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From Regional Diversity to Global Influence:

Latin America and the Caribbean and the Future of UN Leadership

Contents

Introduction **3**

1. Latin America and the Caribbean and the UN **5**

2. Latin America and the Caribbean Policy Priorities **7**

3. What Should the Next Secretary-General Do? Policy Recommendations from Latin America and the Caribbean **8**

Conclusion **15**

Annex: Latin America and the Caribbean Convening Participants List **16**

Endnotes **17**

Introduction

The selection of the next United Nations Secretary-General comes at a period of geopolitical fragmentation, declining trust in multilateral institutions, and growing pressure on the United Nations (UN) to demonstrate that it can deliver. For Latin America and the Caribbean, the selection is especially significant for two reasons: first, it may yield a Secretary-General from the region for only the second time in UN history, and second, it offers the possibility of appointing the first woman to lead the Organization.

Cepei,[1] the Igarapé Institute,[2] and the GQUAL Campaign[3] convened 26 former senior officials and diplomats, academics, civil society representatives, and policy experts from across Latin America and the Caribbean in Bogotá, Colombia, on 7 and 8 September 2026. Most participants were from South America, alongside participants from Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The convening was part of the *Guidance and Regional Intelligence for the Transition of UN Leadership project*. It examined the challenges facing the next Secretary-General, priorities for the first 1,000 days, what Latin America and the Caribbean needs from and contributes to the multilateral system, and practical pathways for stronger engagement.

Key Takeaways

The Challenge
Latin America and the Caribbean is politically, economically, culturally, and environmentally diverse. Across this diversity, countries face intersecting pressures on development, security, and democratic governance, from persistent inequality and fiscal constraints to climate vulnerability, organized crime, and shrinking civic space. At the same time, the region remains underrepresented in global decision-making.

Priorities for the Next Secretary-General
The region brings to the United Nations a long-standing commitment to, and support for, multilateralism and international law, along with diplomatic, normative, and environmental assets. The next Secretary-General should draw more systematically on these, engage more consistently with the region in shaping global debates and rules, including by connecting regional priorities with cross-regional coalitions and processes, and respond to the region's development, security, and governance priorities.

Recommendations

Two cross-cutting recommendations should guide the next Secretary-General's approach across the substantive areas below:

- **Rebuild trust through stronger political engagement, inclusive and representative leadership, tangible delivery, and strategic communication.**
- **Use convening power selectively and work through flexible coalitions where consensus is out of reach.**

These approaches should inform action across five substantive areas:

- **Peace and Security:** strengthen prevention, good offices, and mediation by adapting UN tools to different security contexts and supporting nationally owned approaches to violence reduction and organized and transnational crime.
- **Sustainable Development and Development Finance:** shape the post-2030 agenda and development finance architecture around inequality, debt, multidimensional vulnerability, and access to finance, while strengthening the UN's role in convening knowledge, partnerships, and finance around national priorities.
- **Human Rights and Civic Space:** uphold international law, protect and expand fundamental rights and civic space through stronger UN leadership, earlier preventive action, effective responses to reprisals, and more sustained engagement with civil society and other stakeholders.
- **Climate, Nature, and Energy:** advance more integrated political leadership across these agendas, improve coherence from global governance to country-level delivery, and support implementation of just transitions.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** exercise early leadership on inclusive global AI governance by consolidating emerging UN mechanisms, strengthening developing-country participation, and advancing cooperation on shared principles and high-risk applications.

1. Latin America and the Caribbean and the UN

Latin America and the Caribbean has a long-standing commitment to multilateralism but does not operate as a unified political bloc. The region has a dense architecture of regional and subregional institutions, including the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community (CAN), the Pacific Alliance, the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). Yet overlapping mandates, geopolitical divisions, and comparatively limited intraregional trade mean that this institutional density has not consistently translated into deeper political or economic cooperation.

