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ACRONYMS

SIGLA SIGNIFICADO

ACUS	Conservation and Sustainable Use Areas
ADG	Autonomous Decentralised Government
Agrocalidad	Agency for Plant and Animal Health Regulation and Control
BDE	Development Bank of Ecuador
CONGOPE	Consortium of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador
CPCCS	Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control
DINAPEN	National Directorate of Specialised Police for Children and Teenagers
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
INIAP	National Institute for Agricultural Research
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LRG	Local and Regional Governments
MAATE	Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MIES	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MPCEIP	Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDyOT	Development and Land Management Plans
PRO ECUADOR	Institute for the Promotion of Exports and Foreign Investments
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SENESCYT	Secretariat for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
SERCOP	National Public Procurement Service
SRI	Internal Revenue Service
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments Organization
UN	United Nations System
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organisation





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Presentation

According to the analysis conducted in 2023 by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region are not progressing as expected; only 24.6% of the targets would be achieved if the current trend continues, but even more worryingly, 27.0% of these targets are on a downward trend. These figures reflect that more than 50% of the SDG targets in the Latin American continent will not be met by 2030, which has led the global community and especially the Global South to debate and contribute ideas on how to reverse this trend with the task of making all voices heard.

Within the framework of this concern and the need for action, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, had the relevant initiative to create the United Nations Advisory Group of Local and Regional Governments, to which I was honoured to be invited to be part of, with the aim of reflecting on and proposing initiatives to strengthen the role of local governments in sustainable development agendas.

Beyond the enormous responsibility that this assignment has implied for me personally, this appointment has allowed me to bring the voice of the Ecuadorian territories to the global decision-making spheres, raising the need for our vision to be incorporated in the debates and in the processes of defining multilateral agendas. As a member of the Advisory Group, I have had the opportunity to highlight the contribution of local governments to the achievement of the SDGs and to propose innovative mechanisms that guarantee and empower the participation of territories in the multilateral system.

With this preamble, from CONGOPE, in collaboration with the United Nations System, we decided that my role as a member of the Advisory Group would be participatory and we executed workshops

focused on the Pact for the Future; addressing four priority axes: Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Challenges for Financing Development in Local Governments, Collective Peace Building and Eradication of Violence, and Youth Perspectives for the Future. These workshops were held in four provinces of the country with the participation of around 600 representatives of more than 40 organisations from various sectors, including civil society, civil servants, NGOs, observatories, diplomatic missions and private institutions.

Among the different contributions, I would like to highlight that, from a local perspective, we firmly believe that the global governance model needs a new social pact that puts life and nature at the centre of the discussion, and that recovers the role of the State in guaranteeing our rights. A governance that implements effective mechanisms mainly for the sowing and harvesting of water, the financial structure, peace building and the involvement of young people.

The protection of water sources and the reduction of soil erosion are fundamental components of sustainable development, as well as the fight against climate change. These practices aim to conserve and restore aquatic ecosystems, recharge aquifers, regulate the water cycle and prevent natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Encouraging these activities is crucial to ensure the availability of quality water for future generations and to promote environmental balance on the planet.

The financial structure designed and inherited from the last century does not respond with the agility required by the territories to be served; a clear example from the needs of society is that while some regions of the world discuss how to address the industrial revolution 4.0, others - the vast majority - are still wondering how to solve unmet needs as basic as roads, sewerage, drinking water and internet access, to name a few. ***On the other hand, from the perspective of Local and Regional Governments, critical examples that need to be innovated in this structure are the dependence of sub-national governments on resources from the Central State, the generation of their own income***

for provincial governments and self-management, access to alternative sources of financing for projects in the territory, legal frameworks and public policies differentiated for the territories to provide opportunities for investors, among others.

Collective peacebuilding and violence eradication requires joining wills and efforts towards the construction of a more just and equitable future in order to jointly foster a safer society. It is essential to recognise that eradicating violence and maintaining peace are indispensable pillars for sustainable development and the reconstruction of the social network.

Creating spaces for young people and adults to talk about our future prospects is imperative for building a more prosperous and equitable future for a better society in harmony with our planet.

These contributions can only materialise through the active participation of local governments in global dialogues to ensure that the proposed solutions are relevant and effective for the diverse realities we face. The inputs generated in these workshops show that there are still great challenges to overcome and that local voices must be an integral part of the global agenda for governance guided by dialogue with citizens, to achieve a dignified life in harmony with nature.

The workshops reveal the need for inclusive and multidimensional approaches, recognising the interconnectedness between our local realities and global challenges; that allocate sufficient resources to eradicate all forms of violence and inequalities we face by pushing for greater justice and equity in decision-making processes.

All these contributions are presented to you in this document, which is the result of a rigorous process of systematisation of the information gathered in the workshops. Its approach has two objectives: to give back to the territories their contributions and to provide the Secretary-General with a document that has been jointly constructed from local realities. It highlights the fact that Local Governments have the strength

of being closer to the population, that we know first hand the challenges faced by citizens in the face of the multi-crisis that are permeating all areas for the integral development of our society.

In this effort, I would like to express my gratitude to all the actors who, from different spheres, have contributed to the elaboration of this document, particularly to the Provincial Governments of Azuay, Pastaza, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Imbabura, which hosted each of the workshops, to the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Ecuador, as well as to its agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Youth Advisory Committee of the European Union.

I hope that the results of these workshops will be a contribution and guide to a new cycle of intergovernmental collaboration both at the national level and in the multilateral system, underlining that global development is also nurtured by local initiatives and experiences.



**President of CONGOPE
Provincial Prefect of Pichincha**

The Consultative Group of Local and Regional Governments within the framework of the Summit of the Future





I. The Consultative Group of Local and Regional Governments within the framework of the Summit of the Future

In 2023, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations System (UNS), issued a global call to action to **accelerate the implementation of existing international agreements**, including the 2030 Agenda with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This call was set out in the document **"Our Common Agenda"**. Through this initiative, the Secretary proposed to hold the **Summit of the Future** in September 2024, a high-level event aimed at "bringing together world leaders to **forge a new international consensus** to improve the present and safeguard the future" and **"demonstrating that international cooperation can effectively achieve agreed goals** and address emerging threats and opportunities." As a result of the Summit, world leaders are expected to adopt the Pact for the Future, an international agreement that will include the new global consensus for the achievement of the SDGs.

For thirty years, it has been recognised as important that **organised groups of local and regional governments** (LRGs) of UN Member States **are formally recognised as part of the UN system**¹, **considering the crucial role that these levels of government play in addressing global challenges and implementing intergovernmental agendas**, including the SDGs. In Our Common Agenda, **the Secretary-General recommended the creation of an Advisory Group of Local and Regional Governments** to recommend and build a narrative that gives more prominence to the structural political commitment, ownership and action that LRGs should systematically play in meeting global goals as part of the international intergovernmental system. The Future Summit,

1. En 2023, por ejemplo, el Consejo Asesor de Alto Nivel sobre Multilateralismo Efectivo, aconsejó en su informe "explorar la creación de un estatus formal y permanente de los GLR, que debería determinarse durante la Cumbre del Futuro". Adicionalmente, sugirió que se considere "la participación directa de los GRL en los procesos pertinentes de los tratados multilaterales, permitiéndoles convertirse en signatarios con responsabilidades, de la misma manera que el actual tratado sobre plásticos busca involucrar y obligar al sector privado".

"in its attempt to revitalise the ambition to achieve the 2030 Agenda, should seek to **further close the gap between global commitments and local agendas** for effective and successful implementation by all partners and actors".

As strategic partners of the UN and in **preparation for the Summit of the Future, the Secretary-General defined the following objective for the Advisory Group** and assigned it the development of four specific deliverables until September 2024:

General objective

Define a special, formal and permanent status for organised groups of local and regional governments in the main political bodies of the United Nations. Such a status should:

- I) Strengthen the permanent participation of local and regional governments in intergovernmental processes by **formalising the relationship with the UN General Assembly**;
- II) Further enhance and formalise the **special status of LRGs in the UN Economic and Social Council**, through their participation in the High-Level Political Forum with recognition as a specific and distinct group beyond the current Major Group and Other Stakeholders; and,
- III) **Recognise the special role of local and regional governments in achieving the 2030 Agenda and other global agendas** by strengthening and formalising their engagement with the United Nations System.

Products under its responsibility

1. First input document **for the Summit of the Future** to ensure that local and regional government dimensions are reflected in the relevant preparatory processes.

2. A guidance note on **mechanisms and procedures for the participation of local and regional governments in intergovernmental decision-making processes.**
3. **A policy brief with strategic guidance** and policy advocacy to **strengthen cooperation between national, local and regional governments and UN country teams** to advance national planning processes, anchored in local realities to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and other international agreements.
4. As a final outcome, the Advisory Group will provide its **recommendations to the Secretary-General to inform the deliberations of Member States in the run-up to the Future Summit**, with a view to advising on a comprehensive UN strategy for LRG engagement, including institutional mechanisms, intergovernmental processes and partnership arrangements, to strengthen contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

The creation of the Consultative Group, composed of 20 committed LRG members from around the world, sends a clear message to Member States on the importance of recognising the added value of greater LRG participation to increase the effectiveness of the multilateral system, considering, among another aspects, that:²

- *“LRGs, as **political actors in their own right, with policy-making capacity and responsibilities for inclusive service delivery, directly influence the quality of life of communities.** (...) They are often the level of government with the most direct engagement with vulnerable populations and communities. They are **closest to protect and promote their human rights**”*
- ***LRGs have direct experience in responding to the unpredictable***

2. Síntesis de la Adenda sobre el aumento gradual de la representación estructural de los gobiernos locales y regionales en el Sistema de las Naciones Unidas, elaborada por el Grupo Consultivo en marzo de 2024.

impacts of climate change, as well as significant responsibility for managing migration flows and integrating refugees. Their experience, in these and other areas, could contribute to improving the quality of global policymaking by scaling up local evidence and data.

- *"It is imperative to implement global policies at the local level to ensure their broad and meaningful impact (...). Stronger multi-level governance could improve coordination and empower sub-national levels, through delegated powers for resource mobilisation, access to finance, planning and implementation of urgent sustainable development initiatives."*

In September 2023, **Prefect Paola Pabón, President of the Consortium of Provincial Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE), was appointed by the UN Secretary-General himself as a member of this Advisory Group**, in recognition of her knowledge and expertise in the field of multilevel governance to adapt global efforts to the local level.³ In the framework of this emblematic designation in the country's history, **CONGOPE decided to prepare a document that would gather the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in the provinces on the main issues covered by the five chapters of the Pact for the Future.** To this end, in coordination with the Provincial Governments of Azuay, Pastaza, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Imbabura and with the support of the United Nations Office in Ecuador, **CONGOPE organized four workshops, in each of which the voices** of women, youth, academia, civil society and the general public **were collected**, as well as the perspectives of representatives of provincial, municipal and parish Autonomous Decentralised Government, national and international non-profit organisations, institutes, observatories, private institutions, among other..

The purpose of the workshops was to gather, in a participatory manner, the diverse views of the participating actors on the problems, proposals

3. El mismo año, la prefecta Paola Pabón también fue nombrada Presidenta de la Sección Foro de Regiones y Vicepresidenta Mundial de la Organización de Ciudades y Gobiernos Unidos (CGLU).

and potential alliances, in each of the topics discussed at the meetings. Each workshop had thematic axes, specific sub-themes and guiding questions to motivate discussion. **The four workshops had the following main topics:**

- *Sustainable Development and Climate Change*
- *Challenges for Financing Development in Local Governments*
- *Collective Peacebuilding and the Eradication of Violence*
- *Youth Perspectives for the Future*

The methodology of each workshop consisted of introductory presentations on the theme of the meeting aimed at motivating discussion, which were presented by specialists from the UN, invited experts and representatives of CONGOPE. After the presentations, multi-stakeholder groups were formed for each of the sub-themes of the workshop. The group work was supported by facilitation and systematisation teams and participants had the possibility to choose the group in which they preferred to participate, according to available subtopics. The discussion was conducted on the basis of the guiding questions for each theme. Once the group work was completed, the results of the analysis of each group were shared in the general plenary of the workshop.

This document presents a synthesis of the analysis carried out by each of the workshop's groups on the challenges, proposals and alliances required to promote, from the subnational level, actions that can contribute to the fulfilment of the global development goals. This report is made up of four chapters, each one corresponding to one of the workshops held in the various cities of the country to share the "voices of the provinces of Ecuador" with the world, within the framework of the Summit and the Pact for the Future. Special acknowledgements to all stakeholders participating in each of these spaces for reflection and collective construction for contributing with ideas and innovative



strategies for the achievement of development objectives at the local, national and global levels. It is hoped that this process will make it possible to share with the world the needs, interests, challenges and potential of the different territorial stakeholders in the various development axes that were analysed during the meetings.

Workshop “Sustainable Development and Climate Change”





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II. Workshop “Sustainable Development and Climate Change”

A. Introduction

The workshop “Sustainable Development and Climate Change” was held in Cuenca on 25 April 2024, with the aim of generating reflection and debate on the implications for the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of a triple climate crisis characterised by climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The workshop aimed to identify, from multiple voices, challenges, experiences, alternatives, proposals and alliances to generate transitions towards sustainable production and consumption models. The workshop was attended by 81 participants, including representatives from one ministry, four public institutions, three provincial, five municipal and fourteen parish local governments, two universities, two international cooperation agencies, five NGOs and foundations, and two civil society organisations. In addition, the workshop benefited from the contributions of experts in development and financing.

This chapter presents a synthesis of the analysis and proposals put forward by the diversity of stakeholders from the territories who participated in this meeting, regarding eight themes prioritised for this workshop, four for each thematic axis. Each sub-theme corresponded to a multi-stakeholder group work.

Thematic axis 1. Climate change and sustainable agri-food systems

- Sustainable production resilient to climate change.
- Productive innovation and resilient markets.
- Social participation and alliances for urban-rural articulation to promote sustainable production.
- Responsible consumption and ecological resilience.

Thematic axis 2. Climate change and gender

- Biodiversity conservation.
- Ecosystem restoration.

- Climate action to address climate risks.
- Water conservation for development.

B. Summary of the workshop

Main issues identified in the workshop

State resources are insufficient to promote sustainable territorial development models adapted to local needs. LRGs lack the necessary normative framework, budget and competences to promote environmental conservation and urban-rural integration projects. In addition, there is a lack of articulation between the Development and Land Management Plans at different government levels. Similarly, there is a lack of coordination within the sub-national governments to maximise the economic and human resources available. On the other hand, regulations are not effectively enforced to stop the expansion of the agricultural frontier and deforestation, and environmental studies are not mandatory for the implementation of all projects. Pollution generated by mining and hydroelectric companies is not controlled either. The competences of the LRGs for the protection of water sources and the preservation of protected areas are limited. Citizen participation in the formulation of local policies is also weak.

With regard to production, there are insufficient rules to regulate intermediation and support and protect small producers. The technical and technological capacity at the local level is insufficient and the technological packages offered are not adapted to the local reality, nor are they adapted to safeguarding the environment. Access to production inputs is also limited. Training in sustainable practices is lacking, as is risk prevention throughout the different phases of production. There is a lack of reliable information systems for product traceability and monitoring of production, consumption and marketing. Local capacities in food issues are also limited.

In addition, there is a deficiency of innovation strategies to reduce costs, improve competitiveness and strengthen the associativity of

small producers. Initiatives to strengthen urban-rural linkages, including markets linking producers and consumers and activities such as rural tourism, are also scarce. Civil society's support for local entrepreneurship is also insufficient. Likewise, the actions of the Academy are not articulated with territorial demands.

Finally, there are gender gaps in the rural sector and few employment opportunities for young people and rural farmers. Similarly, there is an absence of environmental education strategies within communities and awareness-raising campaigns that allow the urban population to recognise the work of rural communities for environmental conservation. There is also insufficient dissemination of information on the impacts of extractive activities on the territories and the advocacy role played by communities.

Key proposals from stakeholders participating in the workshop

It is necessary to articulate the Development and Land Management Plans among the different levels of local governments and to establish a multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance mechanism, including the creation of sectoral roundtables to promote local development. It is necessary to issue regulations that establish participatory budgets for rural areas and guarantee an adequate distribution of resources. It is essential to implement territorial planning processes, based on information and taking into account climate issues, as well as sustainable and economically viable production models that include environmental compensation for those who contribute to conservation.

It is important to establish regulations and policies that clearly define the limits of protected areas - including water protection areas -ensuring that they are adjusted to territorial realities. It is necessary to incorporate vulnerable areas in the Land Use and Management Plans of the municipal governments, promoting inter-institutional alliances for conservation. It is crucial to implement projects aimed at protecting water sources and to carry out periodic evaluations of water quantity and quality. It

is essential to strengthen coordination in order to effectively sanction those who infringe environmental regulations. It is recommended to promote research, strengthening the link between Academia and the territory for the measurement and monitoring of natural resources. It is also essential that the LRG can promote actions linked to the promotion of energy alternatives for their territories, fundamentally to guarantee energy autonomy in low water seasons.

In the production sphere, it is fundamental to provide training and technical assistance to local producers in soil management and conservation, actions for biodiversity conservation, conservation of natural heritage, strategies for transitions from conventional production to agricultural practices, among others. Strategies need to be developed to increase production, improve crop profitability and compete effectively with agribusiness, including access to financing for machinery and technology. It is also necessary to promote associativity, so that small producers can access opportunities and services, including product gathering centres and price-fixing agreements with other actors in the chain.

It is also necessary to strengthen strategies for the dissemination of products and services. Innovative actions are needed to ensure direct access of rural producers to urban markets. It is essential to implement actions to make the prices of agroecological products more affordable for consumers. It is important to have adequate spaces for direct marketing. It could be also interesting to form an association that brings together rural producers and urban consumers. All this with the aim of strengthening food security and sovereignty and local economies, as well as contributing to the reduction of migration of the rural population.

On the other hand, it is necessary to include environmental education in the curriculum of all educational levels. It is suggested to develop educational and communication campaigns on responsible consumption, in collaboration with local governments, and to create educational projects for schools and colleges. It is also necessary to raise awareness

among urban residents about the role of rural communities in the conservation of water resource areas and, in general, in the preservation of natural resources.

For this set of actions, it is necessary to rely on the support of LRG, international organisations and to explore new financing and cooperation mechanisms focused on prioritised strategic actions, in collaboration with the private sector. It is recommended to identify sources of financing focused on environmental and climate change agendas. Tax incentives can also be explored to provide more resources for local initiatives to protect natural resources, as well as for environmental remediation, development of agroforestry programmes through technification, among others.

C. Working Group 1. Sustainable production resilient to climate change

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the topic

Prioritised challenges:

- Insufficient public strategies and financial resources to support agricultural development proposals at the local level that respond to the specific needs of the territories, including the elaboration of a rural agricultural cadastre required to implement territorial management plans.
- Lack of implementation of alternatives to stop the advance of the agricultural frontier (such as reforestation or transition to sustainable agriculture models).
- Deficiency of adequate regulations for producers and intermediaries along the entire production chain, as well as for the promotion of associative work and for the protection of small producers.

Other identified challenges:

- Limited attention to local needs during the definition of public technology packages and agricultural technical assistance.

- Weak production planning and low yields, which makes it difficult to respond to demand and to guarantee quality products.
- Insufficient product gathering centres in the LRGs to sell products at fair prices and lack of effective coordination between different institutions.
- Insufficient connection between producers and the market, which makes it difficult to coordinate efforts.
- Persistence of an urban-rural gender equality gap.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Establish clear policies on the boundaries of protected areas and develop regulations adjusted to territorial realities.
- Implement territorial planning processes based on primary information and develop plans, programmes and projects aimed at the protection of springs and watersheds. Provide compensation in the framework of the adoption of sustainable and economically viable production models.
- Create sectoral roundtables to promote local development.
- Explore new funding mechanisms in partnership with the private sector.
- Establish adequate spaces for the commercialisation of products.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, National Institute of Agricultural Research, Consortium of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador, Provincial, Municipal and Parish LRGs, Academia, NGOs, private sector, local and international trade organisations, media, producers and communities.

D. Working Group 2. Productive Innovation and Resilient Markets

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Limited access to technology and innovation strategies to reduce costs, achieve competitiveness and strengthen associativity.
- Insufficient training in sustainable practices and risk prevention throughout the different phases of production.
- Lack of reliable information systems that allow product traceability and monitoring of production, consumption and commercialization.

Other challenges identified:

- Limited technical and technological training for small producers in the use of machinery, livestock practices, soil pollution control, implementation of live fences and irrigation systems.
- Low adaptability of markets to local conditions, with price manipulation, instability and unreliability of transactions, coupled with significant losses of products during transport due to poor logistics infrastructure.
- Limited employment opportunities for young people and rural farmers.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Provide technical support to producers in soil management and conservation. Research and implement strategies to increase crop production and profitability. Implement machinery to speed up the processing of raw materials and improve waste management.
- Facilitate access to concessional financing for technology acquisition.
- Implement strategies that enable small producers to compete with agribusiness.
- Encourage associativity between organisations to access better opportunities and benefits, such as product gathering and storing centres and fixed prices.

- Connecting end consumers with producers in order to strengthen production security, local economy and sovereignty.
- Support agricultural production to make it a more profitable and attractive activity and reduce migration.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, LRG, international cooperation agencies, NGOs, Academia, financial institutions, savings and credit cooperatives, private sector, civil society, producers.

E. Working Group 3. Social participation and alliances for an urban-rural articulation that promotes sustainable production.

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of regulations and budget for local governments to promote urban-rural integration projects, with a focus on gender, sustainable development and environmental conservation.
- Limitations in the competences assigned to local governments for the preservation of protected areas.
- Insufficient initiatives to strengthen urban-rural articulations in agricultural production chains, including markets and activities such as tourism.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of social participation in the formulation of local public policies.
- Insufficient support from public institutions and bureaucracy in the public procurement system. Limited investments in rural areas that promote social and economic development and environmental conservation in the territories.
- Disarticulation of Academia with territorial needs in various fields.
- Scarce civil society support for alternative economies and local producers and entrepreneurs.
- Little access to technology to reduce environmental pollution.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Issue regulations that establish participatory budgets for rural areas.
- Create working groups to identify and link urban and rural needs and generate alliances between local governments and territorial actors.
- Count on the support of sub-national governments and international cooperation to ensure direct access of rural products to urban markets and to develop other articulation strategies.
- Create a Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods and Rural Associations.
- Encourage agroecological producers through subsidies and agricultural inputs for urban gardens, with a focus on Peasant Family Farming.
- Develop agrotourism projects, with adequate design, evaluation and follow-up strategies. Strengthen initiatives for the dissemination of products and services.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, National Assembly, provincial and parish governments, other public institutions, Academia, NGOs, civil society, feminist organisations in the territory, rural federations and associations, trade unions, neighbourhood federations, priority attention groups and students.

F. Working Group 4. Responsible Consumption and Ecological Resilience

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- ▪ Lack of regulations and limited communication strategies to disseminate responsible consumption.
- Insufficient public support for responsible consumption.
- Uncompetitive prices for agro-ecological products and scarcity of less expensive alternatives for consumers.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of agricultural policies that promote sustainable production and care for the environment. Lack of funding to promote territorial development models that contribute to building fairer and more equitable communities.
- Insufficient technical capacity in agriculture and food issues.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Implement public policies developed from sectoral roundtables in which territorial demands are analysed, focusing on price regulation, the quality of healthy products and the protection of water sources, including the delimitation of forested areas and reforestation. Implement plans, programmes and projects that include incentives for those who protect the environment and contribute to sustainable economic production models, generating alliances with diverse actors. Explore new financing mechanisms in alliance with the private sector.
- Offer training and technical support to local producers, so as to improve their income and reduce migration.
- Create market places that make local organic production visible as a sustainable alternative, with certification, and at affordable prices for consumers.
- Develop educational and communication campaigns on responsible consumption in alliance with local governments and generate educational projects in schools and colleges.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, National Assembly, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, Superintendence of Market Control, Internal Revenue Service, National Public Procurement Service, Agrocalidad, Consortium of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador, provincial, cantonal and parish local governments, international

cooperation agencies, NGOs, public and private financial entities, private companies, local organisations and the community.

G. Working Group 5. Biodiversity Conservation

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the topic

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of articulation between the Land Management and Development Plans of the provincial, municipal and parish local governments.
- Deficiency of strategies to address climatic and anthropogenic risks, combat illegal mining and have an adequate management of hydroelectric projects.
- Deficient knowledge on the management of large animals, responsible ownership of small species, biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as on the expansion of the agricultural frontier and burning in upland areas.
- Absence of knowledge among urban residents including youth about the difficulties faced by people in rural areas in caring for water recharge areas.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Articulate the Land Management and Development Plans between the various levels of LRG.
- Implement a system of incentives and sanctions that contributes to biodiversity conservation.
- Promote laws and strategies for the care and protection of rural areas, promoting recreational activities and strengthening awareness through education campaigns in rural and urban areas.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, Agrocalidad, provincial, cantonal and parish local governments, international cooperation agencies, Academia, private companies, NGOs, civil society, the community, producers.

H. Working Group 6. Ecosystem restoration

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the topic

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of regulations and public policies that include an administrative and budgetary plan and the obligation to carry out environmental studies.
- Necessary financial resources are not allocated to parish governments for the implementation of projects.
- Deficiency of environmental education strategies within the communities, including training spaces with alternative methodologies to address issues such as biodiversity conservation, the advance of the agricultural frontier, the loss of natural heritage, the transition from traditional agricultural production to regenerative methods, adequate territorial planning, and the impact of extractive activities, among others.

Other challenges identified:

- Indiscriminate aggregate and stone mining without effective control by the competent authorities.
- There are no university projects, as part of community engagement strategies, that contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs.
- Little cooperation between institutions in the intervention areas.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Implement regulations in the territory, including sanctions, enforcing competences of parish councils. Promote decentralisation and guarantee environmental compensation in the areas of influence.
- Allocate budget and environmental incentives to Conservation and Sustainable Use Areas. Have specialists in the economic field to ensure an adequate distribution of resources.

- Strengthen capacities through awareness-raising workshops in the territory to promote good practices.
- Promote research, in alliance with universities.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, provincial, cantonal and parish local governments, public institutions, international cooperation agencies, Academia, NGOs and the community. Local and international inter-institutional agreements.

I. Working Group 7. Climate action on climate risks

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- There is a lack of funding for provincial and municipal governments to implement mitigation initiatives.
- There is no coordination within the sub-national governments to take advantage of economic and human resources for the planning and implementation of actions.
- Inefficient use of resources and lack of proposals for the de-concentration of electricity generation; to promote strategies for alternative renewable energies; and to reduce the risks that hydroelectric plants face in times of low water levels.

Other challenges identified:

- There is no adequate baseline and information system that would be useful for policy formulation.
- Changes in administration in the public sector create blockages to the advancement of projects in the rural sector.
- There is little knowledge on measuring climate risk in small territories, especially with regard to droughts and land degradation in livestock areas.

2. **Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges**

- Establish national policies with a climate focus, aligned with compliance with environmental regulations.
- Generate a multi-stakeholder, multi-level governance mechanism for climate action that identifies and prioritises climate change issues in order to establish strategies, targets and responsible actors.
- Identify sources of funding and cooperation focused on environmental and climate change issues.
- Encourage the link between Academia and territory for the measurement and monitoring of natural resources.
- Create integrated multi-level socio-environmental training processes to define areas of water interest, improve production processes and develop energy self-sufficient communities.

3. *Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals*

National Government, LRG, public institutions, strategic sectors, productive sector, academia, civil society organisations, neighbourhood and community leaders, small producers. Promote public-private partnerships.

J. **Working Group 8. Water Conservation for Development**

1. **Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme**

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of policies and incentives for environmental protection, including conservation of water sources. Failure of the government to comply with laws and respect the rights of nature by granting mining concessions in areas close to water sources. Sanctions for pollution are not implemented.
- Insufficient environmental education.

Other challenges identified:

- Reduced alignment with the Land Use and Management Plans.
- Indiscriminate use of plastic, uncontrolled agricultural expansion, and poorly planned reforestation projects.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- ▪ Incorporate vulnerable areas in the elaboration of the Land Use and Management Plans of the municipal governments, and promote inter-institutional alliances for water conservation.
- Carry out periodic water quality assessments and apply sanctions in accordance with current regulations. Allocate the economic resources obtained from sanctions to environmental protection and remediation programmes, including: developing agroforestry programmes and improving agroforestry systems through technification; as well as raising awareness and training local communities on river protection.
- Establish economic incentives - including tax incentives - for water resource protection, such as tax exemptions for conservation activities.
- Include environmental education in the curricula at all levels of education.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, Ministry of Education, local governments, Academia and civil society. Promote alliances between prefectures and parish local governments.

Workshop “Challenges for Financing Development in Local Governments”





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IV. Workshop “Challenges for Financing Development in Local Governments”

A. Introduction

The workshop “Challenges for development financing in local governments” was held in Puyo on 9 May 2024, with the objective of gathering and debating practical and viable proposals from local stakeholders on how to face the challenges of development financing in local governments. Guiding questions included how to improve self-financing capacities of LRG; how to enhance their access to alternative sources of financing; and how to promote investments that support sustainable development projects. The workshop was attended by 133 participants, including representatives of six ministries, one governorate, five public institutions, six provincial governments, four municipal governments, ten parish governments, five financial sector institutions (including savings and credit cooperatives), one university, one international cooperation agency, six NGOs and foundations, six civil society organisations, two representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities, five community organisations, two private sector entities and six local media. In addition, experts in development and financing participated in the meeting.

This chapter presents a synthesis of the analysis carried out by the diversity of actors participating in this space for dialogue and collective reflection around the problems, proposals and potential alliances in seven sub-themes that were addressed in multi-stakeholder roundtables. Each roundtable analysed one of the following sub-themes:

- *Access to alternative sources of funding for projects in the territory.*
- *Dependence of sub-national governments on central State resources.*
- *Generation of own revenues for provincial governments and self-management.*
- *Infrastructure projects as comprehensive interventions.*
- *Role of public banks and the private financial system in the financing of development projects.*

- *Local savings (cooperatives) as a source of financing for development projects.*
- *Territories' opportunities for investors.*

B. Summary of the workshop

Main issues identified in the workshop

Local needs are not integrated into national planning. Local governments do not have sufficient resources and technical capacities to implement actions in the areas of competence assigned to them and do not have access to various direct sources of funding, including international cooperation, which is centralised. The funding lines of several donor organisations are not aligned with the priorities of territorial actors. Local governments do not have their own income generation mechanisms, or they have limited ones (e.g. from local public enterprises or taxes). Additionally, in some sub-national governments there is evidence of corruption in the management of resources.

On the other hand, there is a lack of project formulation and management capacities in the territories (both in public institutions, which also face the challenge of high turnover of their teams, and in social organisations). There is little availability of quality information for project formulation and there is no mechanism to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of projects at the local level. Nor are there public policies that encourage local investment and promote territorial and productive development, with a focus on sustainability and inclusion.

The supply of credit products offered by public and private banks does not correspond to the territorial reality (high interest rates, inadequate guarantees and terms). In addition, local infrastructure is insufficient and hinders the economic and social development of the territory (roads, health, education, services for producers). Strategies to promote the agricultural and tourism sectors and the commercialisation of innovative local products (bio-enterprises, products with cultural value) are weak. Nor is the sustainability of development projects and enterprises ensured.

Key proposals from stakeholders participating in the workshop

It is necessary to implement multi-level strategic planning mechanisms that contribute to responding to the needs and demands of territorial actors, with an intersectional approach. It is essential to establish spaces for dialogue, articulation and multi-stakeholder coordination that allow different actors (central government, cooperation agencies, other donors, public and private banks, Academia) to be aware of local priorities, so that funding mechanisms can be aligned and contribute to them. It is also vital to diversify local governments' own sources of income and strengthen their technical capacity, so that the management of resources and territorial development projects can be efficient.

It is crucial to have multidisciplinary teams in local public institutions that are capable of mapping potential sources of funding, following up on calls for proposals, submitting proposals and managing the entire project cycle. It is critical to create a model for programme management, monitoring and evaluation at the local level and to implement transparency and accountability mechanisms that contribute to the credibility of territorial initiatives and facilitate access to new sources of funding. These teams should interact with citizen management committees knowledgeable about community life plans, whose technical capacities also need to be strengthened.

It is indispensable to promote regulations and public policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that promote rural, territorial and productive development projects that respond to the demands of the various territorial actors, with a focus on sustainability and environmental conservation. It is necessary to establish mechanisms that promote the participation and decision-making of the local population for the prioritisation of projects to be implemented. It is basic to strengthen road, educational and sanitary infrastructure and to create centres that provide training, technical assistance and support marketing strategies for small producers, community organisations and associative enterprises. It is essential to support various sectors,

including agriculture and tourism. Fair trade should be supported and the conservation of socio-environmental safeguards should be encouraged. Innovative products with a territorial and cultural identity should be promoted, for which it is important to foster alliances with research institutions.

It is essential to bring financial services closer to and adapt them to the diverse realities of territorial actors, including strategies to lower interest rates, make terms and collateral requirements more flexible - so that, for example, communities can access private and public bank loans with their collective land titles. Local savings need to be encouraged through financial education and inclusion strategies for rural communities (including access to digital tools) and the strengthening of local financial structures, including community savings banks and the establishment of networks between them. It is also necessary to incorporate inclusion policies in savings and credit cooperatives and banking institutions. Incentives need to be created to encourage territorial investments by various actors, including public-private partnerships.

C. Working Group 1. Access to alternative sources of financing for projects in the territory

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Local needs are not integrated into national planning.
- Limited capacities of technical staff to formulate high quality projects with a focus on sustainability, which would allow access to international cooperation.
- There is no mapping of funding bodies and the mechanisms for accessing different funds are unknown.
- Lack of articulation with organisations that have the capacity to access large-scale international cooperation and to establish agreements and conventions that facilitate multilevel cooperation projects.

Other challenges identified:

- Centralised cooperation from bilateral, multilateral agencies, local and international NGOs.
- Territorial actors are not involved in defining the lines of action negotiated with the cooperation.
- High staff turnover limits the availability of capacities to generate projects.
- Poor availability of quality information for project formulation.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Form committees that know the community life plans and the needs of each territory in order to draw up a map of the spheres and areas of intervention that could be supported by LRG and cooperation.
- Implement multi-level strategic planning mechanisms that contribute to respond to territorial needs, with a focus on inclusion and diversity. Strengthen spaces for multi-stakeholder articulation and coordination, including local and regional platforms that facilitate dialogue between community actors, local governments, CONGOPE, Academia, NGOs, cooperation agencies, the Foreign Ministry, other ministries, the private sector, among others.
- Create a model for the management, monitoring and evaluation of cooperation programmes and projects at the local level.
- Develop and socialise toolkits to facilitate project formulation.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Education centres for the implementation of the identified proposals. In addition, it was recommended to promote strategic alliances between social and governmental actors, and between local governments and trade unions.

D. Working Group 2. Dependence of sub-national governments on resources from the Central State

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Insufficient resource management according to the competences assigned to the LRG for the infrastructure of rural schools.
- Lack of transparent management of resources due to corruption.
- Deficient coordination between eco-tourism and green projects.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of conditions to attract financing to the country.
- Inequality in the distribution of resources at the national level to address road and environmental needs. Absence of public works development and road safety improvement.
- Limited access to cooperation funds due to the areas of support offered.
- Insufficient generation of own resources for the local governments. Impossibility of capturing a percentage of taxes generated by the productive sector for the same territory. Absence of new companies that generate resources to finance the provincial government.
- Insufficient product generation to boost the economy.
- Lack of a comprehensive public audit policy.
- Deficiencies in strengthening the financial capacities of citizens, social actors and productive sectors to avoid over-indebtedness for consumption.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Develop a comprehensive management model that considers the prioritisation of investment, the targeting of expenditure according to

the specific competences and potential of the region, as well as the efficient management of public resources.

- Implement effective public policies and formulate regulations that make it possible to raise resources for the sub-national governments, as well as reforms that allow investment in the territories. Advocate for a percentage of taxation from the productive sector to be used in the territory. Create new ADG public companies. Manage strategic alliances that allow access to financing from various sources of cooperation. Request the allocation of specific funds to face climate emergencies.
- Manage resources efficiently and effectively, with integrity, transparency and fairness.
- Directly transfer resources to parish governments to address education, health, roads and environmental needs.
- Support from the sectional and regional governments the reactivation of production, with an emphasis on value-added products.
- Generate training processes on entrepreneurship issues to strengthen the capacities of citizens and social actors.
- Generate integrated projects with a focus on community-based tourism and the environment, which stimulate the economy in the territory and are sustainable in the long term.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, National Assembly, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, Public Enterprises, Development Bank of Ecuador, Central Bank of Ecuador, Internal Revenue Service, provincial and municipal governments, educational institutions, international cooperation agencies, green funds, NGOs, financial institutions, private sector, producers. In addition, community mingas were recommended.

E. Working Group 3. Generation of own revenues for provincial governments and self-governance

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the topic

Prioritised challenges:

- Shortage of public resources and limited institutional capacity to efficiently manage these and other own resources.
- Insufficient resource management for investment of public funds in the agricultural and tourism sectors, and for the protection of natural resources (protection of water sources, air quality, global warming mitigation measures).
- Lack of fund management for the prevention and conservation of natural resources, especially for the agriculture and tourism sectors.
- Lack of support from international organisations.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public management to meet citizens' needs.
- Technical teams capable of submitting proposals and managing projects.
- Manage resources from government institutions for sustainable projects agreed with the territories and nationalities, in which their needs are prioritised.
- Create regulations relating to green taxes and compensation for environmental services.
- Identify potential donors for funding, including non-reimbursable funds.
- Position the Amazon region internationally as a green lung to obtain funding for ecosystem conservation.
- Enable local organisations to plan, manage and evaluate projects. Manage funds transparently to maintain access to funds.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, public institutions and companies, Pro Ecuador, provincial and municipal governments, international cooperation agencies, academia, NGOs, financial entities, private sector and civil society.

F. Working Group 4. Infrastructure projects as integral interventions

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Inadequate road infrastructure to facilitate social, economic and productive development and mobility in the provinces.
- Lack of productive development in the provinces that incorporates a sustainability approach and addresses local needs.
- Weak infrastructure of education and health units.

Other challenges identified:

- Deficiency of multidisciplinary risk management teams in local governments.
- Absence of adequate infrastructures in the city to provide information to producers and to favour the articulation between different actors.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Build and maintain provincial road infrastructure (land, water and air).
- Address the needs of local producers and nationalities through free and informed consultation, training, technical assistance and funding.
- Create local development centres that provide advice, including gathering, industrialisation and marketing centres for local products for the local and international market.

- Manage economic resources for the maintenance of first and second level health units.
- Strengthen multidisciplinary teams in local governments.
- Ensure gender equity and the integration of environmental safeguards in environmental projects, as well as the promotion of reforestation in the provinces.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries, Agrocalidad, Amazon Technical Secretariat, provincial, municipal and parish governments, United Nations System (including the World Health Organisation) and other international cooperation agencies, Academia, NGOs and civil society.

G. Working Group 5. Role of public banks and the private financial system in the financing of development projects

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the topic

Prioritised challenges:

- Insufficient supply of credits from public and private banks, based on previous studies and adjusted to the reality and demand for sustainable local projects, with guarantees and flexible payment plans for individuals and companies. Limited information on how to access credit, including for the tourism sector.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Align the regulatory framework and public policies with the Sustainable Development Goals. Implement sustainable development indicators in financing lines, both in public and private banks, with low-interest and long-term loans.
- Swapping the public bank taxation system for a sustainable reinvestment scheme.

- Train the technical team of the provincial sub-national governments to access available funding for development projects, including a mapping of calls for proposals and funds.
- Involve public and private banks in workshops and spaces for collective construction so that they can learn directly about the needs of the territories.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

International cooperation agencies, Academia, NGOs, financial institutions, private sector.

H. Working Group 6. Local savings (cooperatives) as a source of finance for development projects

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Inadequate supply of credit (with low interest rates and grace periods) for small producers, producer cooperatives and community enterprises. Limited access to credit due to lack of individual guarantees in communities with collective territories.
- Slight promotion of local financial structures.
- Insufficient financial education initiatives to encourage savings in the communities. Economic instability in the communities.

Other challenges identified:

- Insufficient promotion of production cooperatives and community enterprises.
- There is a lack of NGO funding.
- Low economic stability and territorial organisation.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Draft a bill for financial institutions to reduce interest rates on loans and to take into account the length of time that enterprises have

been operating in the market.

- Implement community savings banks and set up networks of savings cooperatives that promote local savings, ensure gender equity, eliminate age restrictions on borrowers, reduce bureaucracy and offer extended credit terms.
- Train communities and nationalities in financial education (including the use of digital tools) to encourage household savings. Promote financial responsibility among individuals to ensure appropriate levels of indebtedness.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Assembly, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Education, Superintendency of Banks, provincial and municipal governments, international cooperation agencies, NGOs, financial institutions, savings and credit cooperatives, producer organisations, small and medium enterprises, community organisations and families. Promote alliances with advisory bodies and disseminate through the media and social networks.

I. Working Group 7. Opportunities of the territories for investors

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of public policies to promote investment in the territory and its products, with insufficient support to promote fair trade.
- Few transparency mechanisms to strengthen trust and eradicate corruption and discriminatory practices by companies.
- Complex requirements for accessing credit in cases of global titles of communities and nationalities, including the lack of interest of cooperatives to offer productive credit at the local level.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of direct financing in the territory for local productive projects

with a sustainable development approach, based on a project bank managed by the local governments.

- Deficiency of articulated work with communities to move towards sustainability in commercialisation.
- Insufficient scientific research on ancestral knowledge, particularly in the Amazon region, which impedes the development of innovative and culturally relevant initiatives.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Establish specific public policies that encourage investment in the rural sector, through laws and regulations that guarantee the active participation of the population in decision-making and project implementation, based on the demands identified by the communities.
- Ensure fair trade practices for rural sector products and services.
- Disseminate calls for proposals and funding opportunities for rural projects and establish strategic alliances to secure the necessary funding for these projects.
- Strengthen citizen organisations and the management capacities of local technical staff to design and implement effective plans, programmes and projects, with a focus on environmental conservation and the bioeconomy.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, National Assembly, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fishing, Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control, Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, National Institute of Agricultural Research, control entities, provincial and municipal governments, international cooperation agencies, NGOs, public and private universities, private enterprise, communities and citizens. Promotion of public-private alliances.

Workshop “Collective Peace Building and Eradication of Violence”





Con el apoyo especial de:



FONDO PARA LA
**CONSOLIDACIÓN DE
LA PAZ**



**Construimos
paz**



IV. Workshop “Collective Peace Building and Eradication of Violence”

A. Introduction

This workshop was held in Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas, on 16 May 2024, with the objective of collectively reflect on the relevance of establishing effective mechanisms to eradicate violence and build a culture of peace, as fundamental pillars for sustainable development, the reconstruction of the social networks and the achievement of a safer society, with the participation and leadership of women. During the meeting participants analysed effective strategies to promote the implementation of human rights inclusion and the strengthening of social justice, fight corruption and transparency of public and private institutions, as integral elements of the culture of peace in the territories. The workshop was attended by 205 participants, including representatives of the National Assembly, four ministries, seven public institutions, two provincial, two municipal and six parish LRG, two universities, two NGOs, seven civil society organisations, eight community organisations and one local media.

The following thematic axis and subtopics were analysed during the workshop:

Thematic axis 1.

Naturalisation of violence and its impact on peacebuilding

- *Women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding*
- *Proposals to prevent violence from affecting the economy, health, education and social cohesion*
- *Denaturalising violence to move towards community development*
- *Women's economic empowerment as a tool for peacebuilding*
- *Local strategies to advance the eradication of gender-based violence*

Thematic axis 2.

The role of governments and regional governments in peacebuilding

- *Community participation and local empowerment for greater social cohesion and peacebuilding*
- *Fighting corruption and strengthening State transparency for peacebuilding*
- *Urban and rural crime and violence prevention*
- *Youth participation in peacebuilding*
- *Access to justice*

B. Summary of the workshop

Main issues identified in the workshop

There is evidence of a loss of values in society, the naturalisation of gender inequality in different spheres (school, family, work), as well as domestic violence and gender-based violence, both in urban and rural areas, but with more alarming statistics in the latter. In addition, the country still has high rates of teenage pregnancy that limit their opportunities for development. Women face an overload of work, which hinders their involvement and leadership in peacebuilding. There are not enough schools for the training of women leaders, nor are there enough public policies and incentives for women's participation. Similarly, many women are unaware of their rights and the spaces in which they can be part of.

The provision of public services (health, education) is deficient, not inclusive and not provided with warmth. There are discriminatory practices against certain groups of users. People with disabilities do not receive quality specialised care. There are significant obstacles to access the judicial system; there is insufficient information, support and tools to follow up on cases, all of which contributes to the re-victimisation of people who have suffered violence, to the abandonment of judicial processes and to the impunity of the aggressors. There is evidence of some cases of corruption

that contribute to the inadequate provision of public services, and there is fear among citizens of making complaints due to possible reprisals.

State centralisation makes it difficult to formulate local policies, with citizen participation, to increase public security. The human and financial resources of local governments to implement the required security strategies are limited. There is insufficient dissemination of the spaces in which citizens can participate and there is a lack of confidence that their voices will be heard. Community organisation is weak and there is fear of criminal groups. Young people from poor backgrounds are easily recruited by these groups. There are insufficient educational campaigns to warn about this situation, as well as programmes related to drug prevention. Employment opportunities, both in the public and private sectors, are limited, which also contributes to the involvement of the population in illicit activities.

Key proposals from stakeholders participating in the workshop

Implement educational programmes that address values and rights education, gender equality, inclusion of vulnerable people and contribute to the creation of a culture of peace from childhood to adolescence in all educational units, so that future generations grow up with a commitment to equality and the defence of rights. Programmes are also needed to prevent drug use, promote responsible sexuality and prevent youth involvement in criminal groups. It is necessary to raise awareness among adults responsible for upbringing so that they contribute to the transformation of social patterns that perpetuate inequality and violence and to strengthen communication strategies within families. It is essential to implement community plans for the eradication of violence. Also, to revitalise public spaces and create safe spaces for children, teenagers and, in general, for family gatherings and recreation.

It is crucial to encourage the creation of leadership training schools for women of all ages to promote their participation in the public sphere and enhance their role in peacebuilding. Also, to implement media campaigns and social networks that contribute to the recognition of this

role. Moreover, to promote public policies that make this participation possible and that contribute to the empowerment of women and the strengthening of their initiatives and enterprises, in order to increase their economic autonomy and reduce their vulnerability. Technical support, accompaniment and access to financing are required to strengthen women's entrepreneurial capacities.

Information needs to be disseminated and the quality of public service provision (health, education, access to justice) needs to be improved, with an emphasis on vulnerable people and people with disabilities. Public organisations must comply with legal provisions for the prevention of violence and protection of rights. It is key to articulate institutional efforts with community initiatives for more effective action, including early warning systems. It is necessary to strengthen community committees for the defence of rights, with broad representation of diverse groups and an intersectional perspective. The use of services such as ECU911 should be strengthened, focusing on actions in areas with higher rates of violence, as well as providing early and comprehensive care to victims of violence.

It is essential to improve access to the justice system, make its work more transparent and increase its effectiveness, including the dissemination of information on services, support for users, strategies to speed up procedures and technological tools to facilitate the filing of complaints and the follow-up of cases. Customer service units are needed. The Judiciary Council needs to be strengthened, as well as citizen ombudsmen, so that they can adequately perform their role. The judiciary needs to bring its services closer to rural areas.

Policies are needed to prevent and promote security within the territories, accompanied by sufficient human and financial resources for the implementation of actions. The inclusion of citizens in the formulation and implementation of public policies is essential. It is necessary to create and reinforce security mechanisms in neighbourhoods and communities, including active surveillance systems and periodic security

campaigns in each locality. It is necessary to recover and maintain public order in community areas.

It is key to prevent the involvement of young people in criminal activities. Strategies are needed to enable them to complete their studies, create comprehensive youth programmes that strengthen their capacities (art, culture, sport, entrepreneurship). Access to funding is needed so that they can implement their youth initiatives, as well as to enable them to link up with youth networks in other cities and countries. It is also necessary to strengthen the involvement of young people in spaces for citizen participation, so that their voices and proposals are heard. In particular, it is necessary to generate employment opportunities for young people in partnership with the public and private sectors.

It is also necessary to create mechanisms to facilitate the prevention of corruption, including strategies and tools to monitor the work of public officials and to facilitate the reporting of acts of corruption. Protection programmes for whistle-blowers need to be strengthened.

C. Working Group 1. Women's Participation and Leadership in Peacebuilding

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding faces numerous challenges due to social and cultural structures that naturalise gender inequality and violence from an early age. Stereotypes limit women's opportunities, creating a cycle of exclusion and marginalisation that begins at school and extends into the workplace.
- Women face a double workload as they take on the responsibility of domestic work, which limits their time to engage in leadership and personal and professional development activities. This is exacerbated

by the lack of supportive policies and accessible, quality childcare services.

- In rural areas, women face additional challenges due to limited access to education and vocational training, leading to a lack of equal opportunities.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Develop and implement educational programmes that address gender equality from childhood to adolescence, in both rural and urban settings, and at all stages of the life cycle, so that future generations grow up with a deep understanding of and commitment to equity.
- Create leadership schools for women, in order to encourage initiatives linked to the promotion of peace.
- Encourage media campaigns that promote gender equality and encourage the eradication of cultural patterns and stereotypes that disadvantage women.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Equality Councils, Human Rights Secretariat, municipal governments, NGOs, Academia, private sector, organised civil society.

D. Working Group 2. Proposals to prevent violence from affecting the economy, health, education and social cohesion

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Disinterest and loss of moral and spiritual values in families and society.
- Ignorance of human rights and naturalisation of violence (economic, social).

- Lack of employment opportunities and poor health system.
- Insufficient strategies to prevent violence and insecurity.
- Few possibilities for inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Limited resources to promote citizens' meetings.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Create nationwide educational campaigns aimed at the formation of values, the inclusion of vulnerable people in society, and the denaturalisation of violence, through the implementation of awareness-raising and training processes for families, communities and grassroots organisations.
- Promote collective strategies for the revitalisation and appropriation of public space.
- Promote, from the public and private sectors, the creation of sources of employment that, in addition to generating income, contribute to the reduction of insecurity.
- Implement policies to promote security.
- Make resources available to provide comprehensive care for victims of violence.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, Judiciary Council, Armed Forces, Academia, NGOs, private companies, civil society organisations.

