

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America

Scoping Paper





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Document prepared by: Cristian Leyton, Valentina Cortínez, Milena Umaña, Cesar Suarez (RIMISP) and Karina Barquet (SEI).



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Abbreviations

GAD	the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Gobiernos autónomos descentralizados (decentralized autonomous governments)
IRF	Independent Research Forum
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PND	Plan nacional de desarrollo (national development plan)
RIMISP	Centro Latino Americano para el Desarrollo Rural (Latin American Centre for Rural Development)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SED	Sistema de Evaluación del Desempeño (Performance Evaluation System)
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This scoping paper gives an account of progress in the implementation processes of the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 13 Latin American countries. It primarily focuses on the critical points, good practices and lessons learned from this process. It is organized around three key thematic areas for the implementation of the Agenda: the process of mainstreaming the Agenda into national priorities and policies; the operationalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and ownership of the Agenda.

The process of implementing the the 2030 Agenda in the region is diverse, with regards to both the extent of progress and the strategies developed by each country. While some countries are still in the set-up phase among public actors directly involved in the implementation of the Agenda, others have advanced in defining their goals, indicators and building a baseline. Indeed, some are already planning strategies aimed at advancing the achievement of their stated objectives. Without a doubt, this diversity reflects the spirit of the SDGs, where the 17 objectives are set out as a common aspiration that each country must adapt, taking into account their specific contexts, capacities and levels of development, and respecting their policies and national priorities.

Countries participating in the workshop highlighted that the principle of mainstreaming the SDGs into public policy and planning priorities was not that complex, as the overall priorities in the the 2030 Agenda coincide with issues already emphasized in national policies. The main difference lies in that some countries have mainstreamed the SDGs into national development plans, which overlap between presidential terms, while others have only mainstreamed the SDGs into government programmes.

Participants highlighted various strategies and levels of progress with regards to the implementation and operationalization of the Agenda. Main common challenges have been achieving cross-sectoral coordination, establishing an

institutional design that enables integrated actions, and coordinating cross-sectoral collection of data and information for monitoring.

To ensure ownership of the the 2030 Agenda across society, countries have carried out actions with different scopes and formats. These actions have enabled them to advance primarily in the dissemination of the SDGs, and in some cases to improve active involvement of civil society and the private sector. Participants highlighted a number of novel initiatives in which civil society and the private sector have been involved, reflecting the interest of both sectors in being part of this global agenda.

Despite some progress, Latin American countries face several challenges in the implementation of the the 2030 Agenda, including: guaranteeing a budget for the Agenda; ensuring participation across society; fully mainstreaming the Agenda with the national planning and budget system; developing institutional capacities for the implementation of an integrated Agenda; and creating the political will to recognize the SDGs as a state commitment.

Resumen

Este documento de posición da cuenta de los avances en los procesos de implementación de la Agenda 2030 en 13 países de la América Latina, poniendo su foco principalmente en los nudos críticos, buenas prácticas y aprendizajes de este proceso. Se organiza en torno a tres ejes temáticos claves para la implementación de la agenda: el proceso de armonización de la Agenda 2030 y los ODS con las prioridades y políticas nacionales; la operacionalización e implementación de los ODS; y la apropiación de la Agenda 2030 por los diferentes actores sociales al interior de los países.

El proceso de implementación de la Agenda 2030 en la región presenta una alta diversidad, tanto en los grados de avance como en las estrategias desarrolladas. Mientras algunos países se encuentran aún en la fase de instalación entre los actores públicos directamente involucrados en la puesta en práctica de la agenda, otros han avanzado en definir sus metas, indicadores y construir una línea base, o ya planean estrategias dirigidas a avanzar en la consecución de dichos objetivos. Sin duda, esta diversidad es consistente con lo expresado en el seno de los ODS, donde se plantean los 17 objetivos como una aspiración común que cada país debe apropiarse tomando en cuenta sus diferentes realidades, capacidades y niveles de desarrollo, y respetando las políticas y prioridades nacionales.

En lo que respecta a la armonización de la Agenda 2030 con las prioridades nacionales, para todos los países fue un proceso relativamente sencillo puesto que las prioridades acordadas globalmente coinciden con los énfasis de las políticas nacionales. Las principales diferencias versan sobre las estrategias sobre las cuales se armoniza la agenda, siendo en algunos casos con programas de gobierno, y en otros casos con estrategias de desarrollo estratégico nacional de más largo plazo.