Despite these constraints, the region has helped shape the multilateral system since the UN's founding. Latin American and Caribbean countries accounted for 20 of the 50 States that signed the UN Charter at the 1945 San Francisco Conference and were prominent advocates of human rights and equality.[4] Representatives from the region pushed for stronger references to human rights in the Charter, a more prominent role for the General Assembly, and, through the leadership of women delegates, explicit recognition of the equal rights of men and women to participate in the Organization.[5]

The region has also contributed to international law,[6] peaceful dispute settlement, and norm-building, through initiatives such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco,[7] the development of international norms and mechanisms on enforced disappearances,[8] the influential approaches of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to development and inequality, and sustained participation in UN peace operations.[9] It has also developed, within the framework of the OAS, one of the world's most influential regional human rights protection systems, the Inter-American Human Rights System.

Latin American and Caribbean States also contributed to the UN's decolonization agenda. During the major UN decolonization period of the 1960s and 1970s, several Caribbean countries were themselves moving from colonial rule to independence, while Latin American States supported broader international efforts on self-determination and decolonization through the UN.[10] Caribbean States, in particular, contributed to international action against racial discrimination and apartheid, drawing on the region's own histories of slavery and colonialism.[11]

The region has served as an important venue for major multilateral negotiations and processes. These have included the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Barbados, the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Rio+20 in 2012, and, more recently, the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP16) in Cali in 2024 and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in

Belém in 2025. Through these processes, countries in the region have shaped global debates on sustainable development, finance, climate, and nature. Caribbean States, in particular, have helped advance debates on climate vulnerability, disaster risk reduction, and the relationship between debt and the climate crisis.

The UN is also operationally present across the region. ECLAC is headquartered in Santiago, Chile; the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica; and the University for Peace in Costa Rica. Panama serves as a major regional hub, hosting 19 of the UN's 49 regional offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Regional Logistics Centre for Humanitarian Assistance in Veracruz, Panamá.[12] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) operates through regional offices in Panama and Santiago, alongside a country-level presence.

The UN's relevance is tangible in everyday life, even if not always recognized. The Revolving Fund of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) pools countries' purchasing power to improve access to vaccines for citizens at lower prices.[13] UN country teams and humanitarian partners also support government-led emergency responses, including following the 2026 earthquakes in Venezuela and Colombia and the 2024 floods in Brazil.[14]

Despite these contributions, the region remains disproportionately underrepresented at the highest levels of UN decision-making. It has no permanent member of the Security Council, hosts none of the UN system's major global specialized agencies, funds, or programmes, and remains underrepresented in senior decision-making positions.[15] The gap between the region's political, economic, and environmental weight and its influence within the UN remains a defining feature of its relationship with the Organization.

2. Latin America and the Caribbean Policy Priorities

The Bogotá convening highlighted a combination of regional assets, strategic relevance, and contemporary pressures that could inform the next phase of UN leadership on engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean and the region's role in global governance. Diplomatic and normative assets remain an important source of regional influence, from Colombia's negotiated peace process to leadership on gender equality, human rights, and nuclear non-proliferation. These traditions continue to matter in a more fragmented international environment, particularly for a region composed largely of small and middle powers that rely heavily on rules, institutions, and coalition-building to amplify their voice.

The region's biodiversity, forests, freshwater, agricultural production and food security, renewable-energy potential, and critical minerals also place it near the centre of global debates on sustainable development, climate, nature, and the energy transition. Participants cautioned against viewing Latin America and the Caribbean primarily as a repository of resources for global extraction. Instead, they argued, these transitions should generate greater value within the region, respect Indigenous Peoples and local communities, minimize climate and environmental externalities, contribute to inclusive sustainable development, and reflect national priorities and regional knowledge.

