

REGIONAL FORUMS

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: A REGION OF INEQUITIES

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region is one of profound contrasts: most countries have experienced economic growth and strengthening democratic processes, but there are huge inequities not just between different countries but among different regions in the same country. Many Latin Americans lack access to basic health services and young, poor, indigenous, female, and Afro-American populations are at a particular disadvantage

38%

of women in the
region are pregnant
before age 20



Unmet contraceptive need

Twenty-one percent of women who want to avoid pregnancy—24 million in 2017—use either no contraceptive method or traditional methods, with typical low levels of effectiveness. These women have an unmet need for modern contraception and account for 75% of all unintended pregnancies in the region.

The adolescent pregnancy rate is the second highest in the world, lower only than Sub-Saharan Africa's. Thirty-eight percent of women in the region are pregnant before age 20. Adolescents face access barriers and limited autonomy in a predominantly conservative society. In many LAC countries, contraceptive access is permitted only after the adolescent girl has had a first child.

Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality (MM) in the region has diminished considerably, but the regional average masks huge differences between countries. In Chile MM is 25 per 100,000 live births but in Bolivia it is 190. Haiti and Guyana have alarming rates: 350 and 280 per 100,000 live births. There are approximately 4.2 million abortions per year, 93% of which are performed under illegal and/or risky conditions. Abortion is legal only in Uruguay and Cuba.

Donor “graduation”

Since the early 2000s, donors have been reducing their assistance to LAC steadily. Most LAC governments now pay for contraceptives for their national Family Planning Programs. Procurement can be erratic depending on political will and budgetary restrictions.

“ #ForoLAC helps us put SRH rights into practice, especially for those living in vulnerable conditions.

Hugo Gonzalez,
UNFPA Country Director, El Salvador

How does the LAC Forum address the region's needs through its members?

The LAC Forum (or ForoLAC as it known in the region) provides a powerful platform connecting the region to global organizations and raising the region's visibility. 644 registered individuals from 22 countries have the opportunity to meet at least once a year in person and monthly in teleconferences to develop strategies, systems and tools to challenge the region's inequities. ForoLAC members network, share lessons, and operate within regional and national support groups. They work to:

- › Increase visibility of the supplies challenges in the region in the international agenda.
- › Increase resources and consciousness around contraceptive security in the region at all levels, especially among decision makers.
- › Strengthen and centralize access to updated information.
- › Avoid duplication of efforts and share best practices.
- › Provide the region with a coordination platform that promotes inter-sectoral and inter-institutional exchanges.

The latest global resources such as webinars and publications are offered in Spanish. Members have access to support from the Innovation Fund to address contraceptive access through a supplies lens.

Encuentros

ForoLAC's Encuentros initiative was designed in 2017 to broaden opportunities for national agencies to procure more affordable, quality RH products. The relationships and introductions fostered in two key encuentros or learning opportunities have yielded remarkable results and initiated important conversations and developments including the following:

- › Chile's central procurement agency (CENABAST) is sharing experience and lessons learned with its peers in CENARES (Perú) and exchange best practices between the two agencies.
- › A regional price platform is under development.
- › Ongoing strategies to developing financial guarantees
- › Procuring high-quality and more affordable contraceptives from Brazilian and local manufacturers
- › Working with UNFPA on securing regional pooled procurements for contraceptives
- › Establishing a regional team that can negotiate better prices for contraceptive products on behalf of a few countries
- › Accessing bulk prices already negotiated by SE-COMISCA.



ForoLAC
ENCUENTROS



Contact information

Chair: Nora Quesada, John Snow Inc. (JSI): nora_quesada@jsi.com

Regional Advisor: Milka Dinev: mdinev@rhsupplies.org

