

Side-event within the framework of the Fifty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), June 26-28, 2024, in Asunción, Paraguay

Programme (provisional)

Titel: “The rights of women in rural areas and their access to justice”

Date and time: Wednesday June 26, 2024, 13:00 - 14:10 (tbc, Paraguay time)

Venue: Comité Olímpico Paraguayo (tbc)

Live-Stream on JSCA's Youtube channel

Languages: Spanish and English, with simultaneous translation

A brown bag lunch will be provided for all invited participants

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| 13:00-13:10 | Participant registration |
| 13:10-13:30 | <p>Welcome remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Luis Almagro; Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) (tbc) ➤ Representative of the Republic of Paraguay (tbc) ➤ Annette Walter; Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, German Federal Foreign Office |
| 13:30-13:40 | <p>Keynote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Alejandra Mora Mora; Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women of OAS (CIM) <p>“The Inter-American Decade for the Rights of All Women, Adolescents, and Girls in Rural Settings of the Americas”</p> |
| 13:40-14:00 | <p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Astrid Bosch; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nataly Ponce Chauca; Executive Secretary of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) ➤ Terry Ince; Founder and Convener of the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) |
| 14:00-14:05 | <p>Presentation of a training programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Astrid Bosch; GIZ <p>“Strengthening criminal prosecution and resocialisation for Gender-Based Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean”</p> |
| 14:05-14:10 | <p>Concluding remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Astrid Bosch; GIZ |

Outline

Theme: Gender-transformative Justice in rural settings

Date and time (tbc): Wednesday, June 26, 2024, 13:00 to 14:10 (PRY time)

→ in the timeslot between the Dialogue of representatives of civil society organizations with heads of delegation (app. 09:00-13:00) and Dialogue of the heads of delegation, the Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary General with heads of delegation of permanent observers (app. 14:30-17:00)

Hosts: German Federal Foreign Office, Government of Paraguay (tbc), Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) and Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)

Guests: OAS (tbc): Secretary General; Assistant Secretary General

Implementation: Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ GmbH)

Speakers

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| DEU | • Annette Walter; Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, German Federal Foreign Office |
| PRY (tbc) | • Representative of the Republic of Paraguay (tbc) |
| OAS (tbc) | • Luis Almagro; Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) (tbc) |
| JSCA | • Nataly Ponce Chauca; Executive Director of the Justice Studies Center of the Americas |
| CIM | • Alejandra Mora Mora; Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women |
| Civil Society | • Terry Ince; Convenor and founder of the CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) ¹ |
| GIZ | • Astrid Bosch, Technical Advisor Rule of Law, “Latin America and Caribbean Initiative to Promote Stability, Democracy and the Rules-Based International Order” at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |

Audience (open invitation to OAS General Assemblies' participants) (tbc):

- Onsite:
 - Representatives of government authorities of OAS Member States
 - Participants of the OAS General Assembly
 - Participants of the OAS Dialogues with representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) and of permanent observers present on June 26 (tbc)
- Online audience: government bodies and judiciary from LAC countries, interested experts; CSOs

¹ [Terry Ince | XIV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean \(cepal.org\)](#)



Objective of the side event

This session is hosted by the Federal Foreign Office, the Justice Ministry of Paraguay, the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), to address the audience about their work in the frame of their feminist agenda and specialized justice systems.

The side event fosters a dialogue between governments and field experts on the rule of law, specifically on the challenges of women residing in rural areas to enjoy their rights and reach legal protection. During the event, we will address the transformative character of an access to justice and discuss policies, opportunities, and challenges faced by states in ensuring women a life free from violence.

As the result of the activism of a broad network of organizations and women leaders in the promotion of the rights of women and girls in rural environments, and under the Presidency of Panama of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the OAS, in June 2023 the 53rd Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Declaration on the Rights of All Women, Adolescents, and Girls in Rural Settings in the Americas (AG/DEC. 113 (LIII-O/23)). Among other mandates, the Declaration established the Inter-American Decade for the Rights of All Women, Adolescents and Girls in Rural Environments of the Americas (2024-2034), with the objective of promoting progressive measures for the advancement of all their rights. The Declaration is applying an intersectional approach to effectively address and eradicate the multiple forms of discrimination, exclusion, inequality, and violence they face.

As an example of possible measures, a training program will be presented at the end of the event. The program known as “Strengthening criminal prosecution and resocialisation for Gender-Based Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean” will be introduced as an offer brought by the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) for legal practitioners in the region.