La implementación y operacionalización da cuenta de diversas estrategias y niveles de avance entre los países, donde el principal desafío ha sido la

coordinación intersectorial, el diseño institucional para llevar a cabo acciones integradas y la obtención de datos e información para el seguimiento y monitoreo. Respecto de la apropiación de la Agenda 2030 por los diversos actores, todos los países han realizado acciones con distinto alcance y en diferentes formatos, avanzando principalmente en la difusión de los ODS y en algunos casos se ha mejorado también el involucramiento activo de la sociedad civil y el sector privado. En este punto se identifican una serie de iniciativas novedosas en las cuales se ha involucrado la sociedad civil y el sector privado, dando cuenta del interés de ambos sectores de ser parte de esta agenda global.

Al mismo tiempo se plantean algunos desafíos para los países de la región, como son: garantizar un presupuesto para la Agenda 2030; garantizar la participación con incidencia de los diferentes actores; completar la debida articulación de la Agenda con el sistema de planificación y presupuesto nacional; y el desarrollo de capacidades institucionales para la implementación de una agenda integrada e instalar los ODS como un compromiso de Estado.

I.- Introduction

Almost two years have passed since the United Nations (UN) member states officially started implementing the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ Countries around the world are now looking at how to achieve the Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline. For Latin American countries, the 2030 Agenda entails challenges on a range of issues, old and new, as well as opportunities to show progress and consolidate regional collaboration.

To this end, the Colombian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Planning Department – in its capacity as President of the High-level Inter-Agency Commission for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies – in collaboration with the ten members of the Independent Research Forum (IRF), held a meeting with the aim of creating a space for exchanging experiences and promoting learning between national leaders in charge of the implementation of the SDGs.

In this context, this scoping paper seeks to account for progress in the implementation of the the 2030 Agenda in 13 Latin American countries, focusing mainly on critical points, good practices and lessons learned along the way. The document has been prepared by the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP) and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) – two IRF members leading the workshop.

The document is organized around three key thematic areas:

1. The process of mainstreaming the the 2030 Agenda into national priorities and policies.
2. Operationalization and implementation of the SDGs.
3. Ownership of the 2030 Agenda amongst different actors of society.

¹ Transforming Our World: The the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in New York in September 2015. Implementation started in January 2016.

Based on the analysis of the case studies, this report identifies key issues that outlined the areas of focus for discussion during the workshop in Bogotá and draws main conclusions from the workshop.

The report is based on information generated during the first Forum of Latin American countries and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean on 26 to 28 April 2017 in Mexico. In addition, secondary information – such as official documents and information available on websites – was used to contextualize the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in each of the 13 countries analyzed (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay). Along with this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with government representatives, civil society and/or private actors from 12 countries in the region (in all of the previously named countries except Jamaica).

Finally, the main reflections and conclusions reached during the workshop in Bogotá were integrated into this paper.





II. Key challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Implementing public policies is generally a complex process, particularly if these policies are rooted in international agendas that may not immediately resonate with national and local interests. The challenges posed by this process demands reflection around the actions that countries in the Latin American region have taken towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Three key themes are addressed here: the process of mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national priorities and policies, operationalization and implementation of the SDGs, and ownership of the Agenda. In the following pages we present a general overview of the status of the participating countries around each of these issues and, subsequently, focus attention on the critical challenges, good practices and lessons learned, as highlighted by the participants.

However, it should be noted that reflections during the workshop in Bogotá highlight the need to reinforce, in a transversal manner and with a permanent budget, any action linked to the implementation of the objectives associated with the 2030 Agenda. Although national agendas are being linked to the priorities established by the SDGs, real commitment towards the Agenda demands the implementation of long-term policies and actions. Recognizing the need for concrete actions in the political discourse sends a strong message that the SDGs require not only a technical proposal or a consensus among different actors, but also structural implementation immersed in the institutional culture of the state.

For example, one of the lessons learned from the dialogue between different experiences is that the 2030 Agenda requires a collaborative approach between the various sectors that participate in the construction of public policy, in addition to the various sectors that participate in the administration of the state. In other words, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda demands cross-sectoral institutions. Only cross-sectoral work will allow the implementation of the SDGs to go beyond centralized government action, to become a long-term exercise embedded across different actors and institutions (for example, government ministries).

A.- Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals

One of the first challenges for countries in adhering to the 2030 Agenda is to align national policy priorities with the SDGs. This process, known as mainstreaming, is important for making SDGs meaningful nationally, and thereby making it more feasible to progress in the implementation of consistent strategies and actions.

The assessment from the 13 countries in this study suggests that, generally, mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national public policy and planning priorities was not perceived as complex because the overall agreed priorities coincided with issues already emphasized. The main difference lies in how mainstreaming has been approached by national governments. Some countries took as a point of departure a more strategic outlook for the country; while in others (the majority) mainstreaming was only done in relation to current government plans. Another difference is with regards to the degree of participation and dialogue established between actors from the public and private sectors and civil society.