These assets coexist with persistent development, governance, and security pressures. Inequality, sovereign debt, fiscal constraints, climate vulnerability, and uneven access to global finance limit governments' room for manoeuvre, while organized crime and illicit economies contribute to high levels of violence. Caribbean countries face several of these pressures with particular intensity, including climate exposure, debt and fiscal constraints that income-based classifications often fail to capture, and severe levels of violence.[16] Participants also emphasized the importance of CARICOM, the UN, and international law to the diplomacy of small States.

Together, these realities point to priorities in peace and security, sustainable development and development finance, human rights and civic space, climate, nature, and energy, and emerging areas such as artificial intelligence.

3. What Should the Next Secretary-General Do? Policy Recommendations from Latin America and the Caribbean

The recommendations are organized into two parts. The first two are cross-cutting priorities that emerged clearly from the Bogotá discussions: rebuilding trust through stronger engagement, leadership, and delivery, and using the Secretary-General's convening power and flexible coalitions to advance cooperation in a fragmented international environment.

The remaining recommendations build on insights from the Bogotá convening and translate these approaches into proposals across peace and security, sustainable development and development finance, international law, human rights and civic space, climate, nature, and energy, and artificial intelligence as an emerging governance challenge.

Recommendation 1. Rebuild Trust through Stronger Engagement, Representative Leadership, Tangible Delivery, and Strategic Communication

Institutional weaknesses, geopolitical tensions, and the UN's growing distance from the societies it serves are putting pressure on its legitimacy. In parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, criticism of the UN and the 2030 Agenda has also become more politically salient, ranging from sovereignty-based opposition to broader critiques of the development model and multilateral effectiveness. The next Secretary-General should make public engagement and strategic communication part of political leadership, while demonstrating more clearly where the UN adds distinctive value through convening, norm-setting, technical expertise, coordination, and support.

Priority Actions

- **Engage politically and listen.** Maintain close relations with permanent missions and institutionalize periodic exchanges with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) and CARICOM, while engaging more regularly with capitals and regional and subregional institutions. Use regional forums such as CELAC Summits, the Summit of the Americas, OAS General Assemblies, and the International Economic Forum of Latin America and the Caribbean as opportunities for political engagement and listening, and ensure regional visits include structured engagement with national, local, and civil society perspectives.

- **Strengthen country-level presence and communication.** Building on the UN80 Regional Reset, strengthen links between national and regional priorities and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, while focusing country-level support where the UN adds clear value. Where functions can be performed more effectively closer to the countries they serve, consider relocating relevant capacities and transferring appropriate tasks from headquarters to regional hubs. Through the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the Resident Coordinator system, convene relevant UN entities and partners, mobilize expertise, support governments during crises, and communicate concrete examples of multilateral delivery. Strengthen OHCHR's regional offices and country presence. Deepen engagement with initiatives connecting younger generations to multilateralism, including Model UN programmes and other youth networks.
- **Build trust through inclusive and representative UN leadership.** Use senior appointments as a strategic opportunity to bring in the perspectives, experience, and expertise needed to address emerging challenges and Member States' priorities, while ensuring meaningful geographic representation and gender parity, including greater opportunities for leadership from Latin America and the Caribbean. A leadership that reflects the diversity of the UN's membership and draws on expertise from different regions can strengthen institutional legitimacy, responsiveness, and trust in the Organization.

Recommendation 2. Use Convening Power and Flexible Coalitions to Advance Cooperation where Consensus is Out of Reach

The Secretary-General's convening power can be especially valuable where political fragmentation makes cooperation difficult, but it should be used selectively. In some cases, issue-based cooperation may advance more effectively through groups of countries, regional organizations, or other platforms. The next Secretary-General should focus UN involvement where it can add political weight, bridge regions, or connect fragmented initiatives.

Priority Actions

- **Choose the right platform for each issue.** Work through the institutions, coalitions, or informal formats best suited to the political context, including CELAC, CARICOM, ACTO, the OAS, and regional development banks such as the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), where appropriate. Platform choice should reflect where participation, legitimacy, and political traction are strongest.
- **Build coalitions across regions and levels.** Use the Executive Office to connect compatible initiatives, bring together actors that do not usually work through the same forums, and broaden coalitions beyond Latin America and the Caribbean. Distinguish between issues that can advance through informal political engagement, good offices, and coalition-building and those that ultimately require formal agreement among Member States.

