house. The women go to work at 5 in the morning and get home at 8 at night. They don't have the time or means to mobilize."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, tremendous effort was made to implement this strategy in some countries. For example, in Paraguay, on March 30, 2014—the International Day of Domestic Workers—, 300 women marched through the center of downtown Asunción carrying cleaning implements to demand equality at the first united

demonstration of domestic workers in the country. This had a significant impact on the society.

Media visibility is another of the organizations' key strategies. Myriam Agüero, General Secretary of SINTRADOP, said: "The visibility we are having in the press helps us, we are seeing that we are not alone, that there is a group of our colleagues that can stand up for us and get ahead. In this respect, we have made progress."<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps one of the main differences in strategies relates to alliances with the diverse actors. Although networks exist in each of the countries, and although, in general, cooperation organizations, women's movements, and trade unions are all present in one way or another in all of them, the strength of the ties with each of the actors differs, as, for example, with the trade unions. In Paraguay, until well into the twenty-first century, labor conditions for domestic workers were not on the trade union federations' agenda (Soto, 2005), despite the fact that SINTRADOP was part of the National Workers Center (CNT). On relationships with the trade union federations, the president of the FENATRAD in Brazil commented: "We have bosses in the trade unions, they raise the flag for equality, but they also have domestic workers in their homes and they do not want to have to pay, then, they fire them when they are pregnant, etc. We are up against something very big."<sup>35</sup>

Overall, it can be said that domestic workers' organizations have undertaken their own learning process. They have communicated their most urgent needs where there was cooperation and support, gained an understanding of their rights and public outreach, and learned how to interact with actors from different spheres. By sharing experiences, they have established relationships and solidarity with other organizations. All these elements have allowed them to recognize and develop their potential, bringing them to the forefront of the struggle. They are now the ones who voice their demands and engage society from their own realities.





# The feminist movement in the region and paid domestic work



# The feminist movement in the region and paid domestic work

Getting the issue of paid domestic work on the feminist agenda in the region was another key in the domestic workers fight for equality. Feminists from different fields promoted debates, provided financial support for conferences, and raised awareness of the issue, which contributed to bringing the organizations together. This liaison was difficult at first, as Lenira Carvalho, from the Union of Domestic Workers of Pernambuco, in Brazil, mentioned in 2002: “As far as women’s movements go, for a long time we had to combat certain preconceptions. At the first meetings, the domestic workers were really shocked by the women movement’s approach to sexuality. Over time, the workers began to take on a greater consciousness as women, and in effect became integrated into the movement” (De Carvalho, 2002).

Beyond these beginnings in some of the countries, the organized regional feminist movement bet heavily on giving support to the domestic workers demands for equality in the Southern Cone. Since 2005, The

Marcosur Feminist Network (AFM) has played an important role in bringing paid domestic workers’ organizations together in the region. During the assembly of that year, it was decided that they would promote the issue by doing research, holding conferences, and running a campaign directed at the *Parlasur*.<sup>36</sup> The AFM, comprised of feminist women from Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru, began to support this issue because of the link between its members and domestic workers’ organizations in their respective countries. They included discussions about domestic employment in the Encounters of Latin American and the Caribbean Feminists. In 2008, the first MERCOSUR domestic workers conference was held. At this conference, it was agreed that they would propose passing common regulations for basic standards for domestic employment for the MERCOSUR. This goal was accomplished in 2009 (Pereira and Valiente, 2010).



# Progressive governments in Latin America and domestic employment



# Progressive governments in Latin America and domestic employment

The election of governments in the region from parties that favored the working classes benefited the domestic workers' fight for better rights. The progressive governments of the Southern Cone provided a favorable political climate to discuss domestic workers' rights and to implement policies that recognize these rights; all six countries in the region ratified ILO Convention 189.

In Argentina, the government of Cristina Fernández (2007-2015), of the Justicialist Party, which has historical ties to workers' organizations, introduced a bill to Parliament to give equal rights to domestic workers in 2010. In 2012, it was approved. At that time, domestic workers' salaries raised 25% by a presidential decree issued in 2012.

In Brazil, the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011), from the Workers' Party, began the process of promoting better rights for domestic work by passing Law 11324 on July 19, 2006. Then, in 2013, an amendment to the Constitution that gave equal rights was passed and went into effect in June 2015, when regulations were put into place by the government of Dilma Rousseff, from the same political party.

In Bolivia, Evo Morales (2006-present), from the Movement towards Socialism, a

coalition of social movements including indigenous people, promoted the ratification of Convention 189 and appointed Casimira Rodríguez, a domestic worker leader, as the Minister of Justice. She had promoted Law 1450, which gave workers almost complete equal rights.