Even if the mainstreaming process is not perceived as complex, there are several critical challenges common to the 13 countries. One of the most important challenges is the need to work with national development plans that go beyond electoral terms and instead take a longer-term approach, since changes in government has implied for several countries a lack of continuity in the implementation of the Agenda. Another challenge is that the mainstreaming process has been characterized by high levels of centralization. Although several countries have carried out more decentralized types of actions, involving subnational levels of government with the SDGs remains a challenge. A third challenge has to do with the difficulty of aligning countries' pledges to a diverse set of international agendas. For example, in Peru, mainstreaming the SDGs into the



agenda of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has proven to be difficult.

Costa Rica highlights an interesting experience in mainstreaming the Agenda, where first the content of the 2014 National Development Plan was assessed in relation to the SDGs and the proposed goals. On this, the country carried out an analysis of needs and incompatibilities with respect to the indicators that had been used, and an inventory of all current public policies. These three actions allowed for the generation of an information system for the SDGs, establishing priorities for ten years and initiating a process for generating national goals aligned with the Agenda.

Based on the lessons learned from the dialogue among Latin American countries during the Bogotá workshop, regarding the implementation and mainstreaming of the SDGs, it is recommended that the commitment to fulfil the 2030 Agenda should not depend on government terms of office. Rather it must be an action mobilized through a whole-government approach by enabling collaborative and cross-sectoral work across the three functions of the state (legislative, judicial and executive). The political commitment of these sectors to the 2030 Agenda constitutes a relevant moment in the recognition of the SDGs; however, these commitments need to be materialized through the implementation of long-term action along with appropriate budgets. Finally, cross-sectoral work helps to legitimize actions based on holistic and global diagnoses, making it possible to maximize the possibility of achieving interventions, and to reduce costs and risks in the implementation of the SDGs.

Various actors recognize that mainstreaming the SDGs in general has been primarily addressed at the national levels of government. Although some countries have adopted more inclusive practices generally, involving the discussion and implementation of strategies at intermediate or local levels of government, as well as in the private and civil society sectors, is far from widespread. Despite this, there are interesting lessons to draw from some of the countries in the region. For instance, some governments have developed broad processes of social dialogue in order to understand the priorities of citizens and to integrate these when

mainstreaming the SDGs into national development plans. Opening up for dialogue amongst a wider set of actors allows in turn for “reinforcing the SDGs at the level of state policy and development and not just at the level of the governmental priorities”. It is also a good practice that can have an impact on how mainstreaming the SDGs at this initial stage is carried out at the subnational levels.



Guatemala: Constitutional mandate

In Guatemala, consensus was reached between the different branches of the state, members of civil society and the business sector to form the national development plan Katun: Our Guatemala 2032 under a constitutional mandate. This development plan is aligned with different objectives of the SDGs and has been established as a guide for action by all the actors that make up the Guatemalan state.



Uruguay: Social dialogue

The process for starting a social dialogue around mainstreaming the SDGs in Uruguay was organized by the Presidency of the Republic. Its objective was to develop a series of participatory meetings that allowed for visioning the future of Uruguay in strategic issues. The participatory process of the social dialogue resulted in more than 210 proposals from various social and public actors in all thematic areas. This allowed for the integration of SDGs into different participation spaces, creating an excellent opportunity for promotion and for prioritizing goals and proposals in policies to be associated with the SDGs.

B.- Operationalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

The process of operationalizing or implementing actions to advance the 2030 Agenda requires adequate coordination of several key areas for good management. In this report we focus on four areas: institutional arrangements for the implementation and coordination of SDGs; planning; budget and resource management; and monitoring and evaluation.

Institutional arrangements and coordination

With regard to the institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms established in the different countries for the implementation of the SDGs, we identify two groups of countries: those who chose to create an ad hoc institutional framework to fulfil this task in the form of a political commission accompanied by a technical committee; and those who placed the responsibility of coordinating the Agenda in regular state institutions generally in charge of producing statistical information, planning and evaluation, external relations or social development. It is noteworthy that in some countries, such as Brazil, Costa Rica and Chile, civil society and private actors are included in national frameworks, albeit with different levels of influence. In the case of Brazil, the government has incorporated into the National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals, eight representatives of public institutions – six from federal government, one from state government, one from municipal government, and eight representatives of society (six from civil society and two from the private sector).

In the case of Colombia, a High-level Inter-institutional Commission was created in February 2015 to mainstream and operationalize the SDGs; this became the formal mechanism for SDG implementation. This commission is led by the National Planning Department, which includes a technical secretariat with a technical committee, and members of civil society, the private sector, academia and media. The commission is made up of four working groups on: indicators, communication, international advocacy and national issues. This commission carried out a

voluntary national report in 2016 and coordinates the implementation of the SDGs, as well as defining a monitoring mechanism.

