

Beyond2015



Preliminary Synthesis Report of National Consultations in Latin America and the Caribbean

April 2013



Photo: CONGCOOP - Guatemala

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Preface

Beyond 2015 is a global civil society campaign, pushing for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign is built on a diverse, global base. It ranges from small community organizations to international NGOs, academics, and trade unions. A founding principle of the campaign is that it is a partnership between civil society organizations from the “North” and the “South” – bringing together groups from developing, emerging, and developed economics. The campaign currently brings together more than 620 organizations from around the world.

From September 2012 to October 2013, Beyond 2015 and GCAP¹ (in collaboration with the International Forum of National NGO Platforms, IFP) will develop a global civil society position on the post-2015 framework via a series of national civil society deliberations.

Small groups are being organized at the national level in order to convene these deliberations, supported by a regional coordination on each continent. Beyond 2015 and GCAP have established National Groups in 30 countries selected based on specific criteria; nine of which are from Latin America and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Uruguay.

The Regional Coordination of Beyond 2015 in Latin America and the Caribbean is located in the Chilean Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, ACCION, as Secretary of MESA, Articulation of National Associations and Regional NGO Networks in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This report has been prepared by the Regional Coordination of Beyond 2015 for Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the preliminary and partial reports received to date from the following national hubs of Beyond 2015 in the region:

- National Union of Institutions for Social Action Work², UNITAS, Bolivia
- Colombian Confederation of NGOs, CCONG, Colombia
- CONGCOOP³, Guatemala
- Convergence Network of Civil Organizations and Democratic Alliance of Civil Organizations⁴ ADOC, Mexico
- Sinergia, Venezuela

¹ Global Call Against Poverty.

² Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social

³ Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas or Coordinator of NGOs and Co-ops

⁴ Red Convergencia de Organismos Civiles y Alianza Democrática de Organizaciones Civiles

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These consultations, which show varying degrees of progress and, in some cases, include thematic, sub-national, and sectorial consultations, took place between January and March 2013. **All of the reports taken into account to develop this synthesis are of partial and preliminary character.**

Some of the consultations, like in the case of Colombia, were carried out in conjunction with the UNDP and the national government, others, in conjunction only with the national government, and others only amongst civil society organizations themselves. In the case of Bolivia, for example, we reported on a dialogue on post-2015 with a CSO platform, convened by UNITAS. In Mexico, as such, it was on the sustained dialogue with a focus group of ten CSO experts in ESCR. Guatemala conducted interviews with key actors and a deliberation with farmer's organizations. From Venezuela, we received the results of an online questionnaire administered to 30 civil society organizations. The results recorded here represent the combined opinion of about one hundred civil society organizations in five countries.

It should be noted that the final reports from these countries are still pending, as well as the reports from national consultations, in Brazil, Peru, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay, which are being completed as this report is being written. These will be organized under the leadership of the following organizations:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Brazil | Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, ABONG |
| Peru | National Association of Research, Social Promotion, and Development Centers, ANC |
| Dominican Republic | Research Center for Women's Action, CIPAF/GCAP-RD |
| Uruguay | National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations Aimed at Development, ANONG |

The final consultations will take place on the following dates (in chronological order):

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mexico | April 11 and 12 |
| Guatemala | April 5, 12, and 19 |
| Dominican Republic | April 13 and 24 |
| Bolivia | April 24 and 25 |
| Brazil | TBD |
| Uruguay | TBD |
| Colombia | April 24 |
| Venezuela | April 24 |
| Peru | Completed; report in progress |

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1. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Greater economic growth and greater inequality. During the last years, Latin America and the Caribbean have shown figures of sustained economic growth, which are notable within the framework of the global economic and financial crisis, while developed countries show stagnation and even considerable decline in their economic growth. Together with the application of some social policies fundamentally based and focused on direct monetary transfers, this has permitted governments of the region to demonstrate success in reducing poverty.

“In the year 2011, Latin America’s GDP grew 4.3%, which accounted for a 3.2% increase per capita. Although of a lower magnitude per capita than in 2012 (which was 4.9%), this result strengthens regional recovery after the decline recorded in 2009 (3.0%)”... “In 2012, Latin America and the Caribbean have continued to grow and are projected to reach an average annual rate of 3.2%, 1.1 percentage points less than 2011.” (Social Panorama of Latin America, CEPAL, 2012).

However, economic growth has not hindered the growing levels of inequality from manifesting in the region, which has been considered one of the most inequitable in the world since the 1970s; rather it has enabled the inequality to manifest. This theme continues to be one of the main challenges in the region. According to the cited CEPAL report, the latest available statistics for the 18 countries indicate that on average, the wealthiest 10% of the Latin American population receives 32% of total income, while the poorest 40% only receives 15%.