Recommendation 3. Strengthen Prevention, Good Offices, and Mediation across Different Security Contexts

The next Secretary-General should strengthen the UN's prevention, good offices, and mediation capacities while adapting them to different security contexts. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this should include support for nationally owned and regional approaches to violence and crime reduction, including organized and transnational crime. These approaches should be grounded in human rights, democratic institutions, and the rule of law, as well as in evidence-based policies focused on prevention and intelligence rather than militarized or emergency-led responses. Nationally led efforts should also operate within internationally agreed human rights standards, with safeguards against the misuse of security, anti-crime, and anti-fraud measures to restrict civic space, political participation, or fundamental freedoms. The UN should also draw on the region's long-standing experience and diplomatic traditions in peaceful dispute settlement, mediation, and negotiated political transitions, leveraging the region's expertise to support conflict prevention and resolution efforts in other regions.

Priority Actions

- **Renew the UN's prevention and mediation agenda.** Build on the UN's long-standing use of preventive diplomacy and strengthen prevention across different forms of violence and insecurity. Connect early diplomatic action with sustained attention to the political, social, and economic drivers of violence, cross-border risks, reliable data and analysis. Recognize human rights violations and the erosion of democratic institutions and the rule of law as critical early warning indicators, and make greater use of regional and Global South expertise for efforts inside and outside the region.
- **Support nationally owned crime prevention and violence reduction strategies.** Through Resident Coordinators, UN country teams, OHCHR, and other agencies, and in collaboration with relevant partners, strengthen the rule of law, social and economic policy, human rights, and community-based approaches, with particular attention to at-risk populations. UN support should reinforce civilian institutions, due process, accountability, and safeguards against the misuse of security measures against civil society, journalists, human rights defenders, or political actors.
- **Strengthen international cooperation against transnational organized and environmental crime.** Use the Secretary-General's convening power and the technical capacities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant UN entities to strengthen cross-border information-sharing, financial investigations, and anti-money-laundering cooperation, improve traceability in sectors exposed to environmental crime, and support stronger coordination among national and regional authorities, while protecting affected communities and environmental and human rights defenders.

Recommendation 4. Use the Post-2030 Agenda to Address Inequality, Debt, and Multidimensional Vulnerability

Building on the UN's Beyond GDP agenda, the next Secretary-General should use the post-2030 process to promote a sustainable development framework that better reflects multidimensional vulnerability while preserving commitments and accelerating progress on those that remain unfinished under the 2030 Agenda.

Priority Actions

- **Shape a focused post-2030 framework.** Take stock of what has worked, accelerate progress where implementation is off track, preserve agreed commitments, and add only a limited number of new priorities where there is broad agreement and a clear gap. Draw systematically on ECLAC and other regional institutions — for instance, on the region's experience with inequality and social protection — and ensure meaningful regional and subregional input.
- **Move beyond income-based measures and address financing constraints.** Advance the Beyond GDP agenda by better reflecting inequality, vulnerability, and resilience alongside income classifications, particularly for SIDS and middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Keep sovereign debt, fiscal space, and access to development and climate finance central to the next framework, while ensuring that financing arrangements do not unduly constrain governments' ability to invest in climate resilience, mitigation, and economic transformation.
- **Reposition development and development cooperation for a post-aid and climate-constrained world.** In Latin America and the Caribbean, strengthen the UN development system's role in convening knowledge, partnerships, and finance around nationally defined priorities. Expand the UN's role in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation across the region, particularly through policy dialogues and technical cooperation. Build on Caribbean experience to advance an adaptation economy that links resilience with investment, jobs, innovation, and more climate-resilient infrastructure and productive systems, alongside wider economic transformation through low-carbon agriculture, ecosystem restoration, green industrialization, and greater value creation around critical minerals.

