



# Towards a safe work environment: Eradicating gender-based violence and harassment at work

July 19, 2024

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM EST

Virtual Event



## BASE DOCUMENT

### 8<sup>th</sup> Hemispheric Dialogue on Gender among Ministries of Labor:

#### “Towards a safe work environment: Eradicating gender-based violence and harassment at work”

July 19, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (EST – Check local time [here](#))

All event information will be updated on the website:

[https://rialnet.org/?q=en/8GenderDialogue\\_SafeWorkEnvironment](https://rialnet.org/?q=en/8GenderDialogue_SafeWorkEnvironment)

[Register online here](#)

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### 1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) of the OAS and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) have supported the Ministries of Labor of the Americas in mainstreaming and institutionalizing gender within their operations, policies, and programs,

recognizing these processes as means to achieve gender equality in the world of work. These efforts respond to commitments assumed by the Ministers of Labor of the Americas within the framework of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS. In recent years, they have centered on holding virtual dialogues at the hemispheric level on different priority issues, which resulted in the creation of the RIAL/GENDER network.

The RIAL/GENDER is a specialized community made up of the officers in charge of gender units or areas of the Ministries of Labor of the Americas and pursues the great purpose of contributing to achieve full gender equality in the world of work, through the strengthening of said units. To meet this objective, the Network has tools such as a portfolio of programs, bilateral cooperation, and hemispheric dialogues or events, among others.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Gender Dialogue is an activity of the RIAL/GENDER and, similar to the seven previous dialogues, its purpose is to allow the exchange of experiences, reflections and the formulation of recommendations on a topic of utmost relevance: the eradication of gender-based violence and harassment at work.

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in women's participation in the labor market<sup>1</sup>. This change has generated a significant transformation in labor dynamics, with a growing number of women playing key roles in various industries and economic sectors, and with greater recognition of rights. This addition of more women to the labor market not only reflects a move toward equal opportunities but also enriches the workforce with a diversity of talents, perspectives, and skills.

Despite these advances, significant gender gaps and challenges persist that disproportionately affect women in the world of work, such as workplace violence and harassment. According to global figures, more than 1 in 5 people have suffered at least one form of violence and harassment at work during their working lives<sup>2</sup>. Among them, women are most exposed to this type of violence and harassment compared to men (8.2% of women compared to 5% of men). In Latin America, the percentage is even higher, as 1 out of 10 employed women has been a victim of sexual violence or harassment at work<sup>3</sup>. This not only causes personal havoc on

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<sup>1</sup> ILO (2023). 2023 Labour Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean (Executive Summary). <https://www.ilo.org/publications/2023-labour-overview-latin-america-and-caribbean-executive-summary>

<sup>2</sup> ILO (2022). Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey. [https://webapps.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_863095.pdf](https://webapps.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_863095.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> ILO (2024). Closing the gender gap to boost the economy and productivity of Latin America (Technical Note), p. 16 [In Spanish]. <https://www.ilo.org/es/publications/serie-panorama-laboral-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe-2024-cerrar-la-brecha-0>

the women who suffer these humiliating acts but, at the aggregate level, represents an economic cost of up to 2% of global GDP<sup>4</sup>.

Gender-based violence at work is not an isolated event but responds to an overarching social and cultural dynamic with high rates of violence against women, adolescents and girls. This issue has been addressed by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the OAS, particularly since 1994, when the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, known as the Convention of Belém do Pará<sup>5</sup>, was adopted. This Convention established, for the first time, the development of mechanisms for protecting and defending women's rights as essential for combating the phenomenon of violence against women's physical, sexual, and psychological integrity, whether in the public or the private sphere, and for asserting those rights within society.

Likewise, in 2019, the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment, which, two years later – in 2021 – entered into force. To date, 12 countries in the Americas have ratified C190<sup>6</sup>, establishing a comprehensive framework to address these behaviors. This convention, specific to labor issues, recognizes that violence and harassment are not only limited to the workplace, but can also occur on the way between home and the workplace, in work-related events and in labor communication, emphasizing the importance of incorporating a gender approach, since women are usually the most affected.

Both Conventions offer a guide to move towards safer and more equitable work environments, where all workers, and especially women, can develop their potential without fear of violence or harassment.