As follows, despite the advancements achieved by Latin America and the Caribbean in the last 10 years, 124 million people live in poverty in cities, over half in Brazil (37 million) and Mexico (25 million). More than one fourth of the urban population, 111 million people, lives in shacks or slums, a higher rate than 20 years ago, according to the UN.⁵

Democracy and participation. On the other hand, the region reflects great weakness in the scope of democratic institutionality. In order to overcome this deficiency, it is projected that processes of reinforcing and radicalizing democracy are needed, where the advancement of democratic participation is central, particularly in marginalized groups of society. Additionally, it is suggested that the States make extensive reforms in order to increase their legitimacy and citizens’ trust by means of greater control and transparency in public management, the processes of decentralization and regionalization, the development of participation mechanisms, and the strengthening of civil society networks.

⁵ UN-Habitat report cited y the France Presse Agency in elnuevoherald.com August 22, 2012.

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This context is the prism through which we should view the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at the regional level, or lack thereof, as well as the formation of a new development framework for the post-2015 period.



Photo: CONGCOOP, Guatemala, 2013

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2. Vision

“We have to rethink the concept of development, the concept of poverty. That takes place by identifying its causes, how to measure it, and how to eradicate it”... “It is important to shape our own analyses, reflections, and to propose appropriate ways to measure poverty.”

(Dialogue between Bolivian civil society organizations regarding the post-2015 Agenda, UNITAS-CAFOD)

“...the need to push economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights⁶ was emphasized – emphatically – in the deliberations, both in CSO and in the official consultation and dialogue processes in order to – from that viewpoint – question the framework, agenda, and current development model, which is not only limited and superficial, but also includes the occasional measure that is contradictory, regressive, or even violates human rights while implementing measures in order to achieve the MDGs, means that do not correspond to their ends, amongst others. As long as the economic model, predatory of the environment and exploitative of the pueblos, remains untouchable, generating gains for transnational power...”

(First report from the Mexican consultation in the Beyond 2015 framework – Dialogue with Espacio DESC⁷ on the post-2015 development framework and the consultation process, Convergence of Civil Organizations – Democratic Alliance of Civil Organizations⁸, Mexico)

In the first place, we should establish that amongst Latin American civil society organizations there exists a critical eye on the process of the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs, in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the national level, information on these goals was insufficient or limited in its reach; civil society participation in their implementation and evaluation was practically non-existent.

Many viewed the process of MDGs’ as “an agenda imposed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, without further consultation, while leaving aside the commitments of greatest reach that were agreed upon at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995” (First report from the Mexican consultation on the Beyond 2015 framework). Additionally, it was thought that the MDGs should form a “foundation” and not a “ceiling” for development.

⁶ DESCA

⁷ DESC Space

⁸ Convergencia de Organismos Civiles-Alianza Democrática de Organizaciones Civiles

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Generally, in our region, a true approval of this process was neither granted from the states nor from civil society since discussions on development travelled through other channels. It was not about guaranteeing universal social minimums. During the last decade, the concerns of social movements and Latin American civil society were related to the problems that lead to extreme economic liberalization and the impositions from international financial institutions, such as the reduction of basic services provided by the state (health, education, social assistance, etc.) or their privatization or outsourcing; the weakness of democratic institutions, which translates into a general public mistrust and a lack of social participation; the pillaging of natural resources by transnational companies, amongst others.

“The MDGs are a UN mechanism with good spirit, with indicators to improve and accomplish action and progress against poverty; but there are fundamental problems with the MDGs: some of them concern who created them, from what perspective. The problems are identified, but not the causes, not those responsible for these problems.”... “In general, the system of structural inequality is neither debated nor proposed.”

(Report from the 2nd Dialogue on the Post-2015 Agenda, February 19, 2013, UNITAS)

The same occurs with the process of tracking and monitoring the MDGs, which is considered inadequate and insufficient.

“The new development goals should include elements of tracking, accompaniment, and monitoring.”

(Regional Dialogues for the Construction of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Colombia)

Despite all of this, some deliberations expressed interest in maintaining the MDGs as goals in the new post-2015 development agenda:

“The discussion of the Millennium Development Goals agenda in the case of Guatemala, with the Civil Society Organizations that have attended the deliberation workshops, has allowed us to identify the fact that it is necessary to maintain some of the Goals in the Beyond 2015 Agenda. Such is the case with issues related to education, health, infant and maternal mortality, women’s empowerment, the spread of diseases, and environmental sustainability.”

(Guatemala: The Millennium Goals and the Beyond 2015 Agenda)

Still, the actual consultation process in establishing the post-2015 development agenda, which in some way amounts to the continuity of the MDGs process, is also viewed with scepticism by the main organizations and networks of Latin American civil society.