Recommendation 5. Protect and Expand Civic Space through Stronger UN Leadership and Civil Society Engagement

Shrinking civic space weakens human rights, democratic accountability, and societies' ability to contribute to development, climate action, and conflict prevention. In Latin America and the Caribbean, these pressures increasingly intersect with democratic backsliding, multidimensional violence and insecurity, and more militarized responses to crime, while Indigenous Peoples, human rights and environmental defenders, journalists, and other groups often face particular risks and criminalization. Protecting civic space is therefore inseparable from upholding international law, strengthening the rule of law, and safeguarding the independence and effectiveness of democratic institutions. The UN already has a range of engagement mechanisms, guidelines, and partnership frameworks, but these are not always used consistently to sustain relationships with civil society and other stakeholders or to protect those facing threats or reprisals for engaging with international human rights mechanisms. The next Secretary-General should make the protection and expansion of civic space a more visible part of UN leadership and ensure that institutional reform does not weaken existing human rights safeguards or channels for participation.

Priority Actions

- **Strengthen monitoring, early warning, and preventive action.** Use the OHCHR, Resident Coordinators, and country teams to identify restrictions on civic space and democratic participation earlier, including where security or anti-crime measures undermine rights, due process, or peaceful political participation. Treat attacks on judicial independence, the erosion of democratic checks and balances, and systematic threats against human rights defenders as early warning indicators requiring coordinated preventive action and sustained diplomatic engagement.
- **Institutionalize civil society access to UN leadership.** Create more systematic channels for diverse, critical, and underrepresented actors, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to engage with senior UN leadership, supported by a senior civil society champion or focal point responsible for sustained engagement across the system.[17] Ensure effective measures to prevent, address, and respond to intimidation and reprisals against individuals and organizations engaging with the UN, including through timely protection measures, institutional follow-up, and accountability.
- **Protect civic space across the UN agenda.** Assess the human rights and civic space implications of major UN reforms and integrate meaningful participation into sustainable development, peace and security, climate, and digital governance work, including emerging debates on AI and democracy. Ensure that UN engagement with States consistently reinforces international human rights obligations, the rule of law, and the independence of institutions essential to human rights protection.

Recommendation 6. **Advance Integrated Leadership across Climate, Nature, and the Energy Transition**

Climate, nature, and energy are often governed through separate institutions and policy processes, even though they are deeply interconnected in practice. This fragmentation is particularly consequential for Latin America and the Caribbean, given the region's forests and biodiversity, renewable-energy potential, critical minerals, and high exposure to climate impacts, especially in Caribbean SIDS. The next Secretary-General should use the political authority of the office to move these agendas from fragmented governance towards delivery, advancing just transitions that connect climate and nature objectives with energy access and security, livelihoods, economic opportunity, and national development priorities.

Priority Actions

- **Strengthen political leadership for just transitions across climate, nature, and energy.** Build on the existing Climate Action Team by strengthening capacity in biodiversity, forests, and other nature-related issues, enabling the Executive Office to connect climate, nature, and energy more systematically to development, livelihoods, and economic opportunity.
- **Use convening power to accelerate implementation and clarify the UN's role.** Maintain political attention on a small number of concrete priorities, including aligning climate and biodiversity commitments, halting and reversing deforestation, supporting efforts to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, and expanding affordable climate and development finance. For Latin America and the Caribbean, this should include linking forest and biodiversity protection with development and livelihoods, while responding to the particular financing and resilience needs of Caribbean countries. In parallel, open a focused discussion with Member States on where stronger international cooperation on energy access, affordability, security, and transition is needed, starting with functions rather than new institutional models.
- **Improve coherence from UN reform to country-level delivery.** Use UN80 to address fragmentation, duplication, and reporting burdens, and strengthen country-level coordination so that UN support better connects national climate, biodiversity, forest, land, energy, and development priorities without creating additional planning requirements.

