



Third session of the Conference
on Social Development
in Latin America and the Caribbean

XI Ministerial Forum for Development
in Latin America and the Caribbean

PARTICIPANTS ONLY
REFERENCE DOCUMENT
LC/CDS.3/DDR/4
23 September 2019
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH
19-00704

Third session of the Regional Conference
on Social Development
in Latin America and the Caribbean

XI Ministerial Forum for Development
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Mexico City, 1–3 October 2019

**PROPOSED REGIONAL AGENDA FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:
COMMENTS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY**



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
BACKGROUND.....	3
A. INFORMATION WEBINARS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY	4
B. SYSTEMATIZATION OF COMMENTS RECEIVED.....	6
C. INCORPORATION OF THE COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA	9
D. CLOSING REMARKS	10

BACKGROUND

The preparation of a regional agenda for inclusive social development is a mandate of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, at its second session, held in Montevideo in October 2017. In resolution 2(II), adopted on that occasion, the Conference undertook “to foster the building of a regional agenda for inclusive social development based on public policies that address the region’s structural inequalities and the new challenges arising from technological change and the necessary transition to an environmentally sustainable economy, with a focus based on rights, gender equality and the life cycle and an approach of universalism that is sensitive to differences, within the general framework of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.¹

The bases for the development of the agenda were discussed and endorsed by the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, at their second meeting, held in Panama in 2018.² At their third meeting, held in Santiago in April 2019, the Presiding Officers endorsed the agenda in general terms. In the context of the activities involved in the formulation of the regional agenda, the countries agreed to include mechanisms for civil society participation. This consisted of explaining the process of building the agenda via a dialogue space that included two webinars and an invitation to convey comments by email. This dialogue process permitted compilation of the analysis and reflections of civil society to be considered in the document that would be discussed and adopted at the third session of the Regional Conference, to be held in Mexico City in October 2019.

The present report describes the processes of dissemination and information vis-à-vis civil society, systematizes the comments made by various civil society stakeholders on the proposed regional agenda for inclusive social development during the webinars and, lastly, indicates the contents that were included in the proposed agenda on the basis of the comments received.

A. INFORMATION WEBINARS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

The invitation to participate in the seminars was issued via the mailing list on related topics held by ECLAC, the Social Development Network in Latin America and the Caribbean (REDESOC),³ which is managed by the Social Development Division of ECLAC, and the ECLAC Twitter account.⁴ The invitation was also sent to the emails of the mechanism for civil society participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.⁵

¹ See resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean [online] at <http://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/42561>.

² See [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/events/second-meeting-presiding-officers-regional-conference-social-development-latin-america-and>.

³ See *Nota sobre Desarrollo Social No. 3* in REDESOC, at [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/redesoc/nota?id=4>, inviting civil society to participate in the virtual seminars and *Nota sobre Desarrollo Social No. 4* [online] <https://dds.cepal.org/redesoc/nota?id=6>, which shows the video and the presentation and invites comments by email by 15 June 2019.

⁴ See post in the @cepal_onu account of 25 May 2019 available at [online] https://twitter.com/cepal_onu/status/1132315494806114305.

⁵ See [online] https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2018/sites/foro2018/files/c1800566_mechanism.pdf.

The online seminars, as had been agreed by the Presiding Officers (see diagram 1) were held on 30 May 2019, one each in English and Spanish. Both webinars successfully presented the process and contents of the purposed regional agenda, after which questions were invited. These were answered by Social Affairs Officers of the Social Development Division of ECLAC. Comments were invited, to be sent to the email of the Regional Conference by 15 June 2019.