Across the 13 cases, there is consensus among the interviewed actors that there is a need to, on the one hand, advance and deepen the relationship and participation of private organizations and civil society and, on the other hand, to incorporate political actors, since up until now the institutional arrangements around the implementation and coordination of the 2030 Agenda have focused on more technical institutions.

The main challenges with regards to institutional arrangements relate to the difficulty of bridging the visions of various institutions around the goals of the 2030 Agenda, and to define the roles of each of these institutions around SDG implementation. In this sense, it is common among countries to designate a focal point for each public institution, which is responsible for operating as a nexus for activities and for generating information about SDGs. While this node function facilitates the process to some extent, coordination and implementation remains a complex issue, particularly among ministries and public services which each have a series of programmes and priorities that must be made compatible with the Agenda. Another challenge relates to the involvement of civil society organizations in the less-formalized coordination processes. Once again, higher involvement of civil society organizations is identified as critical for facilitating the operationalization of the Agenda.

Informants identified two good practices for improving coordination activities: institutional continuity and the involvement of actors who were previously engaged with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; and the establishment of high-level formal agreements to establish coordination among the various ministries, subnational governments and state functions. In the latter case, the cases of Paraguay and Argentina stand out.



Paraguay: Inter-institutional commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

Along with the first actions to set up the 2030 Agenda, a commitment was signed to align the Agenda with the SDGs among the highest representatives of the three government functions: executive, legislative and judicial.



Argentina: Linking with subnational levels

Given the size of the country, it was important to incorporate into the subnational levels of government the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For this, Argentina signed agreements between the National Council for Coordination of Social Policies and the highest provincial authority (agreements have been signed with nine of the 15 provinces), which include technical assistance in the definition of intermediate and final goals and in the definition of indicators for monitoring the provincial SDG targets.

Based on discussions during the workshop in Bogotá, recommendations with regards to institutional arrangements for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are related to the coordination of different actors and social levels, as well as the communication of the SDGs. Effective communication of the principles that mobilize the SDGs is an important action for the successful implementation of the Agenda, given that actions and objectives must not only be disseminated to the various sectors of the state, but must also create awareness amongst civil and private actors.

When it comes to dissemination, media has a key role, mainly in the effective transmission of information, strategies and the type of participation that is required of different actors in order to implement the Agenda. Different communication channels need to be addressed in order to increase media coverage, but also to

convene the organization, participation and collaboration of different actors to engage in the SDGs.

In order to create awareness of what the 2030 Agenda actually implies to society, there needs to be active participation of and dissemination to the different actors of society. To create awareness and understanding of the importance of the SDGs and grant legitimacy of the 2030 Agenda across national territories, it is also crucial to strengthen cooperation and coordination across different levels of government. This is particularly relevant for countries with high levels of subnational diversity or low territorial cohesion. Collaborative work presupposes knowledge and holistic understanding of the processes, as well as a fundamental principle: that the actions carried out by an actor influence or affect the country as a whole. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a complex task, not only because of the changes and transformation it represents for society, but also because of the need to mobilize the participation of all sectors within and beyond the state in a cross-sectoral and coordinated manner.

Planning

Planning for the operationalization and implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a complex task, and different countries in the region have made different levels of progress. A common initial step for all countries in operationalizing the Agenda was to analyze the relevance and adequacy of the 169 goals to national landscapes, and thereafter divide roles and responsibilities amongst state actors. While some countries are still in the initial phase of mainstreaming the SDGs, others are closer to the implementation of specific actions for planning, monitoring, or framing policy for programmes that allow progress in achieving the objectives.

In the planning phase a series of critical points have been identified. Among these, informants from the participating Latin American countries point to the tension between short- and long-term planning where national and subnational plans need to be made compatible with the SDGs. In contrast to the Agenda, national plans tend to be more short-term and follow changes in the political arena. Given the integrated nature of the SDGs and considering that, in general, the actors involved

in planning are from the public sector, a critical point here is the lack of adequate information to carry out planning across governance levels, and the need to produce baseline reports to map the national context with respect to the different SDGs. Informants highlight another key challenge: improved coordination in order to generate goals and indicators but also in the validation of these by various actors and public bodies. Along with this, some cases demand more political support in this process. At the same time, there is a need to move forward in the implementation of programmatic changes consistent with the goals established in the Agenda. However, this is something which all 13 countries identify as undeveloped.