Recommendation 7. Exercise Early Leadership on Inclusive Global AI Governance

AI governance remains relatively open compared with more established areas of global governance. The current Secretary-General has already helped build an emerging UN architecture, including the Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, and related advisory work. Latin American and Caribbean countries have also begun developing regional approaches, including the 2024 Cartagena de Indias Declaration and a 2026 UNESCO-supported regional roadmap. The next Secretary-General should consolidate these efforts rather than create additional structures, while ensuring that developing countries can shape emerging rules and that development, inequality, sovereignty, and public-interest concerns remain central.

Priority Actions

- **Strengthen the UN's role as a global platform for AI governance.** Use the Secretary-General's convening power to connect emerging UN mechanisms with national and regional approaches and advance cooperation around shared principles and standards. Regional priorities, including concerns regarding disinformation, electoral integrity, democratic resilience, and responsible AI, should inform these global discussions.
- **Ensure meaningful participation by developing countries.** Strengthen technical and institutional capacity so that countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and other developing regions can shape emerging rules rather than simply adapt to them, including through regional and cross-regional cooperation and improved access to computing resources, trusted public data, and evaluation capacity.
- **Expand attention to military AI and other high-risk applications.** Build on existing UN discussions on AI in the military domain and work with Member States, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relevant international bodies to advance clearer rules on human control, accountability, legal review and the protection of civilians. Particular attention should be given to autonomous weapon systems, AI-enabled military decision-support systems and other applications that could accelerate conflict or weaken human judgment over the use of force.

Conclusion

Latin America and the Caribbean does not need a single political position to exercise greater influence within the United Nations. Its diversity can coexist with stronger cooperation around shared interests and a more active role in shaping global rules.

For the next Secretary-General, the central task is to show where the UN can still add distinctive value: rebuilding trust through stronger engagement and delivery, using convening power selectively, and connecting actors, institutions, and initiatives where fragmentation limits cooperation. The possibility that the next Secretary-General may come from the region gives this transition particular significance, but the case for deeper engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean does not depend on the nationality of the eventual appointee.

A UN that delivers for and with the region will also depend on governments using their political and diplomatic capital more effectively, individually and collectively, to shape a future of multilateral cooperation more deeply grounded in national and regional agency. This will require a UN that can respond politically and structurally to national and regional priorities, as well as greater prioritization of global issues by national leaders and their publics.

Annex: Latin America and the Caribbean Convening Participants, Bogotá, 7-8 September 2026

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- Francisco Sagasti (Former President of Peru)
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Endnotes

1 Cepei (n.d.). Cepei.

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6 Salazar Albornoz, M., and Torremare, G. (2026). "It Is Time for a Woman: The Legal Contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to the United Nations Organization"

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8 Pérez Solla, M.F. (2026). "Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances". *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, Oxford Public International Law. The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, established in 1980, emerged in response to international concern over enforced disappearances under authoritarian rule in Latin America and became the first UN human rights thematic mechanism with a universal mandate.

9 For example, Uruguay has a long-standing record of participation in UN peacekeeping, including its deployment of more than 900 peacekeepers to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in 2018, while Brazil commanded the military component of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from 2004 to 2017. See *UN News* (2018). Uruguay: Helping the UN to Keep the Peace Around the Globe for Nearly 70 Years; United Nations in Brazil (2017). Brasil encerra atividade militar no Haiti nesta quinta-feira (31)

10 United Nations General Assembly (2010). Sixty-fifth Session, 65th Plenary Meeting, A/65/PV.65. Speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), Venezuela recalled that 14 Caribbean States that had been Non-Self-Governing Territories achieved independence in the 1960s and 1970s, and that Latin American republics had supported self-determination and decolonization in the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific through the United Nations.