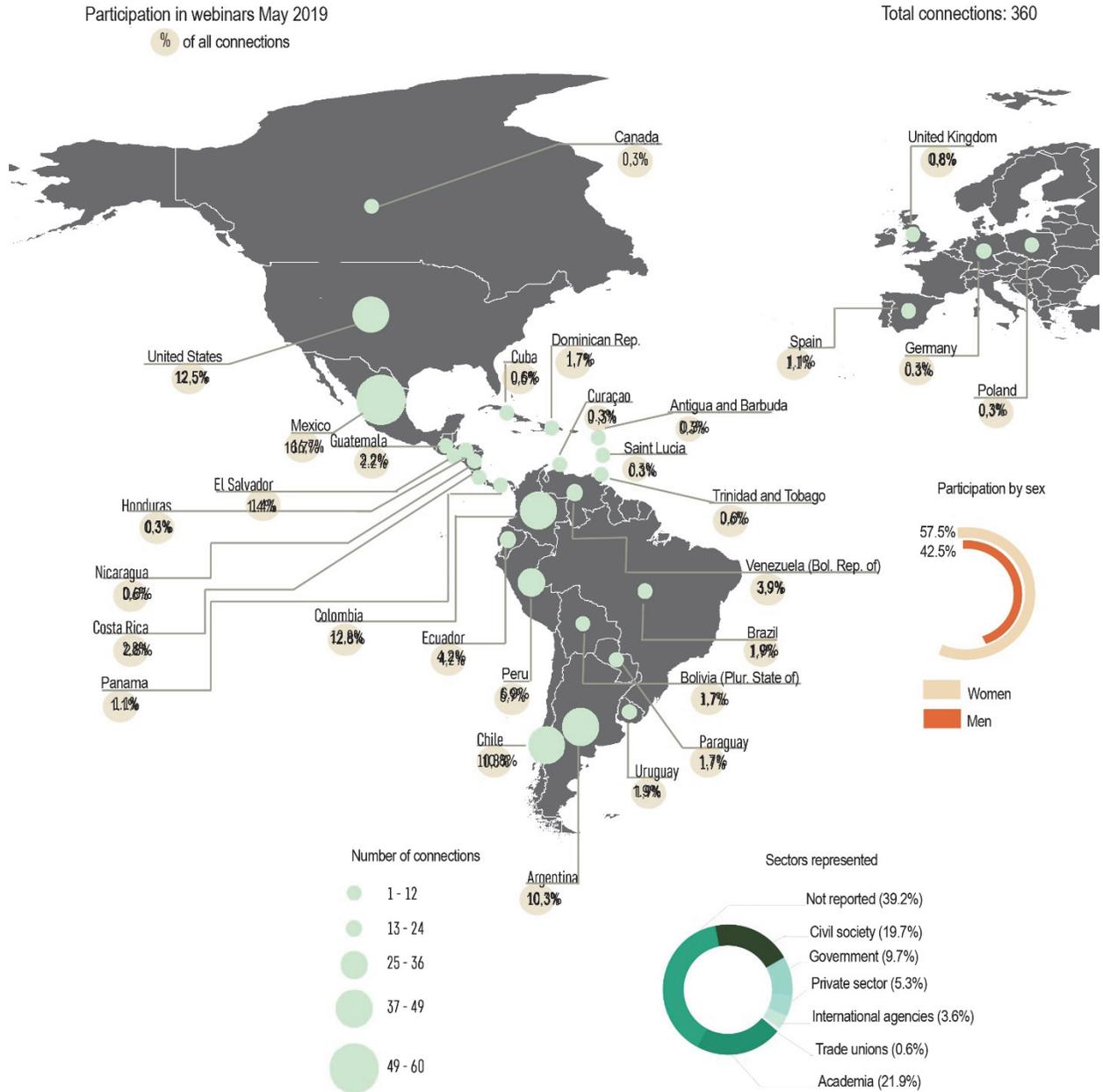
Diagram 1
Time line of the dialogue with civil society



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The following map shows the participation in the online seminars. A total of 360 individuals were connected, from 29 countries. The information entered upon connection was used to map participation by country, sex and type of sector represented (see map 1).

