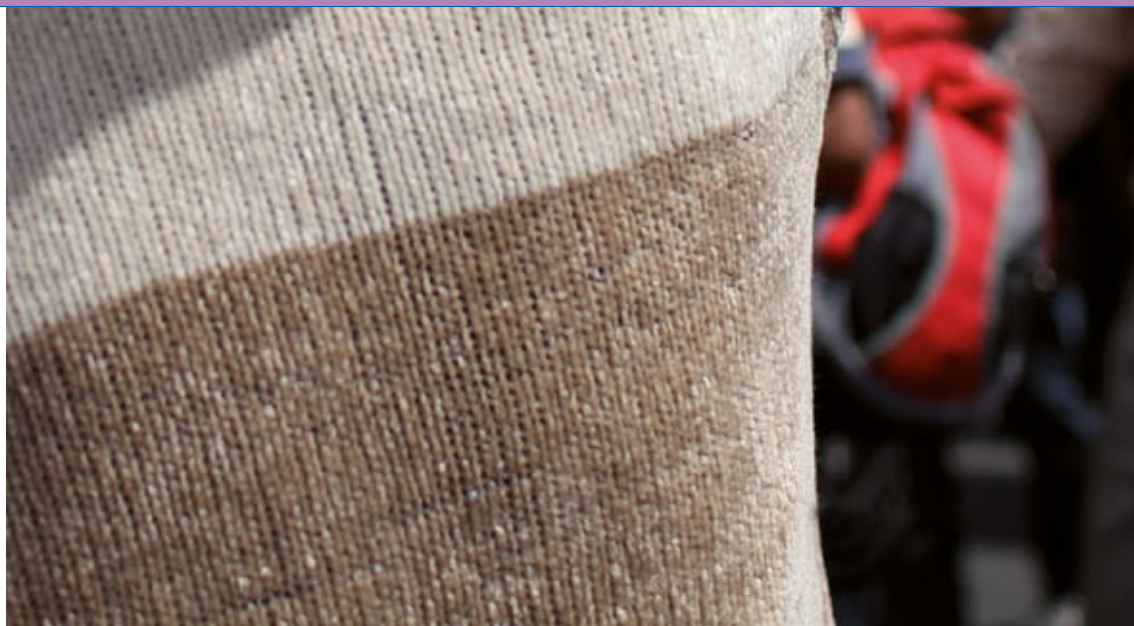# CONFLICT PREVENTION

What does UNDP do for Conflict Prevention
in Latin America and the Caribbean?

United Nations Development Programme

UNDP

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

"Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together."

William Isaacs

CONTENT

THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

Social conflicts routinely show up as news headlines in the press throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. So, due to their prominence in the region, conflict prevention and democratic dialogue are often at the center of the agendas of national, regional, and municipal governments, civil society organizations, and universities.

Despite the fact that Latin America is currently considered a relatively stable region, with periodic elections and consolidated democratic institutions, the gradual receding of armed conflicts have been accompanied by the rising of social conflicts that are multiplying in number and complexity, challenging the capacity of the State's response.

The initiation of peace talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Colombian Armed Forces (the FARC) marked the regional agenda in peace-making advances in 2013. However, even in the case of Colombia, traditional forms of social conflict are losing ground to new dynamics and types of conflicts. This new modalities of social conflict, centered around socio-economic, political-institutional, and cultural factors, involves traditional movements and organizations (unions, farmworker organizations, workers in the informal sector, political movements, etc.) and new social actors, which, on some occasions, show a strong territorial implantation (for example, indigenous populations, precarious or informal workers, women, youth, ecological groups, non-governmental organizations, etc.).

The diversification of demands, the multiplication and fragmentation of actors involved and the high levels of polarization characterize the pattern of conflict in Latin America. According to the Regional Conflict Observatory -a joint initiative between UNDP and *Fundación UNIR* in Bolivia - existing social conflicts in the region share a common platform.

UNDP, through its Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), and its country offices, in addition to studying the aforementioned complex dynamics and working toward solutions, has been involved in the implementation of a wide range of concrete initiatives in 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Common traits that underlie conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean

Excessively concentrated power structures

Economic dynamics with little competitiveness

Weak state institutions whose legitimacy is questioned by the population

Difficulty managing problems that most concern citizens (i.e.: criminality, unemployment, persistent poverty, and inequality).

Limited citizen participation and political apathy

Political communities with incomplete institutional recognition

2
3

UNDP'S RESPONSE

UNDP has supported the resolution of conflicts and the promotion of specific issues on the public agenda, such as laws, intercultural development plans or visions that guarantee the respect of human rights and avoid the recurrence of violent conflicts.