11 United Nations (1973). Resolution on Colonialism and Apartheid Adopted at the Eighth Conference of Heads of Government of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, A/9060. Commonwealth Caribbean governments reaffirmed their opposition to colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination and committed to diplomatic and political action in support of liberation movements and self-determination in southern Africa.

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15 Chai, J. (2024). Exploring Member State Dominance over UN Senior Appointments. NYU Center on International Cooperation. The analysis identified 30 Under-Secretary-General (USG) and Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) posts that had been repeatedly held by nationals of the same Member State; 21 were associated with Western European and Other States, compared with only one from Latin America and the Caribbean; Blue Smoke (2023). Ringfencing and the General Assembly. The imbalance is also reflected in senior appointments: between 2016 and 2022, US nationals received 37 senior UN appointments, compared with 34 for nationals from all Latin American and Caribbean countries combined.

16 See Bardouille, N. C. (2024). What United Nations Reform Means for the Caribbean Community. Stimson Center; Cepei (2026). Policy Update at UNGA 81: What Are We Hearing & How Southern Actors Are Shaping the Multilateral Agenda

17 Together First (2020). The Case for a UN Civil Society Champion; UNmute Civil Society Initiative (2021). Recommendations to Ensure Meaningful Civil Society Participation at the United Nations: From Ambition to Action

Institutional Information

About this Policy Brief

This policy brief was authored by Giovanna Kuele of the Igarapé Institute, with inputs from Aline Lara, Laura Trajber Waisbich, Robert Muggah, Philipp Schönrock, María Noel Leoni, and Natalie Samarasinghe. The Igarapé Institute served as the regional penholder for the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Convening, and the brief was peer reviewed by Public Interest. The brief builds on discussions held under the Chatham House Rule and reflects the author's synthesis of the perspectives, tensions, and proposals raised during the meeting. The analysis and recommendations do not represent a negotiated regional position and do not necessarily reflect the individual views of all participants or partner organizations.

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Cepei is an independent, non-governmental think tank based in Bogotá, Colombia, working from the Global South to advance sustainable development. Through research, data and evidence-based analysis, it supports informed decision-making and strengthens the capacity of institutions and stakeholders to implement and monitor global development agendas.

GQUAL

GQUAL is a global campaign working to transform international leadership by making gender parity a permanent standard across institutions that shape international law, human rights, justice, and responses to global challenges. Through data-driven advocacy, coalition-building, and strategic engagement, GQUAL works to reform selection processes, advance transparency and accountability, and expand opportunities for women in all their diversity to exercise international leadership. GQUAL champions women's equal voice and power in global decision-making as a matter of rights and justice, and as essential to more representative, legitimate, and effective international institutions.

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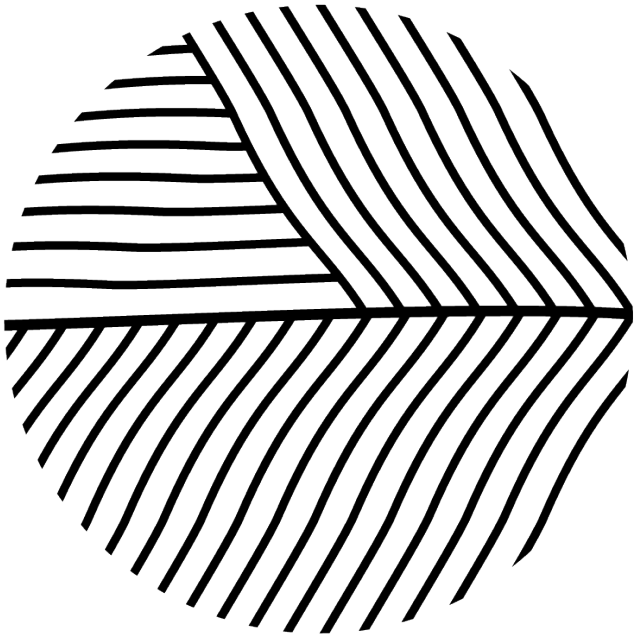
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