

Conclusions and recommendations of the Latin America and the Caribbean multi-stakeholder meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD)

La Antigua, Guatemala, 7-8 July 2016

The organisations which took part in this multi-stakeholder meeting, including local authorities, trade unions, cooperatives, feminist groups, NGOs and the private sector, acknowledge that the **implementation of Agenda 2030** in Latin America and the Caribbean is an opportunity for the region to achieve development in an equal and sustainable way respecting the human rights of every single person.

However, **a contradiction is evident between the content of Agenda 2030 and the current exploitative, predatory and unsustainable development model in place in the region, as well as the problems regarding the quality of democracy and the lack of respect for human rights in many countries which could threaten the universal and indivisible attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to consolidate various strategies to comprehensively integrate Agenda 2030 into the day-to-day political systems and the processes of development planning both at a national level and in terms of transnational and regional cooperation. To this end, it is essential to work in an enabling environment **which strengthens** the work and active participation of Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. Although the region has seen positive growth rates in recent years, one of the most worrying regional characteristics is **the increase in inequality**, and the impact this is having on present and future generations. Using GDP as the main indicator for measuring the level of development is not enough and conceals inequality in each of these countries and in the region as a whole. [Recommendation] With this in mind, public policies are required which address the structural causes and various expressions of this inequality; fiscal policies which promote better wealth distribution, meaning a multidimensional approach to development in order to enhance the possibility of accessing international cooperation (especially for middle-income countries, which is nearly all of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean).
2. **The serious gender inequality** in the region, demonstrated by the various kinds of violence suffered by women, the different working conditions experienced such as wage inequality, perpetuated gender roles which hinder women's ability to fully exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights and the systematic violation of human rights, is still one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the objectives of Agenda 2030. [Recommendation] It is crucial to highlight the magnitude of this problem in the region and set up instruments which are able to combat this inequality. To do this, resources are needed, which is why the meeting supports the rapid creation of a regional fund to work for gender equality and intercultural dialogue led by the feminist movement in the region and welcomed by the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC.
3. A particularly worrying aspect in the region is the high climatic vulnerability of some of the island countries and parts of others, especially in Central America and the Caribbean, which adds additional challenges to achieving the goals of Agenda 2030. [Recommendation] To do this, it is essential to create **strategies which pay special attention to the levels of climatic vulnerability**, particularly focusing on those populations which are most threatened by these effects.

4. A significant challenge throughout the region is the **need to raise awareness**, both on a governmental and grassroots level, about the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. [Recommendation] To achieve this, it is crucial to support the role of Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations in spreading the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthening the communication of information on the agenda at a community level.
5. There is agreement that the responsibilities for the implementation of Agenda 2030 must be clearly assigned among the various levels of government, taking into account the different responsibilities and advantages at each level. [Recommendation] It is important to **“localise” the Agenda** and design institutional mechanisms of participation, coordination and interaction which harmonise and capitalise on the efforts of all the stakeholders involved at every level. There is a consensus that [Recommendation] **strengthening monitoring and accountability systems** to track the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, both at a local and national level, is key to ensuring that the objectives of the Agenda are reached.
6. One of the biggest obstacles is the **nature and complexity of the Agenda itself** (trans-ministerial and long term) which challenges both the institutional mentality and short-termism which exists in many governmental systems in the region. Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities can provide useful support in their areas of work and expertise to promote a more holistic and participatory approach both in the planning and the implementation of Agenda 2030. [Recommendation] **This requires favourable conditions and clear mechanisms for active participation, including the non-criminalisation and strengthening of institutions and movements so that strategies and actions become increasingly effective.**
7. To this end, more innovative and participatory collaboration frameworks often appear to be achieved through a **clear multi-stakeholder approach**, which can be more effective in implementing Agenda 2030 in areas of gender equality, poverty reduction and inequality, climate change, fair and productive employment, sustainable enterprise, etc. [Recommendation] It is advisable **to enhance and support these multi-stakeholder approaches** and their ability to take a leading role in defining national and regional strategies for the implementation of Agenda 2030.
8. **Roadmaps** are a useful instrument for reinforcing civil society in its capacity to act and formulate proposals. They help to improve the frequency, scale and depth of dialogue between the EU and the Civil Society Organisations; they help to improve mutual understanding, dialogue and cooperation between member states; and they involve Civil Society Organisations throughout the entire (political and technical) cooperation cycle with the EU. Nevertheless, [Recommendation] they can still be improved, by expanding their coverage to more stakeholders in civil society and the private sector: - taking into account the institutional and representational structure of the organisations involved in their production; - spreading the mechanism and its results to every country; - using them to strengthen existing methods of interaction and dialogue at a national level, and promoting them where they do not yet exist; - updating them using the content of the SDGs; - using the EU’s power of influence in those countries with an unfavourable climate for civil society to flourish; - guaranteeing their implementation and continuation with the EU’s human, technical and financial resources; etc.
9. **The EU is considered a solid partner** for civil society and local authorities in the implementation of Agenda 2030 in the region. [Recommendation] Increased dialogue with EU delegations would be beneficial for the implementation of the SDGs on a national level and, at the same time, would help to promote greater awareness of the future of European development cooperation policy in general and the implementation of Agenda 2030 in particular. [Recommendation] Equally, it is important to seek a renewal of the EU’s commitment to civil society in middle-income or upper-middle income countries where cooperation is diminishing, since the withdrawal of EU cooperation from these countries cannot be based solely on economic indicators.

10. Finally, it is also important that the work carried out over these two days is not lost, and that the **debates and the conclusions** reached during the Forum continue to resonate. [Recommendation] Participants are invited to contribute to the work of the Forum so that it continues to be a global and regional platform of dialogue which benefits from collective action: 1) by promoting multi-stakeholder approaches at a local and national level; 2) by working in cooperation at a regional level, especially among the Forum of Latin America and Caribbean countries for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and other regional areas; and 3) by participating in the review of the European Consensus on Development from the viewpoint of our organisations and regional contexts.