In Chile, Michelle Bachelet (2014-present), from the Socialist Party, instructed the Parliament to modify a bill that was under consideration in order to give equal rights to the domestic workers. The law was passed and enacted in 2014. She also promoted the ratification of Convention 189.

In Paraguay, the government of Fernando Lugo (2008-2012), from a coalition of left and center political groups, extended health-care coverage —restricted for workers in the capital— to the entire country.

In Uruguay, during the socialist Tabaré Vázquez first term in government (2005-2010), Law 18065 was promoted and passed giving domestic workers equal rights, and the Council on Wages for Domestic Workers was formed, as announced in his inaugural speech in March 2005.

Table 7 summarizes favorable measures for rights for domestic work promoted by governments in the region over the last decade.

TABLE 7

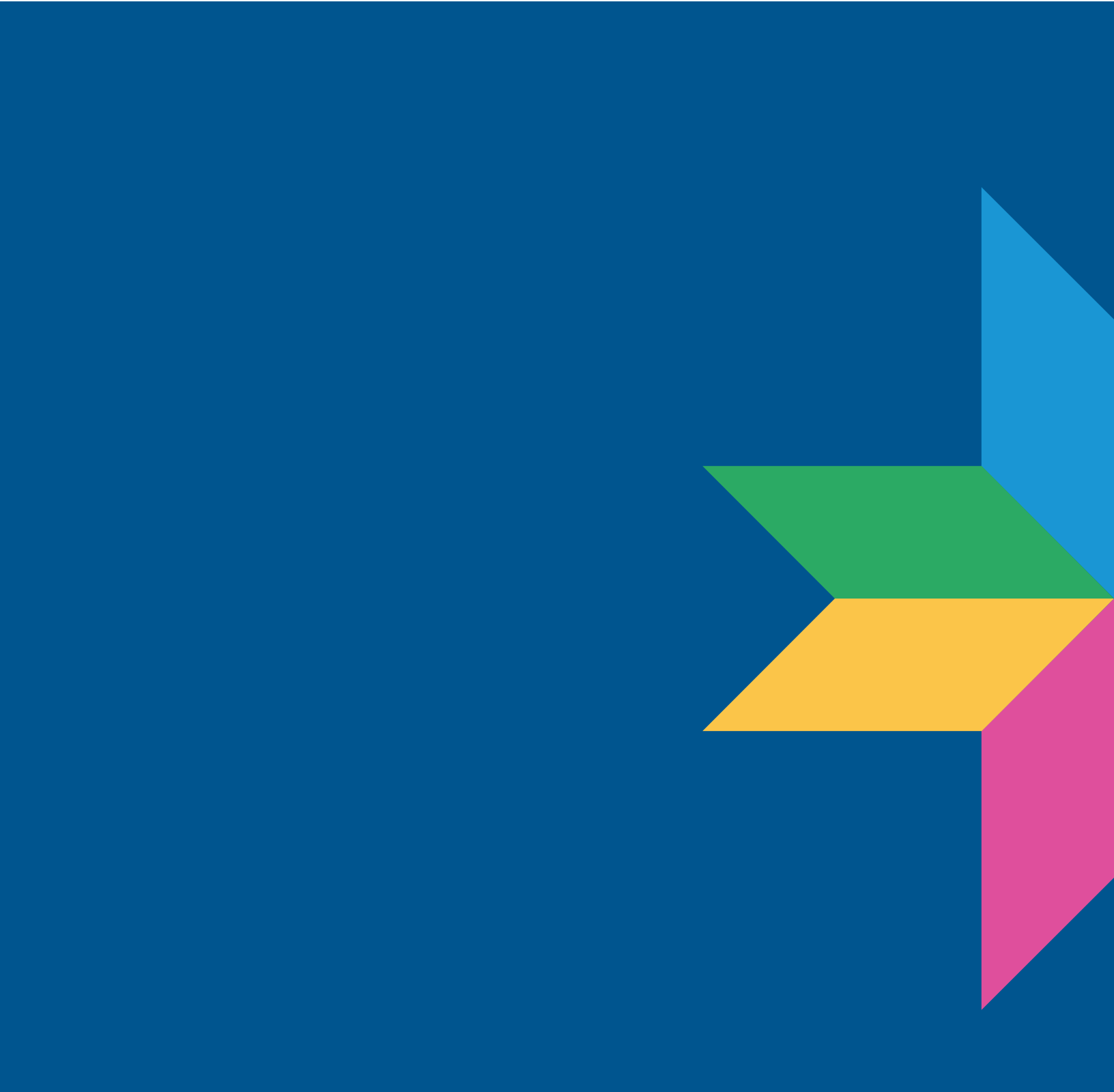
**The governments of the Southern Cone countries and favorable measures for domestic work rights**