Guiding questions of the event will be:

- How can we approach the rights of rural women and access to justice more holistically? What are the issues and obstacles involved?
- Which are the most pressing legal needs of women living in rural settings and the policies in place to address them?
- How does access to rights play a role in the prevention and protection against gender-based violence? What kind of practices have proven to be effective and where are opportunities for enhancement?



Background and justification of the event

In Latin America and the Caribbean, gender-based violence (GBV) is a significant concern. The World Health Organisation (2018) estimates that the prevalence of intimate and non-intimate violence in the Americas region (34%) is three points higher than the global average (31%). Gender stereotypes result both in poor access to rights for women to ensure independent lives and poor access to justice when they need legal support. In cases of gender-based violence women are confronted with deficient investigations and insensitive legal officials, leading to survivors frustration, and public distrust in the legal system.

These problems are even more serious in the case of rural women, who represent around 10% (ca. 61 million women) of the population (CEPAL, 2015). A rural woman's first recourse in the event of violence is generally community schemes. In most of the countries of the region, rural communities have their own systems of conflict resolution, either within indigenous cultures, afro communities or outside of them (de Sousa Santos, 2001)². Abundant research shows that these systems reproduce sexist power structures, which see violence as a "private" issue and prioritize conciliation between partners rather than a transformation of relationships (Terceros, 2003, Bellatin y Vivanco, 2016)³. When women decide to leave community-schemes to search for protection or legal advice, they often lack the skills to navigate the complexities of bureaucracy and the resources to afford professional legal support. Both public services and legal judicial institutions are in urban areas, and they suffer from major shortcomings: poor buildings, insufficient and unskilled officers; hierarchic and opaque norms and structures, extremely often too, discriminatory mind-settings.

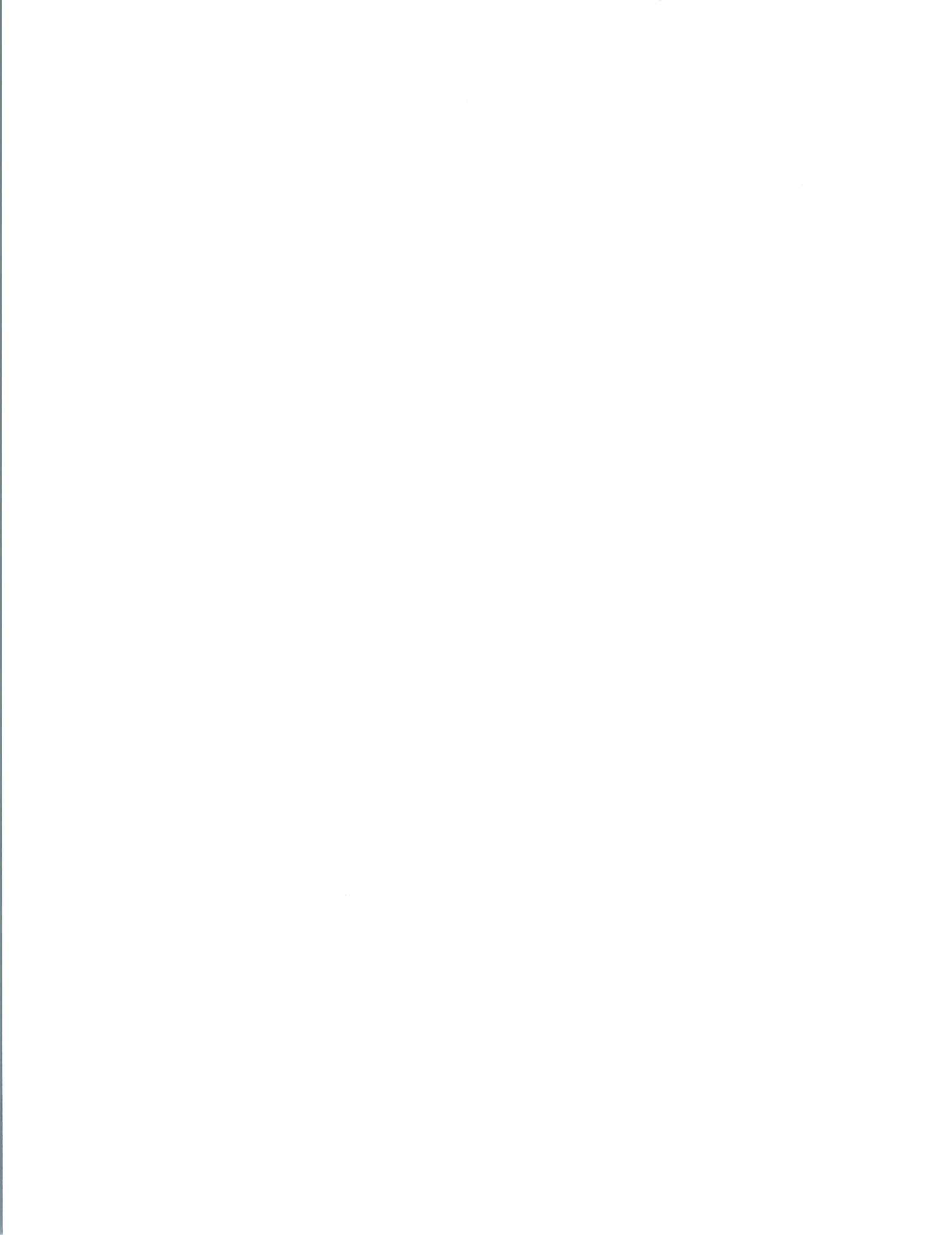
However, people in the region have clearly raised their voices through public initiatives and social movements ("ni una menos"), which have an important impact in the region and beyond. Although there are growing numbers of political violence, women remain political active in the region and there are advances, e.g. on reproductive health.