Informants highlight two main lessons and good practices with regards to planning. Some countries have assigned separate institutions with the responsibility of addressing specific SDGs. Responsibilities are thus more clearly allocated. Another good practice is in countries which have succeeded in merging the planning of SDGs with national processes of strategic development planning.



Colombia:

The case of Colombia in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into its national development plan, or Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (PND) 2014–2018 stands out. Colombia pioneered the mainstreaming of the SDGs into development plans in Latin America by mainstreaming more than half of the SDGs (92 out of 169) into the PND “Todos por un Nuevo País 2014–2018”. The three pillars of the PND – peace, justice and solid institutions, inequity reduction and education quality – are well in line with the SDGs. In particular, the PND Law (Law 1753 of 2015) highlights in its article 1 that “The PND 2014–2018 aims to build a Colombia in peace, equitable and educated, in harmony with the purposes of the National Government, with the best practices and international standards, and with the vision of long-term planning foreseen by the Sustainable Development Goals”.

It was also noted that some countries have succeeded in involving civil society organizations in planning processes, at least in the initial diagnosis and discussion of goals. This was achieved through meetings and workshops with various actors to generate common visions. In addition, some countries have involved civil society actors and different public institutions in the development of indicators. In most cases, these initiatives remain rather sporadic, but in other countries they have been carried out more regularly.



Perú: Linking national strategic planning and the 2030 Agenda

Since February 2017, an update of Peru's National Strategic Development Plan has been carried out. This process was linked to the initial implementation phase of the 2030 Agenda by building a shared vision of the future (through a new cycle of policy and planning updates) and by developing platforms and indicators that facilitate the establishment of objectives, goals and follow-up of progress.

Management of the public budget

Countries have started analysing their public budgets in terms of linkages with the different SDGs. Based on this they have made progress in calculating how much of their budget is destined to the fulfilment of the SDGs. As a result, several of these countries have added "SDGs" or "the 2030 Agenda" into their budget monitoring tools, allowing them to track current funding for each target, identify budget gaps, and assess what resources need to be mobilized from other actors.

For example, Mexico is aligning more than 400 development indicators, outlined by the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, with the 230 SDG indicators. In the case of Uruguay, since June 2016, the SDGs have been incorporated into the monitoring mechanism for the national budget, which is organized around programmatic areas and linked to the objectives of the Agenda. Likewise, Brazil has added the item "the 2030 Agenda" to the budget monitoring system for its national development plan.

While the above mechanisms make it possible to visualize the investment of countries according to each objective, they do not ensure that there are specific budgetary allocations for the fulfilment of the Agenda. Eventually, they may generate distorted information about the level of budgetary commitment of countries, when in practice no action other than that which had previously been done through the national development plans is being taken. Indeed, participants from several countries said that there would be no budgetary changes linked to the Agenda in the short term.

A challenge here is related to the multiplicity of public programmes and actions. This makes it difficult to calculate budgets by objective and goal, especially in the larger countries of the region (Brazil and Mexico). Another drawback of this methodology is that, given the interlinked nature of the SDGs, there is a risk of double-counting spending on a programme that could contribute to more than one goal. On the other hand, an important part of the countries' budget is pre-allocated, leaving little space to reorient specific resources to the 2030 Agenda. This point becomes more problematic in countries with multi-year budgets and certainly represents a challenge for implementation. Lastly, several countries in the region face economic recessions that have led to austerity policies at national and local levels, making it difficult to assign new budget allocations for the Agenda.

With regards to good practices, informants identified the alignment of budgets towards the fulfilment of the Agenda objectives. Likewise, Colombia's participatory budgeting mechanism emerges as a notable benchmark.



México: Alignment of budget indicators with Sustainable Development Goals

In Mexico, the Performance Evaluation System of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit is a mechanism to ensure an adequate budgetary allocation. Here, the country aligned itself with more than 400 indicators that account for 230 global indicators of the 2030 Agenda. This will open up the possibility that public expenditure is more effectively in line with the SDGs.

Management of other resources

Given the budget reallocation constraints and economic slowdown that Latin American countries face, participation and involvement of international cooperation and the private sector stands as an opportunity to inject fresh resources for the implementation of the Agenda.

Generally, the countries studied here have received contributions in the form of technical assistance mainly from UN agencies. In particular, the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stands out where a pilot methodology for the implementation of objective 16 in some countries of the region was developed. In El Salvador, resources have been obtained for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the “accelerated implementation” programme.

Countries like Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica have attracted resources from the private sector. In fact, in Costa Rica, all the new resources that have been used for the 2030 Agenda have been mobilized from the private sector as part of the country’s corporate social responsibility agenda. Thus, the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for private sector involvement where companies have found a benchmark against which to align their strategies for social responsibility.