Country	Government	Measures
<b>Argentina</b>	Cristina Fernández	Equal rights bill Ratification of Convention 189
<b>Bolivia</b>	Evo Morales	Ratification of Convention 189 Domestic worker leader was appointed as Minister of Justice
<b>Brazil</b>	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Promoted and enacted Law 11324 that entailed improvements for domestic work Promoted Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 478/10 for equal rights for domestic work
	Dilma Rousseff	Promoted the passing of the Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) and put regulations into place Ratification of Convention 189
<b>Chile</b>	Michelle Bachelet	Instructed Parliament to make adjustments to give equal rights Ratification of Convention 189
<b>Paraguay</b>	Fernando Lugo	Extended healthcare coverage to workers throughout the country Ratification of Convention 189
<b>Uruguay</b>	Tabaré Vázquez	Promoted and passed Law 18065 Formed the Council on Wages for Domestic Workers

Source: Prepared by the author.

Certainly, progressive governments in the region provided a favorable political climate for promoting better rights for domestic workers. Leaders for the domestic workers clearly acknowledge this support. Selva Benítez, domestic worker and member of the SUTD, Uruguay, said: “Law 18065 drafted in 2006, during the Tabaré Vázquez administration, backs us up. This legal framework gave us the ability to exercise our rights, since then our union has been growing day by day”.

Creuza Maria de Oliveira, president of the FENATRAB, said: “This did not happen by chance, these important advances took place during the Lula administration, when we began to see all the work built up by the organizations, and since then we are starting to see exploitation and domestic child labor included; before this it was not even talked about, the little girls were in a house, under a roof, they had something to eat and there was a family which was not theirs and they did domestic work”.<sup>40</sup>







# Forms of resistance



## Forms of resistance

Discussing domestic workers rights publicly is difficult and reveals a deep-seated notion about how undervalued this type of employment is. Prejudices about class, gender, ethnicity, origin, and language surface when justifying the limiting of domestic workers' rights. When the Domestic Work Law was considered recently in the Paraguayan Parliament, the debate was characterized by disparaging comments about this type of employment by some members of Parliament and in discussions taking place on social media. Domestic worker leaders in Brazil

experienced the same situation when their equal rights were discussed. "This law is not to conservative society's liking, that there is a law that reclassifies domestic workers, there is a counter campaign in the media that says that the Domestic PEC is a terrorist campaign, this is meant to scare people who are afraid of the changes, and who are generally afraid of these changes, especially when these changes are going to benefit a group of women, and above all black women".<sup>41</sup>



# Moving the debate towards care and family responsibility



# Moving the debate towards care and family responsibility

The role the domestic workers have played in demanding their rights has placed domestic work —paid or not— into the category of work, as opposed to its historic characterization as “not work”, that is, a task that is practically “natural” for women. The domestic workers’ demands exposed society to economic and social issues from the perspective of the personal experiences of these women’s everyday lives. What had been presented as percentages in statistical reports on employment in each country were now the faces, lives and realities of contingents of women who had been invisible for so long, despite their constant presence in many homes in these countries. Betania Avila said: “Domestic workers organizing as domestic workers generated a political and social consequence, that of affirming domestic work as work. This is why, while feminist movements were already fighting for many years, when the domestic workers organized as a work sector they advanced this cause much further, with a more profound legitimacy, because they identified themselves as the persons doing a job that was not considered work, and this has moved the struggle ahead centuries”<sup>42</sup>

The presence of domestic workers’ organizations on the public scene intrudes on an invisible substitution that was maintained for a long time, as Arriagada and Todaro (2012, p. 20) point out in their analysis of this kind of employment: “Being the ‘substitute’ for the mother/housewife, it maintains invisibility, which is one of its characteristics, even as it hides, yet at the same time it exposes, other inequalities, mainly social class and ethnic, that combine in diverse ways due to differing factors”.

The rupture of this almost silent rearrangement, that comes from the domestic workers visibly demanding the same labor rights as

other workers, compels societies to look at an issue that had not been considered for a long time; an issue that the historic exploitation of women in domestic employment had resolved in some way when women began to become emancipated and entered into the labor market and other areas. The unavoidable question that arises is: who is in charge of care? The “invisible substitute” is no longer in charge.