For 2014, UNDP maintains its commitment to continue working in conflict prevention and conflict resolution initiatives in close collaboration with other allies of the United Nations System (SNU), such as the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations or the Office of High Commission for Human Rights, as well as other regional and civil society groups.

Elaboration of Integral Development Plan of indigenous groups in Panama

During 2013, UNDP collaborated in the implementation of participatory dialogue processes for the preparation of public policies. The discussion of the Integral Development Plan of Indigenous Groups in Panama is an example. This process, which has lasted for over a year, has implicated the participation of the traditional congresses that represent the seven indigenous populations of the country and the Government Ministries of Panama. The elaboration of the Development Plan was one of the commitments achieved during the dialogue process carried out in 2012 between the representatives of the Ngäbe-Buglé population and the Panamanian government, which was facilitated by the United Nations. To prepare this Development Plan, it has been necessary to carry out a process of consultation in more than 90 communities, with the participation of an estimated 10,000 people. The process was led by the government structures of the indigenous groups, always respecting their internal mechanisms of consultation and decision-making. This building process, along with the Development Plan, was finalized with the presentation of the Plan at the National Assembly so it could be sanctioned and converted into public State policy.

A major threat to the peace process in Colombia will appear after the signing of the peace accords, when the country will have to build infrastructures for peace with a subnational approach

Support in conflict prevention and resolution

1 Consultations in Colombia

Colombia is going through a crucial moment to end its long-term armed conflict. It has often been affirmed that the major challenge to achieving peace is the signing of a definitive peace accord, which will be indispensable to start peace building efforts in all the regions, especially in those where the State presence is limited.

Recognizing that the main threats to the peace process will appear in the first months after the signing of the peace accord, the United Nations System in Colombia has emphasized the importance of carrying out activities early on in the peace building process, during the post-conflict period. The signing of such an accord will generate immediate expectations that should be satisfied with relatively quick changes that are visible to the population. However, the immediate results should be made visible only if an anticipated planning has been carried out.

Up until now, both parties have requested to the United Nations System in Colombia the support of the peace process through the collection and synthesis of viewpoints from different sectors of the Colombian society about the agenda that is currently being discussed in Havana. UNDP has collaborated with technical advising, design, the organization and systematization of the Mesas Regionales (Regional Tables), con-voked by the Peace Commissions Congress, that have the purpose of guaranteeing the broad participation of civil society sectors from all regions of Colombia in the discussion of the themes in question from the General Accord. UNDP made special efforts to assure a truly representative participation of women and minority groups, often excluded from important discussions.

Through the program "Art-Networks", UNDP works to contribute to the social cons-truction of peace, human development, democratic governing, and reconciliation through support and strengthening on the national and local levels with initiatives from civil society and the State.

2 Strengthening peace infrastructures

The majority of countries in the region have significant institutional limitations to adequately tackle recurring and potentially violent conflicts.

UNDP has worked on different mechanisms that encourage conditions for the creation of peace infrastructures through:

• **Technical assistance for strategic conflict prevention and resolution interventions.** Through this, UNDP has participated in more than 30 prospective missions, conditions analysis, and technical support or evaluation of the existing institutions for prevention and conflict management in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

• **Development of conflict analysis tools**, such as conflict and development analysis, the analysis of prospective policies and scenarios, or feasibility missions for dialogue processes.

• **Early warning systems** and platforms to monitor demands that could generate conflicts.

• **Design and implementation of protocols** of intervention for conflict management.

In diverse contexts such as Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Peru, UNDP has worked with human rights defense/Ombudsman's offices to make these conflict analysis instruments available and provide training courses for those who participate in the dialogue and mediation processes, and promote the use of software for the monitoring and follow-up of social conflicts.

The conflicts cannot be tackled through mediation alone, nor through just one peace process; rather, they require permanent and sustainable mechanisms on local and national levels in each country

Assessment of government capacities for conflict prevention and resolution in Guatemala

Guatemalan society confronts conflicts in diverse sectors that establish serious challenges to the governability: mining, natural resources, access to land, supply of electric energy, territorial limits, cultural identities, justice, education, and more. UNDP prepared a diagnostic report about conflicts in Guatemala and capacities of different entities and institutions of the state, as well as the relevant actors from civil society to prevent, manage, resolve and/or transform conflicts in a peaceful, democratic, coordinated, and sustainable way. As part of the study, impressions and complaints of the communities regarding the existing conflict prevention and resolution institutions were collected, identifying potential opportunities for collaboration with the country in the area of social conflict prevention.

Design and implementation of the Conflict Prevention National System in Peru

For the last several years, UNDP has offered technical assistance and financial support to the former social conflicts office of Peru. With the Supreme Decree 106-2012-PCM, on October 25, 2012, this office was turned into the Office of National Dialogue and Sustainability (ONDS), as a technical organization specializing in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The ONDS is the public organization in charge of directing the dialogue processes with the diverse social actors, and representatives of private institutions and public officials, with the objective of preventing controversies, differences and social conflicts its competency fields. The Office also facilitates the mediation and/or negotiation for conflict solutions.