Informants identified critical issues, particularly for middle-income countries which face difficulties in obtaining resources from international cooperation. This impacts on, in particular, civil society organizations and their ability to be involved in a systematic and professional way. An exceptional case is Chile, where civil society, grouped through an organization called Asocia 2030, has been funded by Eurosocial for the implementation of the Incidence 2030 initiative. Other countries are struggling with lack of credibility from donors, private sector, and international organizations due to high levels of corruption or potential frictions with governments. Additionally, participants highlight the lack of involvement from banking institutions such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

A good practice in Argentina was a study identifying opportunities for the private sector in the implementation of the SDGs. Likewise, in Mexico, the Alliance for

Sustainability, a space for dialogue with the private sector to finance the Agenda, has been useful to trigger broader discussions with private and civil society actors. In a similar format, the Business Council for Sustainable Development is particularly supportive of work related to evaluation of the Agenda.

Monitoring and evaluation

A main area of focus in the implementation of the Agenda has been to collect existing information for each of the proposed goals and define mechanisms to report the state of progress in each country. In this area, important cross-sectoral work strategies have been deployed, laying the foundations for the multi-level mainstreaming that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires.

For the majority of the countries in this study, the production of indicators and the establishment of a baseline has been carried out by national statistical institutes. However, the definition of goals and the collection of information necessary to report on each one of these has been a challenge for the different ministries involved in the process. In a number of countries (Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Peru), cross-sectoral technical bodies involving representatives of different ministries have been set up exclusively for the definition of indicators and SDG targets. The main task of these institutions has been to develop an initial situational map on a country's ability to report on its progress, including reviewing and analyzing the data sources available at the national level, solving methodological problems, and defining responsibilities in terms of data generation and indicators linked to the different goals. All the countries that have made progress in this area have been guided by the global framework of indicators developed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

The experiences of the Latin American countries that participated in the workshop in Bogotá highlight that the use of indicators for reporting results should be commensurate with local realities. However, this does not mean that the already established global indicators cannot be used to allow comparison of the different processes; rather, there should be the possibility of dialogue for the standardization of results.

In order to investigate results and findings during the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – that is, to generate follow-up strategies – statistical data should capture the transformations and/or continuities, across local and intermediate (e.g. national regions) levels of government. Generating empirical evidence is one of the most important objectives in the implementation. This, however, requires time in order to build into the institutional structures a culture of self-evaluation, along with the construction of complex instruments and indicators to carry out such evaluations.

Another trend observed is the interest of civil society in participating in the monitoring of the Agenda, by forming, for instance, citizen observatories, public–private platforms and virtual platforms for online monitoring, among others.

A critical point for monitoring is the lack of data and/or the lack of good quality information, which makes it difficult to measure the goals set in the Agenda. Other problems include the lack of uniformity of data formats and consistency, for example of administrative records, which further increases the complexity of standardizing data. Likewise, there are difficulties in systematizing and selecting information relevant to the development of indicators, due to the large volumes of information that each ministry manages. And in the cases where national targets have not been set, it has also been difficult to identify the information required for the development of indicators. This problem has been resolved for certain goals that were previously defined as a product of other international agendas ratified by countries (e.g. the goals of the climate change agenda).

As a good practice, collaboration among countries is important for comparing and exchanging methodologies. In the case of El Salvador and Uruguay, technical staff from the National Institute of Statistics has been trained to develop indicators in line with the Agenda. In Mexico, the creation of an online platform that follows the development of SDGs in time and space has enabled the involvement of actors beyond the state apparatus in the monitoring of the Agenda. Similarly, Paraguay has also launched a platform with information on progress in achieving the Agenda. For its part, in Chile, the civil society grouped in Asocia 2030 produced the Light Report, which highlights alternative initiatives, progress and critical aspects for some of the SDGs.



México: Monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals

The National Digital Strategy of the Office of the Presidency of the Republic and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography developed the Information System of the Sustainable Development Goals. This platform allows for exploring, comparing and downloading indicators and databases that follow up on the progress of the SDGs. It also seeks to help governments make better informed and evidence-based decisions, as well as disseminate and make transparent information on the progress of the SDGs in the country.



Ecuador: Monitoring SDGs at the subnational level

The National Institute of Statistics and Census of Ecuador has a department directly responsible for statistics related to the SDGs, and recently launched in partnership with UNDP five pilot “territorial statistical development plans”. This project seeks to build a methodology to identify statistical information related to the SDGs in the decentralized autonomous governments, or gobiernos autónomos descentralizados (GADs), and to highlight which of these indicators can be integrated into the country’s national statistical system. The purpose is to achieve a better follow-up of the compliance of the SDGs at national and subnational levels, while strengthening the statistical capacities of the GADs.