If women are no longer at home because they are working outside the home, participating in other spheres of public, social, and political life, and even leading society as members of Parliament or heads of state, and domestic workers are no longer silent, subservient to the needs of the households and of the people living in these households, receiving as compensation whatever they are offered, as little as it may be, how do we organize life to satisfy those needs? Issues of family co-responsibility and care systems emerge at the social and political center stage. Whether this is what domestic workers posit or not, this is the direction the discussion is moving, and there is no way to dodge it. In some cases, it is approached crudely, making evident the absence of a rights perspective, such as during the debate that took place in the Paraguayan National Parliament. Several senators and representatives tossed out the question: “If domestic workers earn the same salary as other workers, and people are not able to pay them, many people will be without ‘their’ domestics, and then, who will take care of their children?”<sup>43</sup> omitting any consideration of the fact that domestic workers may also have children to take care of.

There is no question that the visibility of domestic workers and their organizations as subjects of rights —getting their voices heard, and putting domestic employment on the public and social agenda— has a direct

effect on the issue of care in the countries of the Southern Cone. However, comprehensive public policy has still not been extensively put into place to address the issue.

Uruguay is the only country of the six that has designed a National Care System. In the other countries, this issue is just beginning to be discussed.

## BOX 1

### The Comprehensive National Care System (SNIC) in Uruguay

The objective of the Comprehensive National Care System (SNIC) is to “design, promote and implement public policies destined to address the needs of dependent persons, promoting the greatest possible personal autonomy, using a model of collective responsibility between Families, the State, the Market and the Community. In this way, the System hopes to contribute to overcoming cultural sexual divisions of labor, promoting both gender and generational co-responsibility” (article 1 of the Comprehensive National Care System Bill).

#### i) Development of the National Care System

- In 2010, Presidential Resolution 863/010 creates the Work Group to design the Care System as outlined in the National Council of Social Policies (CNPS).
- During 2011, discussions on the topic take place throughout the country.
- During 2012, the proposal for the Care System is designed and the document Towards a model of solidarity for care: Proposal for developing a National Care System is approved.
- On March 2015, a bill is sent to Parliament.
- On November 2015, the law is passed and enacted.

#### ii) Beneficiaries of the National Care System

- Children from 0 to 12 years of age, with priority given to children up to 3 years old.
- Persons with disabilities who are not self-sufficient.
- Elderly persons who do not have or have lost autonomy to carry out daily activities.
- Persons who are caregivers, paid or unremunerated.

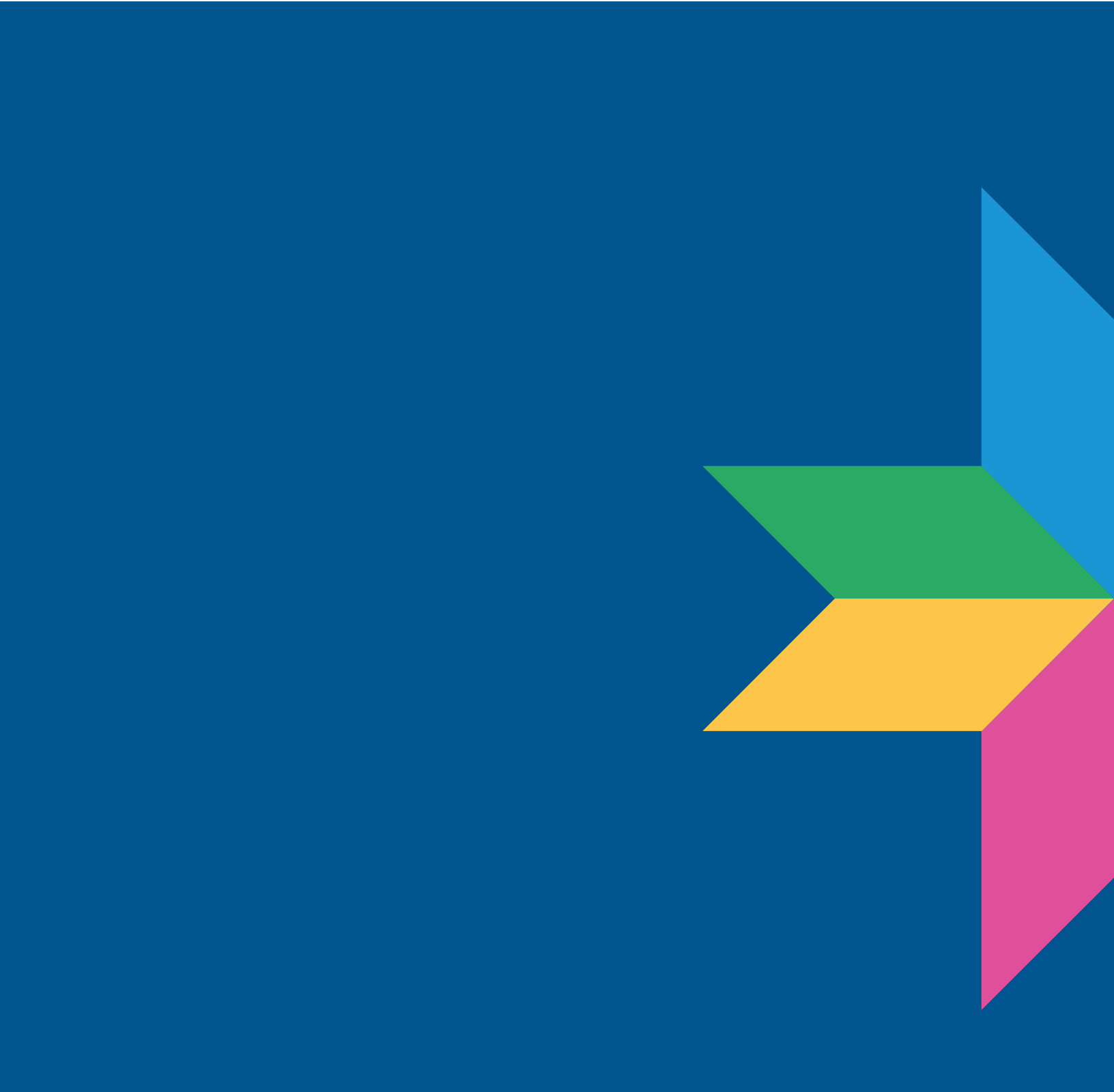
#### iii) What does the Care System include?

