



## Milestones

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### Gender Equality, Indigenous Rights and Human Rights in Ecuador

The new Constitution of Ecuador, approved in 2008, is far-reaching in its recognition of both gender equality and indigenous rights. It prohibits gender discrimination and includes provisions for equal employment and property rights, sexual and reproductive rights, shared responsibility in the family and social security for home-makers. Articles 57 and 58 recognize and guarantee indigenous peoples' rights, enfranchising thousands of people living in the country's poorest regions. Most importantly for indigenous women, article 171 guarantees women's participation and decision-making in indigenous governance and justice systems. The process to re-formulate the Constitution that began in 2007, saw active participation from women's groups who called for the State to guarantee collective and indigenous cultural rights, including economic and land rights, the elimination of ethnic and gender-based discrimination, and respect for and protection of ancestral languages. Through this process, indigenous women, who face triple discrimination

on the basis of gender, ethnicity and poverty, have mobilized to ensure that their rights are protected at both national and local levels.

In 2010, taking this further forward in terms of their national planning, the government of Ecuador requested assistance from the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in integrating human rights principles and approaches into development planning. The collaboration between the Government of Ecuador and OHCHR resulted in the publication of a guide for the formulation of sectoral policies. This guide is the first in the series of efforts to ensure that human rights will contribute to the vision of *Buen Vivir*, or good living. The vision of *Buen Vivir* enshrined in the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution, is based on the principle that there is no real development without the full enjoyment of human rights by all. The Constitution further calls upon the State to design and implement public policies that ensure the full enjoyment by all of all the rights set forth in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ■