

UPF Latin American Webinar: Women Leaders Build Healthy Societies

Mario Salinas

March 16, 2026

Secretary General, UPF-Latin America

DIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA MUJER
Mujer, liderazgo y gestión:
Construyendo familias fuertes
y sociedades saludables

AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE
FEDERACION PARA LA PAZ UNIVERSAL

Viernes 16 de marzo, 2026
14:00 a 17:00 horas
Presencia Pres. 10:00 Colombia

Portrait	Name	Country/Region	Role
	MARIO SALINAS	SECRETARIO GENERAL	FEDERACION PARA LA PAZ UNIVERSAL - AMERICA LATINA
	ELIECER ARAYA	PRESIDENTE	FEDERACION PARA LA PAZ UNIVERSAL - AMERICA LATINA
	ADRIANA RAMALHO	GRADUADA EN DERECHO, CON ESPECIALIZACION EN DERECHO SINDICAL. EN 2016, FUE ELEGIDA CONCEJALA DE LA CIUDAD DE SÃO PAULO.	
	OLIVIA GRANDA CORTES	DIRECTORA EJECUTIVA FUNDACION MUJERES PODEROSAS. ADMINISTRADORA DE EMPRESAS ESPECIALISTAS EN ALTA GERENCIA.	COLOMBIA
	ANGELA SOSA VEROY	ABOGADA, ESPECIALISTA EN SERVICIOS ECONOMICOS SOCIALES Y CULTURALES. MASTER EN EDUCACION EN DERECHOS HUMANOS.	HONDURAS
	DRA. SORAYA AQUINO	POLITICA Y ASISTENTE EMBAJADORA DE LA PAZ MUNDIAL (UPF) Y PRIMERA MUJER CANDIDATA PRESIDENCIAL DE LA REPUBLICA DOMINICANA.	REP. DOMINICANA
	MARIA TORREZ	LICDA. EN RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES. ESPECIALISTA EN DEFENSA HUMANA Y DERECHOS HUMANOS.	PANAMA

La UPF apoya la labor de las Naciones Unidas, en particular en los ámbitos de la consolidación de la paz interreligiosa, la educación para la paz y el fortalecimiento del matrimonio y la familia.

South and Central America – A panel of leaders from South and Central America and the Caribbean region met in a webinar on March 16, 2026, to discuss the theme: "Women, Leadership, and Management: Building Strong Families and Healthy Societies." The event was organized and sponsored by UPF and several of its affiliated associations.

Mr. Mario Salinas, secretary general for UPF-Latin America and regional coordinator for the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), moderated the event. In his welcoming remarks, he noted that the first Woman's Day was held in New York City on February 28, 1909.

International Women's Day, on March 8, commemorates women's social, economic, political and cultural achievements, and draws attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Eliecer Araya**, chair of UPF-South and Central America and the Caribbean, said, "Women's leadership is essential to building strong families and healthy societies. When a woman leads, she not only manages and makes decisions but also drives change processes that strengthen family cohesion, promote values of respect and solidarity, and create more resilient communities. Her ability to balance vision, sensitivity, and firmness makes her contribution an indispensable engine for social

development and peace."

The first panelist was **Dr. Adriana Ramalho** from Brazil, a law graduate specializing in labor law and a former city councilor of São Paulo.

"The first physical gesture of God's love comes through our mother at the moment of birth, when she embraces us, when she looks into our eyes, when she thanks us for our breath of life, and when she says, 'I love you.' Therefore, it is important to help all women understand themselves through God's eyes," she said.

"Women continue to be a minority in political participation, and our voices often remain marginalized. But I believe this will begin to change with more spaces like this UPF online seminar raising awareness and fostering positive attitudes toward all women worldwide." She added, "I want to especially highlight the men who have put their heart and support into making this event possible, with so many courageous women."

The next speaker was the founder of the PoderRosa (power and rose) Women's Foundation, **Dr. Olivia Granda Cortes**, from Colombia. She had just returned from New York, where she was one of 20 women delegates from Latin America to participate in the United Nations' 70th annual meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70).

"We know that women's participation in organizations is growing more and more each day because we are entering an era where women are already considered a power," she said. "That power comes from our holistic development, which begins when we cultivate a deep spiritual and emotional connection – that bond with the powerful being that God has placed within each of us. But above all, it is strengthened when we embrace our sacred feminine identity based on the values that are built and passed down within the family."

Dr. Angela Sosa Veroy, from Honduras, is a lawyer specializing in economic, social and cultural rights. She has a masters' degree in human rights education. She said, "Healthy societies are not built solely through laws or public policies. They are built when communities recognize the value of women's contributions in all areas: in the family, in the economy, in politics, in education, and in peacebuilding ... I have observed that when women are empowered through knowledge, entire communities are transformed. An informed, educated woman who is committed to her community has the power to positively influence entire generations."

Dr. Soraya Aquino was the first female presidential candidate in the Dominican Republic. She said, "Women bring to leadership an extraordinary combination of vision, social awareness, management skills, and commitment to the collective good. These qualities are essential for building more balanced and sustainable societies. But when we talk about women's leadership, we're not just talking about occupying positions of power. We're talking about purposeful leadership, leadership that transforms, inspires, and places human dignity at the heart of decision-making."

The forum concluded with a presentation by **Ms. Maria Teresa Torrez**, a specialist in human rights jurisprudence and researcher at the International Center for Political and Social Studies in Panama. "Talking about female leadership and healthy societies means talking about social justice and the lack of protection for the most vulnerable populations," she pointed out. "From my experience working with diverse groups, I have observed how equality, and therefore the leadership that women develop, not only transforms communities but also has the opportunity to redefine the possibilities of the future, not only for girls and women but for all of society."