- Right to be cared for during infancy from 0 to 12 years of age, with special emphasis on early childhood (0 to 3 years old).

- Line to pay for Personal Aide for persons of any age who receive a pension for severe disabilities from the Social Security Bank (BPS) and who are dependent due to a severe disability.
- Establishments for long-term stays for the elderly throughout the country.
- Parental leave with the new Law 19161 (Maternity or Paternity Benefits for Private Sector Employees), that establishes:
  - \* New regulations for maternity benefits: includes non-dependents who contribute to social security from the private sector and who do not have more than one employee, and single taxpayer workers. The benefit lasts for 14 weeks.
  - \* Ten continuous days (starting in 2016) for paternity leave in addition to the three paid days currently covered by the contracting party. Leave is paid by social security and is for dependent workers in the private sector, non-dependents who contribute to social security and who do not have more than one employee, and single tax payers.
  - \* Half workday for father or mother until child reaches 6 months of age (starting in 2016) that begins at the end of maternity leave. This benefit can be used interchangeably and alternately between the father and the mother.

iv) The institutions that make up the SNIC are the following: i) the Ministry of Social Development; ii) the Ministry of Labor and Social Security; iii) the Ministry of Education and Culture; iv) the Ministry of Public Health; v) the Ministry of Economy and Finance; vi) the Office of Planning and Budgeting; vii) the Institute of Children and Adolescents of Uruguay; viii) the Social Security Bank; ix) the National Office for Administration of Public Education, and x) the National Care Secretariat, a dependency of the Ministry for Social Development, that is responsible for implementing the SNIC.

**Source:** Prepared by the author based on data from the Comprehensive National Care System Bill, Montevideo, March 5, 2015, available at: [http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/sci/proyectos/2015/03/mides\\_2.pdf](http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/sci/proyectos/2015/03/mides_2.pdf) [access on September 1, 2015]; the document entitled Hacia un modelo solidario de cuidados [Towards a Model of Solidarity in Care], 2012, available at: [http://www.sistemadecuidados.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/23302/1/12.11\\_-\\_snc\\_hacia\\_un\\_modelo\\_solidario\\_de\\_cuidados.pdf](http://www.sistemadecuidados.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/23302/1/12.11_-_snc_hacia_un_modelo_solidario_de_cuidados.pdf) [access on September 1, 2015]; and the document published by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), La construcción del sistema de cuidados en el Uruguay. En busca de consensos para una protección social más igualitaria, Santiago, 2014, available at: [http://www.mides.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/26134/1/sps192\\_construccion\\_sistema\\_cuidados\\_en\\_el\\_uruguay\\_16\\_de\\_abril\\_2014\\_tudh.pdf](http://www.mides.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/26134/1/sps192_construccion_sistema_cuidados_en_el_uruguay_16_de_abril_2014_tudh.pdf) [access on September 1, 2015].