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That said, we similarly observe that at a global level, much concurrence exists in the five reports reviewed to date with regard to the vision, although we still cannot speak of a consensus on the objective of the post-2015 framework in Latin America and the Caribbean, which remains a goal to be established.

For example, the participating organizations in Venezuela, report an 80% concurrence with Beyond 2015's vision as communicated in version 2.0 of the document. At the same time, they suggested to include the need to "*provide an empowering legal framework and democratic liberties,*" and the right of all citizens to "*obtain services, education, etc. of excellent or good quality,*" for example.

Some central elements that appear repeatedly in the examined reports are:

Social and environmental justice and equality, which appear as fundamental elements of this vision, as well as the **emphasis on rights** in development.

Addressing the **structural causes of poverty and inequality**, as well as the complete **transformation** of the economic and political model, emerge repeatedly in the deliberations carried out.

The **emphasis on human rights** in development emerges repeatedly throughout all of the completed consultations, including the people's right to **consultation** and **participation** in decisions that affect them.

Due to the lack of appreciation for transparency, there is great mistrust toward state institutions, and as a result, the necessity of **citizen control and accountability** appear as a concern of the civil society organizations on the continent.

In general, the analysed reports emphasize the need to question the framework, agenda, and model of current development.

"With regard to the fundamental concepts for a new post-2015 framework...the importance of the attention to human rights and sustainability was agreed upon, as well as equality/equity. However, regarding the emphasis on democracy/participation, the observation was that it should be redefined since the concept of 'democracy' is questioned or devalued which makes it better to reclaim a position on: 'the right to consultation and participation'."

(First report from the Mexican Consultation in the Beyond 2015 Framework. Dialogue with Espacio DESC on the Post-2015 Development Framework and the Consultation Process)



3. PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“These MDG debates are a pretext for those of us who wait and dream of the possibilities to create something different and I feel that in Bolivia we are at the point of being able to position ourselves to change and take action. However, we should ask ourselves: What are the alternatives to the development model? What can we do?”

(Representative from the Casa de la Mujer⁹ in the 2nd Dialogue on the Post-2015 Agenda, Bolivia)

“In order to attain significant and sustainable changes in the lives of people and communities, and not simply reduce gaps in statistics, it is essential to rethink the current paradigms of social and economic development from the human rights perspective, designed in a holistic manner.”

(First Report from the Mexican Consultation in the Beyond 2015 Framework. Dialogue with Espacio DESC on the Post-2015 Development Framework and the Consultation Process)

A series of priorities and recommendations regarding the main theme are determined from the analysed reports, such as **human rights; legal framework; democracy and social participation; environment**, including climate change and sustainability; **poverty and economic development; health**, including sexual and reproductive health and maternal and infant mortality; **education; gender equality; and aging.**

The deliberations carried out by the CSOs of Bolivia indicated that, although universal healthcare access is guaranteed in their political Constitution, they lack health promotion and prevention efforts; provision of services for emerging diseases, and access to essential medications for maternal and infant health. On the other hand, faced with the intensification of the extractive economic pattern in the country; the environmental impact of mining and hydroelectric megaprojects; deforestation; vulnerability to climate change, and the serious threat to natural reserves with extraordinary biodiversity, they recommended that the agenda include measures to assure **environmental sustainability**. Regarding **gender equality**, it was affirmed that the topic is expressed in 30 articles of the Constitution, yet a specific independent institutionality is lacking and there is a significant absence of women’s political participation. The **protection of indigenous rights** was also indicated as a need in the new development framework. Finally, they recommended the incorporation of new actors and the guarantee of **citizen control, transparency, and accountability.**

⁹ Women’s Home

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The CSO of Brazil decided to conduct a preliminary effort for the national consultation through the distribution of information amongst its networks and associates, considering that they did not possess much knowledge on the topic. Furthermore, they held a preliminary workshop, attended by representatives from civil society organizations and social movements, rights defense students and activists, as well as representatives from the Secretary General to the President and the UN team in Brazil, who shared their participation strategies in the campaign. The **principles and strategies** that should be incorporated by the consultations were discussed at this preliminary activity. They reiterated the need to systematize the **objectives and commitments already undertaken by the Brazilian government** in development issues in order to **guarantee the coherence** of the post-2015 development framework. The importance of **ensuring civil society participation in the monitoring, execution, and evaluation** of post-2015 development goals was also emphasized.

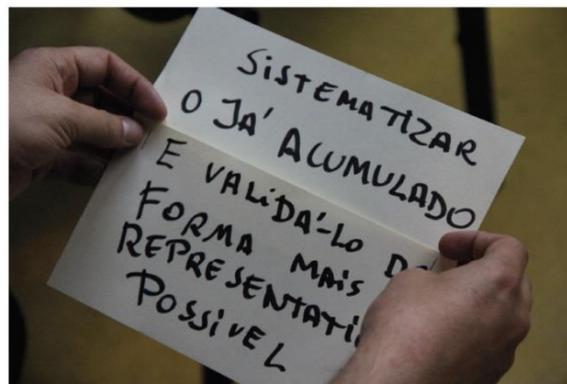


Photo: ABONG, Brasil, 2013.

Meanwhile, in Colombia, the deliberations had a strong focus on the issue of **aging**. Among the main recommendations were the promotion of **inclusion** of all actors in society in the new goals; the incorporation of effective **participation mechanisms** that allow a participatory assembly; the reinforcement of the **right to association** and the promotion of **decentralization** processes.

“We need policies and actions that have the entire life of present and future generations in perspective, from birth to old age. Policies and actions concentrated on human rights, leaving behind welfare measures that perpetuate dependency.”
(Regional Dialogues for the Construction of the Post-2015 Agenda, Colombia)

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“Without a doubt, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, throughout life, brings to mind women who live longer, yet impoverished and in worse conditions or without any quality of life at all. To cite the first MDG, in a manner that when the outlook on and access to education throughout life is expanded, the care for life always and forever, gender equality, the possibility of having sexual and reproductive health throughout life, and not only in the case of spreading or contracting HIV AIDS or malaria...and so on and so forth, what is expanded, in reality, more than an outlook, is the true opportunity for development for people around the world.”

(The World We Want for all people of all ages and conditions Beyond 2015, Thematic Consultation, Colombia)

The deliberations of Guatemala concluded that:

“With the proposed Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals as a starting point, in the case of Guatemala, based on the analysis that inequity and social inequalities have in common a model of concentrated and exclusive development, it is considered pertinent to include in this agenda issues related to integrated rural development and to guarantee development to women and indigenous populations.”

(Guatemala: Millennium Goals and the Beyond 2015 Agenda)

The recommendation of the Guatemalan CSOs include a detailed list of objectives for (i) social development, such as education, health and social goals themselves, which include the decrease in chronic malnutrition and the general decrease of extreme poverty; (ii) economic development, such as employment and fiscal reform; (iii) environmental development, including environmental degradation, natural resource management, biodiversity, potable water and sanitation, and the right to consultation; and (iv) development for women and indigenous peoples.

On the other hand, the group of experts consulted in Mexico concluded that:

“The overview of the situation of inequality and great social gaps in our country brings us to question the effectiveness of the social policy that has been implemented, as well as the limitations of the MDGs’ focus, which, since their establishment, we have considered to be part of a basic “foundation” for social development and not a “ceiling” on top of which there would be no need to build.”

(First Report from the Mexican Consultation in the Beyond 2015 Framework. Dialogue with Espacio DESC on the Post-2015 Development Framework and Consultation Process)

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Regarding the recommendations, the Mexican consultation proposes reconsidering the current paradigms of social and economic development from the human rights perspective, designed in a holistic manner:

*“Both civil and political rights – including not only fundamental liberties but also rights to **access information, consultation, and participation in public affairs** - and economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights – which include the **right to an adequate standard of living** and the **people’s right to self-determination** in order to provide for their economic, social, and cultural development as well as their **right to not be deprived of their means of subsistence** – are essential to achieve truly substantial, balanced, and sustainable development, where the ends are as important as the means.”*

(First Report from the Mexican Consultation in the Beyond 2015 Framework. Dialogue with Espacio DESC on the Post-2015 Development Framework and Consultation Process)

Finally, the online consultation carried out in Venezuela selected six priority goals to achieve its vision. They were: a good education; better work opportunities; protection against crime and violence; an honest and receptive government; political liberties, and protections against discrimination and persecution. From amongst these, they selected the top priorities for civil society: a good **education**; protection against **discrimination and persecution**, and **political liberties**. Amongst their recommendations we find: change the political program and open spaces for negotiation and dialogue; agree on the basic rules of play between authorities and citizens; recuperate the **democratic institutions** and **strengthen civil society**; promote mutual responsibility amongst all actors. Furthermore, they recommend the creation of a national program agreed upon by all sectors; ‘build ourselves based on consensus.’ Additionally, the Venezuelan CSOs demanded **access to public information**, and granting a more active role to civil society in the monitoring of MDGs.

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FINAL NOTE

All of the aforementioned should be complemented and enriched by the conclusions of the final national consultations in the five countries that we reported on, as well as the contributions of the deliberations that will be carried out in another four countries from now until the end of April 2013.

In particular, the final reports of the consultations carried out in Mexico and the Dominican Republic immediately prior to the Regional Consultation in Guadalajara were not able to be included in this preliminary report. These will be included in the Final Regional Synthesis Report.

Translation: Aura Lawson-Alonso