PERU IS A COUNTRY THAT HAS EXPERIENCED RISING LEVELS OF CONFLICT LINKED TO ITS EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES DUE TO ITS SIZE, ETHNIC DIVERSITY, AND MINERAL AND GEOGRAPHIC WEALTH

3 Democratic dialogue

In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP has centered a large part of its efforts on supporting multi-party dialogue processes oriented at the construction of medium and long-term consensus. In contrast to the tools and techniques such as debate, negotiation, deliberation, and mediation, which follow concrete accords between representatives of organizations and specific interests, the dialogue processes seek to transform conflicting relations and develop a collective understanding that contributes to transforming the conflicts into opportunities.

Through the Regional Democratic Dialogue Project, created by UNDP in 2001, contributions have been made to the construction of an analytical and conceptual framework (principles, methodologies, manuals, and good practices) as well as the design and facilitation of numerous initiatives and dialogue processes from a Latin American perspective.

> The costs of conflict: The diverse violence cost estimation models of violence show losses to the GDP of the countries between 1.5% and 4%, depending on the duration of the conflict, as well as an increase in security costs, capital flight, destruction to physical capital, loss of productivity and increase in transaction costs

Diagnostic of electoral conflict in Mexico derived from the coexistence of traditional and indigenous systems

Mexico recognized the jurisdictional and political autonomy of the indigenous populations to elect their governments according to their own normative systems, which constitutes an unprecedented advancement in the fulfillment of international norms and the consolidation of the rights of indigenous populations. In Mexico, 28 indigenous electoral districts are recognized in 11 federal entities (Campeche, Chiapas, Mexico State, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Veracruz and Yucatán). In various federal entities, the indigenous normative processes for the election of municipal authorities are also recognized. Paradoxically, the juridical plurality has generated an increase in post-electoral conflicts. UNDP has untied efforts with the Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute of Oaxaca to carry out a diagnostic about the electoral conflict in districts that are governed by traditional normative systems, and form Dialogue and Mediation for officials from federal and state electoral institutions, as well as key actors in the indigenous communities. It has also contributed to the development of an Institutional Action Protocol that works to prevent and address conflict in these municipalities.

Construction of ethical and transparent electoral processes in Honduras

Prior to the 2013 presidential elections, UNDP facilitated the opening of a dialogue process among representatives of the 9 political parties and electoral authorities of Honduras, which culminated in the signing of a protocol called

"Commitments to Minimum Guarantees for the Ethics and Electoral Transparency," with the aim of achieving a clean electoral process without aggression, and with respect for the results.

Conciliation between colonial and indigenous populations in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, UNDP designed, facilitated, and accompanied as an observer a long dialogue process between the indigenous populations from the south of the country and the national government. The process revolved around five strategic topics that were causing tensions in the relations with the colonies in the indigenous territorial zones, which had led to isolated episodes of violence. For over a year, 7 representatives from the indigenous populations and seven from the government formally made up the

Dialogue Table, in which they exchanged, analyzed, signed agreements, and followed-upon the implementation of the following areas:

• Territorial security
• Governability of the territories
• Public policies and development plans for the territories
• The Autonomous Development of Indigenous Populations law
• The right to consultation of the indigenous populations in Buenos Aries and Pérez Zeledón

THE PROCESS WENT AROUND FIVE STRATEGIC ISSUES WHICH WERE PRODUCING TENSIONS AMONG LOCAL ACTORS

Peace training

The UNDP has promoted the integration of analysis, management, and the handling of conflicts in the national development plans, as well as in the design, management and facilitation of dialogue of political and social leaders, and the United Nations System personnel and facilitators, with the aim of strengthening the leadership capacities to confront the collective problems of developing countries.

On a regional level, UNDP developed and launched, through a Virtual School Platform, a pilot version of a Virtual Course about Conflicts and Peace Building in Latin America, orienting the development of conceptual abilities and applying tools for the identification, prevention, and intervention in conflict situations, with a focus on conflict transformation and peace building.

More than 150 people that work with conflict prevention tools have completed the "Democratic Dialogue" course, developed over the last three years through the Virtual School platform as an online, independent course, contributing to the capacitation and development of key actors.

Citizen trials: two deliberative public participation experiences in science and technology in Uruguay

In Uruguay, conflicts about the use of natural resources have peaked over the last years. Technical support and facilitation at the National Conference of Mining and Sustainable Development were offered with the goal to exchange expertise to learn about the background of the subject and seek ways to manage conflict collaboratively. The publication "Citizen Trials in Uruguay: Two Deliberate Experiences in Public Participation in Science and Technology" was put on by the University of the Republic of Uruguay. The goal of this publication is to contribute to the study of general problems and facilitate their comprehension by the public and to gather two experiences of the application of a methodology of deliberate public participation in scientific-technological controversies (which include environmental controversies).

