

to these practices by highlighting their corporate responsibility to the national and international community.

- Encourage initiatives to reform legislation at the national and municipal level of government that perpetuates gender inequality.

## EDUCATION

### Background

Education has an important role to play in mobilizing people to pull themselves out of poverty. A recent OAS statistic showed that individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) now need a minimum Grade 12 education in order to break the cycle of poverty. Yet ironically, the opportunity cost of getting an education cannot compete with the benefits that an additional income brings in serving people's immediate needs. It is for this reason that although more and more countries enjoy universal access to primary education, a large percentage of children who enroll never actually complete school. While both boys and girls drop out when economic resources falter, boys' educations are consistently favoured over girls', who therefore often leave school in order to participate in domestic chores. Across the region, access to education remains inequitable for girls, especially in rural communities, among indigenous and minority groups whose (language) rights may not be safeguarded or recognized, and among children with a disability who are usually the last to receive an education, employment, and fair and equal treatment. Even where efforts have been made to enhance access to primary and secondary education, the quality of education falters. Classes are large, space and resources are limited, and there are few qualified teachers. Children in marginalized communities often arrive at school unable to focus on their education because they are hungry and tired from the long distances they have to travel to get to school. Measures need to be taken that both support a child's educational needs while providing for some of their basic human needs.