Addressing the issue of gender-based violence, which disproportionately affect women, is crucial to ensuring peaceful and sustainable societies, especially in Latina America and the Caribbean.

² de Sousa Santos (2001) Los paisajes de las justicias en las sociedades contemporáneas. El caleidoscopio de las justicias en Colombia. Siglo del Hombre Editores. Colombia.

³ Elva Terceros (2003). El Derecho indígena en la legislación positiva. CEJIS. Bolivia.

Bellatin Paloma & Maria Fernanda Vivanco (2015). El acceso a la justicia de la mujer rural: desencuentros en la protección y propiedad de la tierra. Genero y Justicia. Tribunal Constitucional. Peru.



Hosts and organizing institutions

German Federal Foreign Office

The Federal Foreign Office represents Germany's interests to the world. It promotes international exchange and offers protection and assistance to Germans abroad. Shaping globalisation is one of the most important tasks of diplomacy. In this area, the Federal Foreign Office works closely with partners from civil society, including business associations, unions and humanitarian and human rights organisations. Latin America and the Caribbean are politically, culturally and economically important cooperation partners for Germany and Europe. To support cooperation with the region, the German Federal Foreign Office launched a Latin America and Caribbean Initiative in 2019. It sets a framework for political relations and joint projects on issues such as the rule of law and women's rights and supports the civil society and partner countries by promoting democracy, the rule of law and gender equality. [Latin America and the Caribbean: A strategically important region - Federal Foreign Office \(auswaertiges-amt.de\)](https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-a-strategically-important-region)

Government of the Republic of Paraguay

(tbd)

Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA)

Created in 1999 by resolution of the OAS General Assembly, the Justice Studies Center of the Americas (JSCA) is an agency of the Inter-American system enjoying technical and operational autonomy. Its mission is to support justice system reform and modernization processes in the Americas. JSCA provides technical assistance to governments, judicial branches and other stakeholders in regional justice systems. It also conducts studies and offers specialized training programs for judges, prosecutors, public defenders, litigators and policymakers.

Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)

Established in 1928, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) was the first inter-governmental agency established to ensure recognition of women's human rights and is the only hemispheric political forum for women's rights and gender equality.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ GmbH)

As a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, the GIZ is dedicated to shaping a future worth living around the world. The project "Latin America and Caribbean Initiative to Promote Stability, Democracy and the Rules-Based International Order" (LAK-FSDRIO) coordinates the German Federal Foreign Office's women's network Unidas which promotes dialogue among its members on women's rights and gender justice in the region and in Germany. Furthermore, on behalf of German Federal Foreign Office, the project seeks to enhance cooperation on the rule of law. To this end it supports partners in consolidating legal procedures and facilitating access to equal rights in the region, including through e-learning opportunities.

[Promoting democracy, the rule of law and women's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean - giz.de](https://www.giz.de/en/promoting-democracy-the-rule-of-law-and-women-s-rights-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean)