Online course on Democratic Dialogue in El Salvador

In El Salvador, the virtual Democratic Dialogue course was spread to important political actors. There were also two spaces created for the reflection of consultations and political dialogue, with members of the Economic and Social Council, promoted by the "Second Generation of Democratic Agreements" project.

Dialogue facilitator and mediator Community of Practice in Bolivia

In Bolivia, UNDP promoted the consolidation of a practice community for dialogue mediators and facilitators. It has sponsored spaces to reflect on the regional conflict and the potential of the previous consultation as a tool to prevent conflicts, analyze and manage socio-environmental conflicts, and to use the new Democratic Dialogue Practice Guide drafted by UNDP and the Organization of American States with officials from the government, municipalities, the Agrarian Reform Institute, territorial headquarters, social organizations, NGOs, and Universities.

National Development Plan in Sint Maarten

In Sint Maarten, there was a capacity building program (both virtual and in person) about prevention tools, analysis and conflict management, with the goal to empower the national dialogue process for the elaboration and validation of the National Development Plan.

Knowledge production and sharing

UNDP has a wide selection of conflict prevention and democratic dialogue materials: methodologies, case studies, systematization of concrete experiences, databases, an updated website -www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org-, which receives an average of 41,000 visitors per year and from which a total of 411,415 documents have been downloaded since its creation in 2005.

In addition, it has a roster of specialized consultants in prevention, resolution, and conflict and dialogue management.

The activities carried out in 2013 for the expertise production and exchange focused on sharing and strengthening the capacities of the actors immersed in conflict contexts.

Democratic Dialogue Practice Guide
Through a joint effort between UNDP and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, a Democratic Dialogue Practice Guide was published in Spanish and English. The guide summarizes the contents of the "Democratic Dialogue-A Manual for Practitioners" in a concise, agile and amicable way, and is geared towards the different social actors that work in dialogue initiatives.

Orientation practice guide for the development of warning and early response systems in Conflict Prevention
As a second phase of the joint work with the Organization of American States, a "Practice Guide for the Development of Warning and Early Response Systems in Conflict Prevention" is being developed. This will be published during the second semester of 2014.

Preventing or "tackling" conflicts in early phases turns out to be infinitely less expensive than in later phases

HONDURAS

Construction of ethical and transparent electoral processes
Technical advice to sustained dialogue: Active Citizenship Dialogue Group

CENTRAL AMERICA

Design and facilitation of a workshop on the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 with the participation of representatives of 15 Latin American Ombudsman Offices

MEXICO

Diagnostic of electoral conflict in Mexico derived from the coexistence of traditional and indigenous systems
Technical advice to establish a multi-stake-holderdialogue to design principles and norms leading to displaced persons legislation in the State of Chiapas

SINT MAARTEN

Capacity strengthening for the elaboration of the National Development Plan in Sint Maarten

GUATEMALA

Assessment of government capacities for conflict prevention and resolution

EL SALVADOR

Online course on Democratic Dialogue
Technical advice to high-level multistakeholder dialogue tables on issues of citizen security, education, health and economic policy, growth and competitiveness

COSTA RICA

Conciliation between colonial and indigenous populations

PANAMA

Elaboration of Integral Development Plan of indigenous groups in Panama
Technical advice to dialogue between government and Ngäbe-Buglé indigenous people leading to specific legislation on natural - mineral, environmental and hydric-resources protection on indigenous territories.
Technical support to government to design the "Intersectoral Dialogue Table" for health care reform

COLOMBIA

Evaluation of the Colombia-Ecuador Bi-national Dialogue
Technical advice forthe establishment of the regional peace tables to end armed conflict called by the Senate and the Peace Commission of the House of Representatives
Technical advice for the establishment of thematic forum called by the National University to contribute to peace negotiation in Havana

PERU

Technical advice to the Sustainability and Dialogue National Office for the implementation of an early warning system
Technical advice to the Ombudsman's Office in Convention No. 169 and previous consultation
Design and implementation of the Conflict Prevention National System

PARAGUAY

Technical support to government to establish high-level social dialogue tables on social and labour policy, economic policy, health and education, public services and rural development

BOLIVIA

Capacity strengthening for conflict transformation: Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Campesino, Indigenous, and Native Women of Bolivia
Dialogue facilitator and mediator Community of Practice
Systematization of the Dialogue process which led to the new Political Constitution approval

URUGUAY

Citizen trials: two deliberative public participation experiences in science and technology

Examples from the regional portfolio 2013