# Final comments



## Final comments

Advances in the rights of paid domestic work in the countries of the Southern Cone are part of a long history of struggle by women who do this type of work almost as an extension of the gendered division of labor societies have assigned exclusively to women. The struggles have not been easy given the characteristics of the women who do this work and the structural conditions of paid domestic work. The conditions of the lives of women who do domestic work and belong to groups that are discriminated against for economic, ethnic, and racial reasons create tremendous obstacles for workers' organizations to become political and social actors who can speak out and voice their demands. Despite these difficulties, women domestic workers have overcome many obstacles in each of the countries and have found ways to reach out and organize in all the countries of the region. However, due to many obstacles and resistance by society, their efforts have had many setbacks. While some changes have been made, the struggles against the discrimination that concerns this type of work could not advance until well into the twenty-first century. The situation of fewer rights for domestic workers in the Southern Cone

was similar to that of the rest of the countries in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. In differing and similar ways, steps were taken to better the conditions in which domestic work is carried out.

The demand for equal rights for domestic work became much more sustained starting in the 1990s of the twentieth century, at which time domestic workers' organizations played and continue to play a central role. Alliances and networks with various women's organizations, international cooperation organizations, and trade unions have played an important part in sustaining the process. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the majority of the six countries in the region have given the same rights to domestic work as other work sectors. Nevertheless, in all of the countries the struggle continues for laws to be enforced and for domestic workers' rights to be fully exercised. In this way, difficulties in enforcing laws continues, as does the fight to ensure enjoyment of all legal rights, as well as to achieve those that still have not been recognized.