1. C.- Ownership of Sustainable Development Goals among the different social actors

All countries represented in this study highlight attempts to involve other actors other than public authorities and state agencies, through information dissemination and learning and exchange platforms such as seminars, workshops, surveys and online consultations. The aim with these activities is to capture the perspective of civil society organizations, the private sector and academia. As mentioned earlier, very few countries incorporate civil society or private organizations into their official structures, despite consensus amongst informants of the need to strengthen the dynamics of actors across sectors.

Although, generally, the link between the private sector and countries' strategies to implement the SDGs is at a very early stage, in several countries, some of the established business platforms have been important for raising awareness of the SDGs, joining the Global Compact and following the guide *SDG Compass* (see <https://sdgcompass.org/>). In cases like Colombia, there are platforms in which private actors are coordinated with civil society. According to the interviewees, private actors are moving even faster than the public in mobilizing around the 2030 Agenda and reporting on their actions.

On the other hand, there is consensus that the Agenda is something that remains at the level of technical elites in each of the countries. There is still a long way to go in terms of expanding the space for participation and obtaining understanding on how to contextualize the SDGs. For example, in the case of Argentina, the National Center for Community Organizations carried out a survey of organizations registered in its databases to consult their interest in being incorporated into the SDG implementation process. As of June 2017, out of 462 surveys answered, only 37% of the organizations said they were aware of the Agenda. It appears there is still a long way to go for ordinary citizens to get to know the SDGs and the strategies set to achieve them.

Some of the most crucial points identified by the interviewees include the lack of channels for fostering civil society participation and incorporating this into the decision-making process of the 2030 Agenda; and in cases where some progress

has been made, informants identified the importance of maintaining these spaces. While, as said earlier, the involvement of private sector in the implementation of the Agenda has been somewhat better than that of civil society, there is still room for improvement.

Besides fostering inclusion of civil society and the private sector, informants stressed the need to encourage the participation of more local actors, since today the 2030 Agenda is dominated by central and national approaches and territorial nuances are therefore not reflected. Interviewees from various countries agree that there has been a weak link between the Agenda and the participation of universities and the academic world, as well as that of parliamentarians and the judiciary.

Although it is necessary to deepen the process of ownership of the SDGs among social actors, it is possible to identify good practices surveyed by the actors interviewed. Among the most relevant is the fact that most governments have developed platforms, workshops and seminars involving members of civil society to exchange visions with the state on how to implement the 2030 Agenda, and to visualize – and in some cases monitor – the goals and indicators.

In Argentina, the government ceded part of its role in writing the country's official report to representatives of civil society, including the opposition, and provided financial support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to generate information for this report. In several other countries, public actors in charge of the implementation pointed out that they participate in all actions organized by other non-public actors to disseminate and raise awareness about the Agenda.

In Guatemala, for example, around 65 workshops were held as part of a campaign to communicate and disseminate the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, 22 workshops were held in different regions of the country involving subnational civil society actors, academia and various NGOs. These workshops served the government in identifying Guatemala's priorities in relation to the SDGs.

Another relevant case regarding the involvement of civil society in the Agenda is that of Mexico. Several NGO representatives from the country attended, as part of the Delegation of Mexico, SDG negotiations carried out at the United Nations. In

2015, several civil society organizations together with distinguished academics organized the forum Encounter for Civil Society 2030 for a Sustainable Development in the Perspective of its Implementation and Follow-up in Mexico, where they discussed relevant issues for the implementation of the Agenda in the country together with representatives of the Secretary of Foreign Relations.



Colombia: Associations of private and civil society actors

A multi-actor platform is anticipated to function as a network between public actors, private partnerships and civil society. It emerges from a series of meetings between the different actors to define viable mechanisms of dialogue. The platform will be an interactive virtual space, where lessons learned and general information about SDGs will be stored.



Costa Rica: Diversity of social actors

A platform of civil society organizations was created within the framework of the SDGs and is part of a consultative committee, which includes not only environmental and social organizations, but also faith-based organizations. Workers' unions have not yet defined whether they want to join the committee, although they are supporting the implementation of the SDGs and participating in the working groups.

III.- Conclusions and main topics for discussion



The process of implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Latin American region is diverse both in terms of progress as well as with regards to the strategies developed in each of the countries. While some countries are still in the design stage, others have made progress in defining their goals, indicators and building a baseline overview, and some others have already planned strategies for advancing the objectives. Undoubtedly, this diversity is consistent with what is expressed in the SDGs, where the 17 objectives are considered as a common aspiration that each country must own, taking into account their different realities, capacities and levels of development, and respecting the policies and priorities.