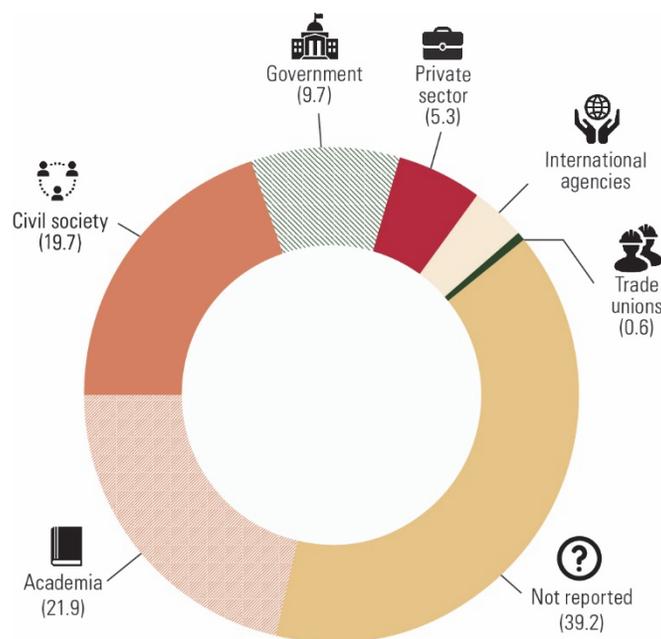
Map 1 Participation in online seminars



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from webinar held on 30 May 2019.

Figure 1 shows the representation of participants in the webinars: a large proportion (39.2%) did not report what sector they represented, while 21.9% belonged to the academic sector, 19.7% were from civil society and 0.6% from trade unions.

Figure 1
Participation in webinars by sector represented
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from webinars held on 30 May 2019.

B. SYSTEMATIZATION OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

Around 100 comments and questions were received during the webinars, and these were answered in situ by the Social Affairs Officers present. These, along with the comments or suggestions subsequently received by email, were systematized and organized around the issues raised.⁶ Since it was not a case of standardized responses to closed questions, but rather a collection of freely submitted ideas on a wide array of topics and issues, we have highlighted some major topics that attracted most attention, often in combination. The word cloud (see figure 2) illustrates the topics addressed in the comments.

⁶ Notably, all comments, suggestions and questions were raised in a context of respect and acknowledgement for the work done by ECLAC. The review of contents did not include those that did not contain a specific question or comment.

- (b) **On groups or populations that warrant special attention:** the comments included reference to the need to recognize and pay attention to the rights and specific needs of various groups: older persons, young people, people of African descent and indigenous peoples, migrants, persons with disabilities and LGBTI persons.
- “How are young people engaged in this process?”
 - “Does the agenda envisage the inclusion of LGBTI persons and the generational approach?”
 - “How can we incorporate the rights of older persons in the region in the development goals of the 2030 Agenda?”
 - “I am concerned about the social exclusion of indigenous people in my country. They have been excluded for years and the projects that have been created for development in villages have not had the expected impact, given that they live in deep poverty, without access to roads, decent schools and health services.”
 - “Does the agenda propose strategies or specific programmes for population groups, specifically for the population with disabilities, which is one of the most socially and occupationally excluded in the region?”
- (c) **On territories:** the emphasis on the local and the needs of territories (e.g. development of local agendas and targets and local capacity-building).
- “It would be good if, within our countries, at the subnational level, local and regional governments could develop local/regional agendas for inclusive social development.”
 - “Will the agenda have a specific approach for local government (municipalities, cities), identifying specific targets for local governments, disaggregated by the global SDG targets?”
 - “We still have a great deal to learn about poverty eradication, mainly in rural areas of Peru.”
 - “How is the question of a comprehensive approach to territory managed in the 2030 Agenda with respect to indigenous cultures?”
- (d) **On poverty/inequality:** overcoming poverty and inequality in the different countries of the region is, together with corruption, one of the major problems facing the region.
- “Reducing inequalities generates a suitable framework for inclusive social development to exist. To that end, we must participate in the creation of laws, public policies and programmes to halt the rise in disparities and promote inclusion specifically considering the impact of their financing on inequality.”
 - “In the Dominican Republic, the lack of distribution of the wealth that we produce and corruption have prevented the majority of Dominicans from enjoying the wealth that we have; we are far from achieving the SDGs in time”.
- (e) **On education:** developing skills for new requirements, as well as overcoming gaps and gender barriers in access to quality education opportunities for women of all ages, is key to development.
- “I think it’s important to see the content in greater detail and how it includes a gender perspective on these issues (education).”
 - “There is an open discussion in our country today on the topic of gender equality and how we address it in schools and education from childhood. This discussion has opened up a national debate which has been opposed by the Church and all the sectors it represents. Knowing the reality in the Caribbean, what approaches are being promoted in the SDGs and the agenda?”