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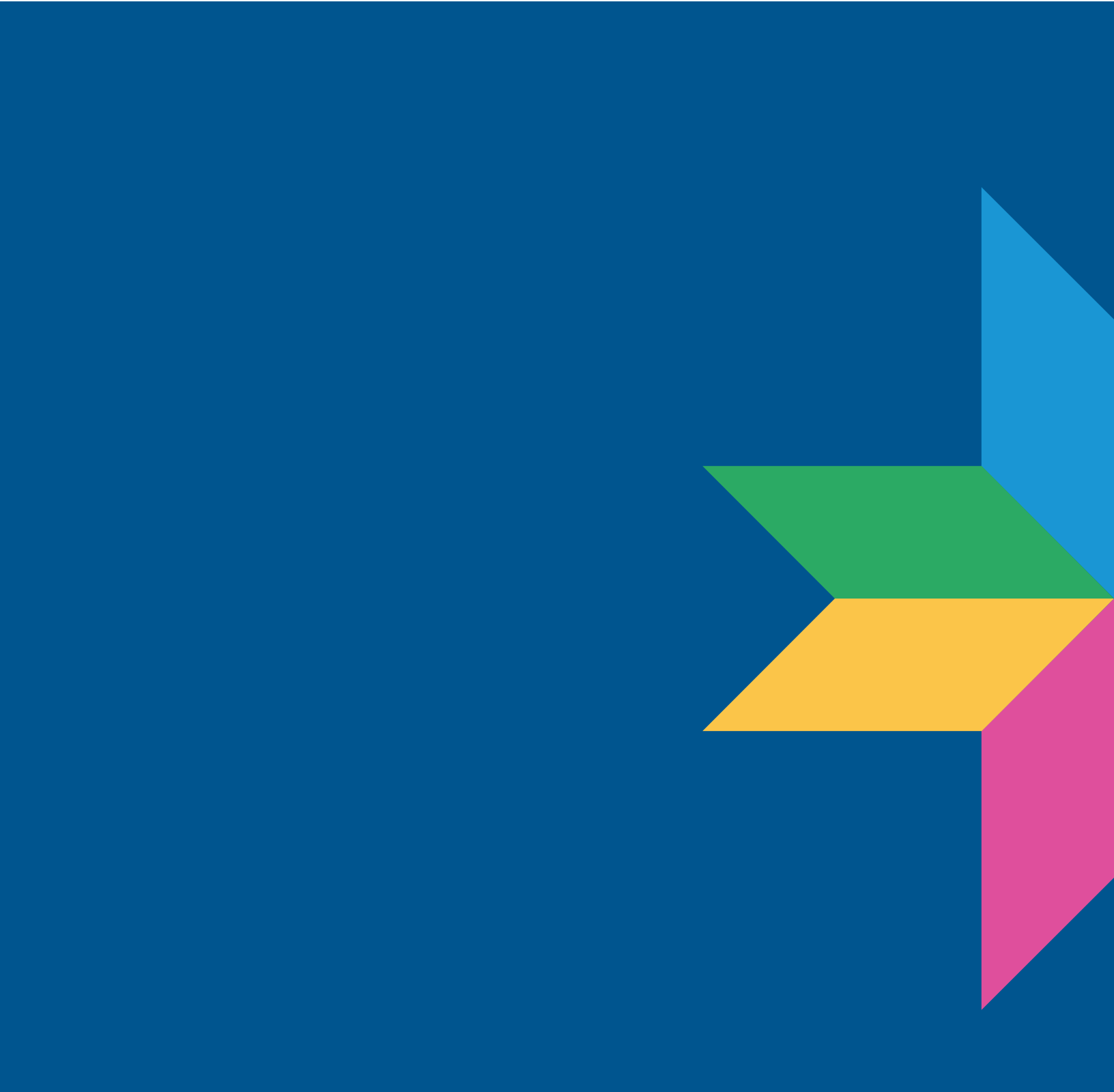
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# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The findings, interpretations, conclusions, errors and omissions outlined here are entirely the author's own responsibility and may not represent those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- <sup>2</sup> The extended Southern Cone includes the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.
- <sup>3</sup> The workers' organizations disagree about the term domestic: some decided to continue using it, such as organizations in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, while others, such as those in Bolivia, use the term household workers.
- <sup>4</sup> Data taken from ILO (2014).
- <sup>5</sup> Soto (2014) shows that, according to the Permanent Household Survey 2013, 93% of those in domestic employment in Paraguay were women, and Triaca shows that 99% of the sector is female (MTSS, 2013).
- <sup>6</sup> Data from 2013 presented in ILO (2014) for five of the six countries considered. There is no data for Bolivia for that year.
- <sup>7</sup> Although the ILO reports do not record data for Bolivia for 2013, the FENATRAHOB web page shows that 17% of the female workforce works in domestic employment.
- <sup>8</sup> This piece of information, taken from FENATRAHOB (n.d.), refers to female workforce. Disaggregation by urban-rural residence is not specified.
- <sup>9</sup> Cuba is not included in the 2014 *Labour Overview* (ILO, 2014).
- <sup>10</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for example, the study prepared by Ileana Moreno Ramírez (n.d.), which states that "almost 60% belongs to a lower-middle socioeconomic class and 64% barely finished elementary school or less. In 2005, it was calculated that 11.8% of household workers who lived at their place of work were indigenous women".
- <sup>12</sup> Valiente (2005, p. 87) states that domestic service was the second regulated profession in Paraguay when, in 1884, Regulations for Domestic Service were passed.
- <sup>13</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>14</sup> The Parliament had passed the law establishing 16 as the minimum age to work as domestic employee, disregarding the workers' organization proposal.
- <sup>15</sup> Nora Pacheco is a domestic worker, member of the leadership of the Union of Domestic Workers (SUTD), and she is the founder of the María Goretti organization that promotes the rights of domestic workers, specially of those in situation of greater vulnerability.
- <sup>16</sup> Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.
- <sup>17</sup> See Republic of Ecuador (2012).
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, Fuertes Medina, Rodríguez and Casalí (2013).
- <sup>19</sup> See COMMCA-SICA (2010).
- <sup>20</sup> See the document published by the Ministry of Labor of Colombia, available at: [http://incp.org.co/Site/news/archivos/MinTrabajo-Concepto-2013-N0021762\\_20130211.pdf](http://incp.org.co/Site/news/archivos/MinTrabajo-Concepto-2013-N0021762_20130211.pdf), and the article entitled "Jornada laboral en los trabajadores del servicio doméstico", available at: <http://www.gerencie.com/jornada-laboral-en-los-trabajadores-del-servicio-domestico.html> [access on September 4, 2015].
- <sup>21</sup> See Republic of Ecuador (2012).
- <sup>22</sup> See Republic of Peru (2003).
- <sup>23</sup> See CONAPRED (2012).
- <sup>24</sup> Valenzuela and Mora (2009) recount the wavering road traveled by the International Labour Conferences and the ILO in relation to domestic workers' rights in the conclusion to the book entitled *Trabajo doméstico: un largo camino hacia el trabajo decente [Domestic Work: A Long Road to Decent Work]*. They sustain that "the priority of addressing domestic workers' labor conditions was taken up again by the ILO in 2008, with an initiative headed by the workers' organizations" (Valenzuela and Mora, 2009, p. 291).
- <sup>25</sup> Tizziani (2011) states that it is the oldest organization in Argentina, created as the Syndicate of Domestic Personnel in 1901, becoming the Union of Private Household Auxiliary Personnel in 1946.
- <sup>26</sup> The information can be found on the FENATRAHOB web site.
- <sup>27</sup> On the history of domestic workers' organizations in Chile, see Hutchison (2013).