Concerning the mainstreaming of the Agenda with national priorities, it is, in principle, a relatively simple process for all countries since the overall agreed priorities coincide with the emphasis of national policies. In practice, however, there are disagreements relating to the strategies into which the Agenda is mainstreamed – in some cases with government, and in other cases with longer-term national strategic development strategies.

Concerning the implementation and operationalization of the Agenda, there are various strategies and levels of progress among countries; but a main and common challenge in all cases is the lack of cross-sectoral coordination and an adequate institutional design to carry out integrated actions.

Regarding ownership of the Agenda, all countries have carried out actions with different scopes and in different formats. Progress has mostly been made with regard to the dissemination of the SDGs, and some countries have succeeded in expanding participation to civil society and the private sector. This report identifies some interesting and innovative examples where multi-actor approaches have more or less been established.

The dialogue between Latin American countries attending the workshop indicates that it is necessary for all sectors and actors to participate in the implementation process. This recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach also entails involving the needs of different sectors of society through dialogue and reflection. Understanding and recognizing the 2030 Agenda implies assuming the involvement of different actors, which then grants legitimacy to the process. This legitimacy entails not only active participation, but also the ability to identify topics of interest and local needs. Media coverage is crucial for convening sectors that could be key in the positioning of the SDGs and to achieve compliance with the Agenda.

From the analysis of interviews with the 13 countries concerning mainstreaming, ownership and implementation of the 2030 Agenda the following common challenges were identified:

Guaranteeing a budget for the 2030 Agenda

The Agenda is broad and ambitious. Through 17 objectives, it brings together the main challenges for guaranteeing an inclusive and sustainable economic development globally. In this context, all countries allocate part of their budget to policies, programmes or initiatives that somehow relate to the Agenda. However, the injection of new resources for the Agenda is a critical aspect that is essential for its implementation. In Latin America, this challenge is exacerbated by a context

of economic recession in several countries in the region. With this context in mind, it is essential to strengthen the Global Alliance for Sustainable Development, mobilize international financial resources and advance the involvement of the private sector and civil society through concrete initiatives and particularly in areas with greater need for investment.

Guaranteeing participation of all relevant actors of society

The true commitment of states to sustainable development necessarily requires the opening of spaces for participation. Several countries have deployed innovative strategies to incorporate civil society and the private sector, which in turn have shown interest in being part of this alliance. However, there are few experiences in which the participation of non-state actors has had a formal and systematic character. This represents a challenge for securing the continuous engagement of society in the implementation and acceptance of the Agenda.

Along the same lines, countries should move forward in decentralizing the discussion of the SDGs and incorporating actors from subnational territories. Making them part of this process is imperative for several reasons. Firstly, the 2030 Agenda places special emphasis on “leaving no one behind”. Territories, particularly rural ones, require special attention because of their great degree of inequality (social, economic and access). Secondly, decentralization is important because certain objectives are more relevant in some territories than in others. Finally, involving subnational actors will allow for the identification of actions for collaborating in the achievement of the SDGs which may not have been previously considered. Thus, it is recommended to move forward using formal mechanisms for increasing ownership and fulfilment of the Agenda at the subnational (e.g. federal) and local levels. This would imply, in the first instance, strengthening mechanisms for the dissemination of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the different jurisdictional levels (national, regional and local).

Mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda into national planning and budget systems

While several countries have made progress in incorporating the mechanisms of the SDGs into planning instruments and, in some cases, into their budgets as well, there is still work to be done. Completing this process is essential for the effective fulfilment of the Agenda, and for its systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Building institutional capacities for the implementation of an integrated Agenda

The integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda represents a major challenge for the states of the region whose organizations are characterized by a silo approach. In most countries, the SDGs have accelerated or strengthened previous cross-sectoral coordination processes, and progress has been made in building trust and common languages that facilitate joint operation. However, integrated work requires the development of technical skills and the modification of old habits and organizational cultures. This implies a change in the logic of sectoral work. Adjustments of normative and institutional design that encourage cross-sectoral work should be considered. This challenge is particularly evident in the design of SDG evaluation systems, which has required, on the one hand, the systematization of high volumes of information from different sources and in different formats, and, on the other hand, the development of indicators that account for integrated rather than segmented progress. In this sense, it is crucial to strengthen technical capacities, as well as information systems, in order to collect data that allow for proper monitoring of the objectives.

Adopting the 2030 Agenda as a state commitment

Finally, a cross-cutting challenge for the 13 countries will be to adopt the Agenda and its objectives as a state commitment, and beyond the political will of a particular government. This challenge represents a great opportunity for the countries of the region to steer their policies toward long-term objectives that will resist and be resilient to future changes in government.