- (f) **On social institutions:** the references to social institutions, among others, mention the capacity for intra-and inter-institutional work and coordination, the existence of a clear and explicit leadership of work obligations and being a source of credibility vis-a-vis citizens.
- “In Argentina, the greatest problem is sometimes the lack of coordination among government institutions and social policies do not always reach all municipalities.”
- (g) **On public information:** this topic refers to the importance of accessible public information.
- “In my country (Peru), there are great differences in the skills for accessing that public information and I wonder what solutions the regional agenda could provide?”
 - “One of the problems in advancing the agenda in my country, seen from my professional experience, is the deficit of public information from the State (Executive Branch, Legislative Branch and Judicial Branch). This structural problem exists in the three jurisdictional levels of the State (national, provincial and municipal), although the provincial assessment that we conducted showed the various aspects in which this deficit is evident at that level.”
- (h) **On migration:** references to the issue of migration mentioned its impact on host countries.
- “Our reality shows that almost 50% of the population live in extreme poverty; we also have a large flow of migrants from some Central American countries, sometimes in transit to the United States and sometimes in search of new opportunities. This situation puts us under much more pressure in terms of maintaining inclusiveness and leaving no one behind. Although this is a national impact, I propose analysing the issue because of its multinational implications and the possible effect on the SDGs, as a specific proposal for the October meeting.”
- (i) **On work:** references to work point to the importance of decent work in creating less unequal societies.
- “How can poverty be reduced other than with economic growth, decent work and education? Without economic growth, there is no education; without education, there is no decent work; without decent work, there is poverty. All these factors are interrelated, we must tackle them comprehensively in order to break the vicious circle of which we are a part today.”

C. INCORPORATION OF THE COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

After sorting the information and identifying the most prominent issues, a careful comparison was made with the contents of the initial agenda proposal presented to the countries at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference in April 2019. Then the topics that were missing were included, or existing topics were enriched with the contributions received. Those suggestions were considered by the technical secretariat of the Conference and incorporated into the new agenda proposal sent to the countries in July 2019, based on the comments received at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference and subsequent emails.

One of the topics most mentioned was civil society and clarification of its definition and role in the agenda. Accordingly, under principle 7, “Quality public policies”, a footnote was added with a definition of civil society and its role. The definition added is as follows: “This includes organizations, autonomous collectives, social movements and local, national and regional networks committed through their work to social, economic and environmental justice, in any of the three dimensions of sustainable development, as

established by the Mechanism for civil society participation in the Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, considering also academia and the private sector.”

To address gender stereotypes and gender equality, line of action 2.6 (under the axis “Policies to promote social and labour inclusion”) was adjusted as follows: “Ensure the incorporation of the gender and ethno-racial approach into social and labour inclusion policies, aiming to eliminate stereotypes and all forms of discrimination that may exist in social policies”.

To foster information transparency, line of action 3.1.10 was adjusted under the axis “A strengthened social institutional framework” to read as follows: “Include and consolidate the statistical identification and visibility of different population groups in all the data sources and administrative records used in social policies and programmes, including: women, young people, older persons, indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons and homeless persons. Ensure that this information is properly stored and easily accessible for consultation through appropriate technologies for all public entities, civil society organizations and the general public, to foster development of evidence-based social policymaking”.

Reference to the concept of inequality is central to the regional agenda on inclusive social development, but this was further strengthened in line of action 3.2.3 (under the axis “A strengthened social institutional framework”), which now reads: “Reaffirm, at the national and regional levels, the notion that social policy financing should be considered an investment. Encourage analysis of the impact of social policy financing on poverty and inequality, to advance in the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental.”

Lastly, to include the participation of social stakeholders in formal discussion spaces, line of action 4.3 (under the axis “Regional cooperation and integration”) was adjusted as follows: “Create joint working groups on specific thematic and policy areas identified by governments, made up of specialized technical teams from countries, to promote experience-sharing and to foster common agendas at the regional and subregional levels and among countries from different subregions, as well as civil society participation and dialogue”.

D. CLOSING REMARKS

The information process followed vis-à-vis civil society on this occasion served to compile opinions that, on the one hand, confirmed that many of the contents of the proposed regional agenda for inclusive social development were in tune with its needs, demands and perceptions, and, on the other helped to reinforce certain topics, especially in relation to the inclusion of civil society in follow-up of the agenda.