- <sup>28</sup> Marciana Santander, Conference for Exchange: Challenges for Domestic Workers' Organizations - Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, June 29 and 30, 2013.
- <sup>29</sup> Selva Benítez, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>30</sup> Marciana Santander, Conference for Exchange: Challenges for Domestic Workers' Organizations - Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, June 29 and 30, 2013.
- <sup>31</sup> Selva Benítez, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>32</sup> Maria Noemi, Conference for Exchange: Challenges for Domestic Workers' Organizations - Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, June 29 and 30, 2013.
- <sup>33</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>34</sup> Myriam Agüero, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>35</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>36</sup> Information from the AFM web site. Available at: <http://www.mujeresdelsur-afm.org.uy/fortalecimiento-de-los-derechos-humanos-de-las-trabajadoras-domesticas> [access on August 2, 2015].
- <sup>37</sup> Various analysis and articles refer to these processes. See, for example, the article published in the Brazilian portal *Âmbito Jurídico*. Available at: [http://www.ambito-juridico.com.br/site/index.php?n\\_link=revista\\_artigos\\_leitura&artigo\\_id=1761](http://www.ambito-juridico.com.br/site/index.php?n_link=revista_artigos_leitura&artigo_id=1761) [access on September 7, 2015].
- <sup>38</sup> See the speech that Tabaré Vázquez made after assuming the Presidency of the Republic in 2005. Available at: [http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/\\_web/pages/vazquez06.htm](http://archivo.presidencia.gub.uy/_web/pages/vazquez06.htm) [access on September 7, 2015].
- <sup>39</sup> Selva Benítez, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>40</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>41</sup> Creuza Maria de Oliveira Presentation, Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>42</sup> Betania Avila Presentation (from AFM, Brazil), Debate Panel Equal Value, Equal Rights: Advances and Debts for Domestic Workers' Equal Rights in Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>43</sup> See Senators' declarations to national newspapers and articles addressing the issue. Available at: <http://www.abc.com.py/nacionales/aprueba-60-de-salario-a-domesticos-1291830.html>, <http://www.dparaguay.com/2014/04/ley-de-empleadas-domesticas-podria.html>, and <http://www.pikaramagazine.com/2015/03/en-paraguay-prevalece-el-derecho-a-tener-empleada-domestica-sobre-el-derecho-a-una-vida-digna/> [access on November 6, 2016].







# Annex

TABLE A1

## Data on paid women domestic workers (percentages) in Latin America, 2013

	Total employed urban EAP	Female employed urban EAP	Paid domestic workers with healthcare and/or pension protections
<b>Averages in Latin America</b>		14,2	38,7
<b>Argentina</b>	7,2	17,0	49,6
<b>Bolivia</b>	...	...	...
<b>Brazil</b>	7,1	15,3	49
<b>Chile</b>	4,2	10	...
<b>Colombia</b>	4	8,4	34,1
<b>Costa Rica</b>	6,3	14	76,1
<b>Ecuador</b>	3,6	8,4	38,2
<b>El Salvador</b>	4,3	8,4	12
<b>Guatemala</b>	4,3	10,1	...
<b>Honduras</b>	3,7	7,8	...
<b>Mexico</b>	4,3	9,3	2,9
<b>Nicaragua</b>	...	...	...
<b>Panama</b>	4,9	10,3	33,4
<b>Paraguay</b>	8,3	17,1	21,2
<b>Peru</b>	3,2	6,8	56
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	5,7	13,1	...
<b>Uruguay</b>	6,6	13,3	98,4
<b>Venezuela</b>	1,5	3,6	...

Source: ILO (2014).

Note: EAP refers to economically active population.



In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations took a historic step with the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the heart of this agenda lies a simple but radical imperative: the elimination of poverty in all its forms, while caring for and protecting the planet.

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The Report describes three steps to avoid the fragmentation of the 2030 Agenda, which contains 17 goals and 169 targets.

The first involves using a multidimensional approach to develop the connections between indicators of well-being and the drivers of economic, social and environmental transformation. Secondly, constellations of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be built around the strategic objectives established by the authorities in each country to avoid piling global agendas on top of national ones. Thirdly, based on the examples in the Report, it is possible to conduct a microsimulation of the impacts of closing intersectoral and inter-territorial gaps for a set of targets, breaking the impact of these measures down by programme or population group.



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