

Women, Business and the Law

Latin America and the Caribbean's strengths lie in the areas of using property, with an average score of 98. The region also performs well in the area of accessing institutions, with an average score of 97. However, close to 40 percent of the 32 economies covered score 0 in building credit. Mexico is the best performing economy in the region across most indicators of *Women, Business and the Law*.

Over the past two years, the following reforms which had an impact on the economies' scores have occurred:

Bolivia enhanced access to credit information by starting to report data from utility companies.

Colombia increased paid maternity leave from 98 to 126 days. Colombia also removed restrictions on women's employment in mining and jobs deemed hazardous and arduous.

The Dominican Republic increased the length of paid maternity leave from 84 to 98 days.

Ecuador equalized men's and women's property rights by repealing the provision favoring husbands' decisions in cases of disagreement between spouses when administering assets during marriage.

El Salvador increased the length of paid maternity leave from 84 to 112 days.

Guyana improved access to credit information by expanding the credit bureau's coverage to more than 5% of the population. The bureau reports data from utility companies and retailers.

Panama introduced 3 days of paid paternity leave.

Paraguay increased the length of paid maternity leave from 63 to 98 days and the percentage of wages received during maternity leave from 50% to 75%. Paraguay also increased the length of paid paternity leave from 2 to 10 days.

Peru increased the length of paid maternity leave from 90 to 98 days.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines increased the percentage of wages received during maternity leave from 75% to 87%.

However, some economies also made changes that had a negative impact on their score:

In **Ecuador**, a new code of civil procedure eliminated small claims procedures, increasing legal formalities for claims of a smaller value.

In **St. Vincent and the Grenadines**, as employers pay for maternity leave, the cost of hiring women of childbearing age has increased from the employer's perspective now that the percentage of wages received during maternity leave is higher.

Women, Business and the Law measures how laws, regulations and institutions differentiate between women and men in ways that may affect women's incentives or capacity to work or to set up and operate a business. It analyzes legal differences on the basis of gender in 189 economies, covering seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, building credit, going to court and protecting women from violence. The report is published every two years.

The full report and accompanying datasets are available at wbl.worldbank.org.

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