



**UNIFEM Andean Subregional Meeting of Gender Focal Points and  
Inter-Agency Gender Working Groups  
Caracas – Venezuela  
15-16 June 2006**

On June 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> 2006 UNIFEM Andean Regional Office organized the “Andean Subregional Meeting of Gender Focal Points and Inter-Agency Gender Working Groups (IGWG)” in Caracas, Venezuela. The overall objective of this high-level meeting was to analyze and measure the work in gender which is undertaken in and by the United Nations in the five Andean Region countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru & Venezuela). In particular, the role of the UNDP Gender Focal Points, the success of the IGWG and the role of UNIFEM and its relationship with UNDP were considered.

This two-day high-level meeting provided a unique opportunity to analyze the level of commitment of the United Nations System in the sub-region to the central issue of gender, as well as to provide new thinking and concrete strategies to better the mainstreaming of gender in the Andean Region.

Participants included: Moni Pizani, Regional Director of UNIFEM Andean Regional Office and Lucia Salamea-Palacios, National Programme Officer of UNIFEM Andean Regional Office; the Resident Coordinators (RC) of four of the five sub-regional countries: Antonio Molpeceres (Bolivia), René Mauricio Valdés (Ecuador), Bruno Moro (Colombia), and David McLachlan-Karr (Venezuela); the five sub-regional UNDP Gender Focal Points, two of the five Coordinators of the IGWG of (Ecuador and Colombia); Teresa Rodríguez, Regional Director for UNIFEM, Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, Raquel Lagunas, Coordinator of the UNDP “America Latina Genera” Project and experts from the World Bank.

The meeting was opened with a video-conference intervention from New York by Marijke Velzeboer, Regional Director of UNIFEM-LAC, and Martín Santiago, UNDP Regional Director for Latin America. Martín Santiago reiterated UNDP’s “real” commitment to gender issues, highlighting the necessity for Gender to be integrated in all programmatic activities in order to reach viable results; he mentioned the fact that the UNDP Administrator shall meet with the Gender Steering Committee on a monthly basis to ensure concrete results. In addition, Martín Santiago stated that in the context of UN Reform the crucial role played by UNIFEM must be underlined and the inter-agency UNDP-UNIFEM relationship strengthened.

The meeting concluded with the signature of the *Caracas Agreement* by the four Resident Coordinators present and Moni Pizani, Regional Director of UNIFEM Andean Regional Office. The signatories of the *Caracas Agreement* pledge, inter alia, to strengthen the participation and implication of the Resident Coordinators in gender issues as a whole and in particular with regards to the effective functioning of the IGWG and the work undertaken by the UNDP Gender Focal Points. In a spirit of strengthening inter-agency work they pledged their commitment to gender issues and to the creation of a Minimum Gender Agenda for the Andean Sub-region as

well as the creation of an information-sharing mechanism between the Sub-regional countries to be lead by UNIFEM.

The Resident Coordinators present agreed that UNIFEM has a crucial role to play as the lead agency in mainstreaming gender and in the dissemination of knowledge. In addition all agreed on the need to increase UNIFEM presence in the national offices quantitatively (more staff) and qualitatively (higher level of staff – JPO's, UNV's, etc.). The contributions made by external collaborators such as the World Bank, Raquel Lagunas and Teresa Rodríguez enriched the Caracas Agreement and commitments were made to work together at the national level as well as in sub-regional projects.

In general the meeting was a success as it provided a unique opportunity for the Resident Coordinators and their teams to debate analyze and come to strategic agreements with regards to the commitment of all to the advancement of women's rights in the Andean Sub-region.