Eradication of violence and harassment at work requires a strong commitment from governments, employers and workers, through the creation of policies and programs that address its underlying causes. This involves fostering a culture of respect and dignity, raising awareness and training among all members of the organization, and establishing safe and confidential mechanisms for reporting and handling incidents.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Can be found on <https://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/convention.asp>

<sup>6</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, México, Panama, Peru, Uruguay. Information available on: [https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO::P11300\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:3999810](https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO::P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:3999810)

Ministries of Labor play a crucial role in this process, providing leadership, resources, and technical support to adopt and implement effective measures. There are different fronts in which the Ministries of Labour contribute to the identification, prevention, eradication and punishment of gender-based violence and harassment at work: from information and awareness campaigns; specialized training on gender issues for public servants, employers and workers; labor inspections with a gender approach; effective and equitable employment services; affirmative measures with a gender focus such as employment campaigns aimed only at women; among others.

This Hemispheric Dialogue complements the RIAL virtual Course on “Gender-based violence at Work”, developed jointly with CIM-MESECVI through the Education Portal of the Americas, and which has trained officers from 27 Ministries of Labor of the region. It will be an opportunity to reflect on the role of the Ministries of Labor and share experiences and progress.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

As in previous dialogues, the 8th Hemispheric Dialogue will bring together **the officers responsible for the gender units or areas of the Ministries of Labor of the Americas** to continue analyzing, exchanging experiences and outlining recommendations on central issues of gender equity and institutionalization. On this occasion, the Dialogue will focus on eradicating gender-based violence and harassment at work.

This dialogue is organized by the Technical Secretariat of the IACML in the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) of the OAS, in collaboration with the CIM and the ILO.

**Day and Time:** July 19, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (EST, Washington D.C. time – Check local time)

**Place:** The dialogue will take place via Zoom.

**General Objective:** Support the Ministries of Labor of the Americas in the creation of safe and equitable work environments by strengthening capacities to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence and harassment at work.

### Specific Objectives:

- Provide tools to support Ministries of Labor in the design and implementation of policies and programs to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence and harassment at work.
- Facilitate the exchange of strategies, policies, and programs of the Ministries of Labor of the Americas to eradicate gender-based violence and harassment at work.

### Participants:

- Directors and representatives of the gender units or areas of the OAS Ministries of Labor, and officials of said Ministries interested in participating.
- Representatives of workers and employers, grouped in the consultative bodies of the IACML -COSATE and CEATAL-.
- International organizations and others interested actors will be invited as observers.

## 3. PRELIMINARY AGENDA

10:00 – 10:15	<b>Opening and Introduction</b> Executive Secretariat for Integral Development of the OAS / Department of Human Development, Education and Employment
10:15 – 11:00	<b>Introductory presentations</b> (20 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Presentation on Belém do Pará Convention</b>, by a CIM/OAS Specialist</li><li>- <b>Presentation on ILO Convention 190</b>, by an ILO Specialist</li></ul>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Demonstrative national experiences</b> (10 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Demonstrative presentations of 3 Ministries to start the dialogue</li></ul>
11:30 – 12:30	<b>Open dialogue</b> among all delegations based on guiding questions
12:30 – 13:00	<b>Update on the RIAL/GENDER and closing</b> Department of Human Development, Education and Employment, SEDI/OAS

#### 4. GUIDING QUESTIONS

To guide the presentations and interventions during the Dialogue and to support participants in preparing for the event, the following questions are laid out. We thank each Ministry of Labor in advance for answering them and sending their responses to: [trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org) no later than July 10.

1. What are the strategies, policies or programs that your Ministry has developed to identify, prevent, eradicate and punish gender-based violence and harassment at work? Please consider *actions in terms of information and awareness, training, labor inspection, design of tools/protocols, among others*.
2. What are the main successes, lessons learned and recommendations that can be drawn from the implementation of those strategies, policies or programs?

#### 5. LOGISTICS AND CONNECTION INFORMATION

**Registration:** Please complete the online registration form, preferably, no later than July 5, which can be done by [clicking here](#).

**Access to the platform and connection:** The meeting will take place on ZOOM. The connection link will be automatically sent to the participants once they have registered.

**Audio testing:** The active participation of all delegations is expected in the dialogue. In this sense, we thank the delegates for connecting 30 minutes before the meeting starts to carry out audio, connection, and interpretation tests.

**Language:** The meeting will have simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and English.

#### **MORE INFORMATION:**

*If you require additional information, please contact: [trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org)*