

Introduction

Exploring the situation of women and children in Latin America and the Caribbean touches upon a wide array of inter-related issues: education and health care; participation and exploitation; and poverty and human rights. Drawing on the conference information package and tapping into their own experience in Latin America, participants were invited to submit a list of what they envisaged as the most salient issues in the region. Four principal themes emerged from these lists: health, education, safety and security of children, and the role of the family/gender participation in child rearing.

The policy options/action plans presented by each group considered the following points:

- Who would benefit from the plan?
- Who would implement it?
- How would it be put in place?
- Who would finance it?
- How long would it last?
- How can it be designed so it is sustainable?

Following the forum, groups' notes were typed up and circulated back to group members. Participants were given a week to clarify their views and encouraged to submit further thoughts on what they had developed at the forum. Due to the tight schedule on the evening of the forum, the groups did not have the opportunity to fully develop each of their ideas. This consultative process therefore provided them with another opportunity for reflection. A week later, the groups' notes were transformed into a policy format and circulated again to ensure that they reflected the group's voice. Some additional policy suggestions have been added to fill out the group's ideas.

What follows are the policy suggestions (in the order they appear) of the four major themes that were identified by the participants: safety and security, education, health, and role of the family/gender participation.