

Year-end 2022

Review of the activities of the Unidas Women's Network in the second half of 2022

Dear Unidas members,

With 2022 drawing to a close, I'd like to wish you and your families a joyful festive season and a good start to the New Year.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to introduce myself. As the new Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the German Federal Foreign Office, I became the Chair of the Unidas Women's Network between Germany, Latin America and the Caribbean in the middle of this year. I'm very much looking forward to advancing our shared interests together with all of you and in dialogue between Germany, Latin America and the Caribbean. Unidas is an important element of our feminist foreign policy, which focuses on women's rights, representation and resources worldwide and advocates for gender-equitable societies.

Since Unidas was founded in 2019, we have made progress in the content and organisation of our work. The network has grown steadily, numerous national and supranational network meetings, workshops and specialist events have been held and projects have been successfully implemented.

I'd also like to use this opportunity to give you an update on the network's activities and the focal areas of our work since our last circular in July and share an initial look ahead to 2023.

My sincere thanks for your invaluable cooperation, engagement and ideas for the network's activities. I'm looking forward to more of the same and hopefully seeing many of you together in person next year.

Kind regards and festive best wishes from Berlin,



Annette Walter
Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the German
Federal Foreign Office

Activity report for the second half of 2022

Unidas Women's Network between Germany, Latin America and the Caribbean

Background information

The Unidas Women's Network was founded on 28 May 2019 with the aim of fostering dialogue among members and organisations whose shared goal is to create a society that offers equal opportunities and gender justice. More than 250 members from Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany and nine partner organisations have since joined the network. Unidas is a central component of the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock assumed the patronage of the Unidas Women's Network in March 2022.

An advisory board composed of members with equal representation from Germany, Latin America and the Caribbean advises Unidas on strategic issues and selects the winner of the annual Unidas Prize for Women's Rights and Democracy.

The aim of Unidas is to strengthen the participation and rights of women in politics, media, society, business and science and to foster dialogue in the following priority areas in particular:

- Women's rights and democracy,
- Women and peacekeeping (Women, Peace and Security agenda),
- Strategies to prevent violence against women and femicide,
- Women's participation in the economy.

Activities

July to December 2022

N.B.: Reports on the individual activities can be retrieved from the [Unidas platform](#) by clicking on the links in the following text.

At the request of the members, a **regular virtual dialogue ('Open Space')** has been taking place **in the network** since February 2021. In the second half of 2022, the topics discussed were the new guidelines on abortion issued by the World Health Organization ([July](#)), the role of indigenous women in environmental protection ([August](#)), feminist agendas in elections and politics in Brazil, Colombia and Germany ([August](#)) and approaches to combating human trafficking ([December](#)).

In addition to this, various Unidas members represented the network at external events. In September, a Brazilian Unidas member from the Instituto Rede Mulher Empreendedora (IRME) participated in a panel discussion on 'Feminising Economic Policy and Practice' as part of the German Federal Foreign Office's **Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy** conference. Subsequently, the IRME representative was also invited to take part in a discussion with representatives of the Association for Latin America (LAV – Lateinamerika Verein e.V.) and

the German Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE) on the role and empowerment of women in business in LAC and Germany.

In October, Unidas took part in a **network meeting on combating anti-feminism** organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation with a round table discussion on digital violence/online attacks. In November, a Colombian Unidas member of the Sisma Mujer organisation took part in **Girls in Crisis: impact of humanitarian crises on girls and young women**, an event run by Plan International.

At **ECLAC's Regional Conference on Women**, held from 7 to 11 November in Buenos Aires, Unidas members from Argentina, Chile and Colombia organised or were involved in conducting five side events. An Argentine Unidas member from Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género was a panellist for the side event on 'Feminist development cooperation policies: perspectives and priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean'.

A working group on feminist foreign policy was established in August to intensify our work in this thematic focus area. It developed a survey on expectations and experiences of feminist foreign policy, which was sent to all Unidas members in September. The responses were presented and discussed at a **consultation with representatives of the German Federal Foreign Office** in October. The results of the survey and discussion were subsequently summarised in a strategy paper and shared with the network and the German Federal Foreign Office in November.

In order to support the communication, visibility and campaign work of the members and their organisations, **several weeks of communication training were offered to Unidas members** from October to November. The content was prepared and delivered by journalists involved in the #NiUnaMenos movement.

At national level, Unidas members in Ecuador were helped to run a **project on dialogue formats and measures for promoting the 2030 Agreement** for a life free from violence against women in November and December. This began with a high-ranking in-person event which was also streamed virtually. Among the 150 attendees at the Quito venue on 18 November were the President of the National Court of Justice and the German Ambassador. There then followed a meeting in each of Ecuador's three regions – the Amazon Rainforest, the Andean Highlands and the Coastal Lowlands.

In Guatemala, Unidas members held various activities on 24 and 25 November to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and raise awareness of the problem. Unidas supported the **XXII vigil in honour of women who have died a violent death** in Guatemala City on 24 November, an event which has taken place every year since 2000.

On 14 December, Unidas again cooperated with the Association for Latin America (LAV) and the German Agency for Business and Economic Development (AWE) on the event **Di-verso, inclusivo y plural: companies as agents of change**, which formed part of the **Women in Business in Germany/Latin America** series.

The current **project support phase under the zivik programme of the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)** started in March 2022 and ran until December 2022. Projects

supported this year revolved around promoting active participation of women and inclusion of gender-specific content in the constitutional project in **Chile**, developing a network on the topics of security, mediation and peacebuilding between **Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico**, urban conflicts over access to land and decent housing in **Brazil**, the dynamics of violence against human rights and environmental activists **in the Brazilian Amazonia** and strengthening civil rights for a life lived with dignity in **Honduras**.

In addition to expanding its content, the Women's Network welcomed **new members from Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany** this year. Furthermore, a new **'nodal point' for Mexico** was established. There are now nodal points – in other words, national coordinators – in 10 countries already. As spokespersons for the respective national Unidas groups, the nodal points engage in dialogue with the network coordinator on current issues and ideas for Unidas every two months.

German embassies in several countries are also contributing very actively to the work of the network. For example, (hybrid) face-to-face national meetings, organised and directed by embassy staff, were held in Ecuador in September and November.

Outlook for 2023

The network will continue to aim to **foster dialogue between members in Latin America, the Caribbean and Germany on women's rights, representation and resources and facilitate networking with German and multilateral foreign policy stakeholders**. The common focus in this regard is on bringing about societal change in order to boost gender equality. Current dynamics will be addressed through discussion. At the same time, the network's aims will be underpinned and achieved through specific, targeted projects where possible.

Unidas members bring valuable insights on regional or national contexts, which can serve to further advance the dialogue and work within the network, including in exchanges with the German Federal Foreign Office and missions abroad. In the context of the economic impact of the current crisis, **interest in addressing challenges to women's economic participation and providing funding to organisations that advocate for women's rights** has grown noticeably.

In addition to network meetings on specific topics, courses on capacity development and project support will still be offered as well.

A journalistic project of a Uruguayan Unidas member planned for early 2023 will include **dialogue and reports on the difficulty of accessing abortion services in Latin America and the Caribbean**.

The next Unidas Week – a supraregional network meeting – is scheduled for the first half of 2023. The Unidas Prize for Women's Rights and Democracy 2022 will also be bestowed on this year's award winner. The next Unidas **advisory board meeting** is also set to take place in the first half of 2023. Further events are in preparation.