E. Working Group 3. Denaturalising violence to move towards community development

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Sexist cultural patterns that perpetuate inequalities and encourage violence.

- Indifference of the population that normalises acts of violence.
- Women's economic dependence increases their vulnerability to violence.
- Lack of safe spaces increases the risk for children and teenagers.
- Disarticulation between institutions and communities weakens violence prevention.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Establish community committees made up of women, men and young people, whose main objective is to combat violence.
- Implement various strategies, including awareness-raising processes, training for the community (education in values, gender equality, women's empowerment), which contribute to the transformation of cultural patterns, the promotion of solidarity and the eradication of gender-based and domestic violence.
- Develop campaigns in social networks and various media aimed at eradicating violence and sexism (male chauvinism) and promoting women's empowerment.
- Implement initiatives to support victims of violence.
- Articulate institutional and community plans for the eradication of violence.
- Support families so that children and teenagers can have safe spaces for care.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National Government, LGR, NGOs, Academia, media.

F. Working Group 4: Women's economic empowerment as a tool for peacebuilding

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Women's economic dependence within their families, which limits their empowerment and agency.

- Some women are afraid of entrepreneurship, which hinders them from starting income-generating projects.
- Limited access to finance for women-led ventures.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Linking experienced professionals to provincial LRG, so that they can provide advice to projects related to women's entrepreneurship.
- Conduct training on various topics related to economic empowerment, in alliance with educational centres and producers' associations (e.g. artisans).
- Expand access to diverse sources of financing through strategic alliances with provincial governments, credit cooperatives and other banking institutions. Disseminate banking services focused on women's entrepreneurship.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

BanEcuador, Directorate of Productive Development of the LRG, financial entities, professionals and citizen groups.

G. Working Group 5. Local strategies to advance in the eradication of gender-based violence

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of dissemination of information by government protection agencies about their services to citizens.
- Deficient access to justice-related services and inadequate accompaniment during judicial proceedings, which leads to the re-victimisation of people who have suffered violence.
- Limited support from local authorities to implement strategies to eradicate gender-based violence.

Other challenges identified:

- Insufficient education and communication within families about gender-based violence, for which it becomes normalised.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Strengthen the dissemination of the services offered by protection entities through different strategies, including socialisation parades, social media campaigns and promoting the use of the ECU 911 App. Focus this set of actions in territories with higher rates of violence.
- Strengthen public support and early care services for victims of violence. Comply with the legal provisions of the various institutions of the protection system.
- Create permanent protection and community support networks in high-risk sectors, linked to public institutions.
- Train educational institutions in gender equity and human rights issues. Include subjects related to this issue in the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.
- Create training programmes on gender education in rural areas.
- Expand the budget for the care of victims of violence and the implementation of prioritised strategies.
- Promote home education on issues such as violence and drugs, with an emphasis on children and teenagers. Train parents on co-parenting and promote gender equity within the family environment.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

National government, Academia, schools, non-governmental organisations (human rights organisations, international organisations dealing with violence), foundations (neighbourhood and community).

H. Working Group 6. Community participation and local empowerment for greater social cohesion and peace-building

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- The centralisation of the State negatively affects the provision of services and the construction of local policies. Territories are not taken into account in policy formulation. There is a decrease in citizens' trust in the State and a lack of guarantees that citizens' voices will be heard and that their efforts will have an impact. Furthermore, there is a lack of communication and dissemination by the State about the spaces available for citizen participation.
- Lack of community organisation. Fear of criminal groups that threaten the security of citizens and the State in general.
- The sub-national governments do not have sufficient resources to implement actions according to the competences assigned to them.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Include citizens in the construction of local public policies in various sectors and simplify processes in public institutions to increase accessibility to processes and services. Promote spaces in which citizen participation and initiatives are encouraged, including all priority groups.
- Strengthen empowerment, values and collective care practices, including child-focused programmes.
- Implement the use of community warning systems linked to local institutions.
- Allocate resources to sub-national governments for the implementation of various proposals.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Public security forces, public-private partnerships, international cooperation agencies, communities and campuses, Academia, the Church.

I. Working Group 7. Combating corruption and strengthening State transparency for peacebuilding

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- ▪ The violence and corruption prevention system is inefficient. It does not meet the objectives of citizen security and social cohesion. The sub-national governments experience a lack of human and financial resources, which limits their capacity to implement actions.
- Corruption levels within government cause inadequate provision of public services to citizens. There is fear of reprisals for reporting corruption.
- People who have been victims of violence have limited access to employment opportunities.

Other challenges identified:

- Deficient inclusion of persons with disabilities. Cases of discrimination and inequality in the services provided to users and users.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- ▪ To influence government leaders and politicians to build public policies that allow for the reduction of violence, attention to victims of violence, increased access to education with equity and the improvement of the quality of educational programmes, as well as the creation of employment opportunities that provide alternatives for citizens. Allocate public budget to implement these actions.

- Create mechanisms to facilitate the prevention of acts of corruption, such as a platform to make public procurement transparent and to monitor the activities of public officials. Similarly, create tools to facilitate the reporting of acts of corruption.
- In order to reduce violence. Within the citizen participation groups, promote the creation of policies that seek equal access to education.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, Assembly, Judiciary Council, control and oversight entities, including the Prosecutor's Office and Comptroller's Office, Armed Forces, National Directorate of Specialised Police for Children and Teenagers (DINAPEN), vulnerable people's groups and citizen representatives.

J. Working Group 8. Urban and rural crime and violence prevention

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Women in the urban sector, but especially in the rural sector, face the challenge of achieving economic autonomy. There is a prevailing prejudice that women should only take care of domestic chores and their economic dependence may increase their vulnerability to gender-based violence. Gender-based violence has negative effects on women's personal development, including low self-esteem. Support for women victims of violence from society and public services is deficient.
- Teenagers and young people are vulnerable to recruitment by criminal groups. Many drop out of school at an early age due to their families' limited financial resources. In addition, there are no educational programmes on violence prevention, drug use, responsible sexuality

or values. There are also insufficient recreational and sporting alternatives and complementary educational processes.

- Insufficient plans for organised crime prevention actions.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Promote local training programmes in schools and colleges on issues such as the prevention of alcoholism, drug use and sexuality. Promote sports, recreational, leisure, cultural and artistic activities in the communities for children, youth and the general public that contribute to the fight against violence.
- Create and reinforce security mechanisms in neighbourhoods and communities, including active surveillance systems and regular security campaigns in each locality. Restore and maintain law and order in community areas, with the aim of steering young people away from activities harmful to their future.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, National Police, Armed Forces, provincial and parish governments, international cooperation agencies, NGOs, private companies.

K. Working Group 9: Youth participation in peacebuilding

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- ▪ Insufficient state investment and inefficient access to public education for young people, including technical and vocational training. Insufficient comprehensive training programmes for young people. Little information on existing opportunities for young people,

including entrepreneurial alternatives.

- Limited opportunities for young people to participate in spaces that allow them to express their opinions, concerns and proposals for peacebuilding.
- Uncertainty generated by violence limits potential youth-driven actions.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of initiatives to promote education in values and a culture of peace for households, considering households as the fundamental nucleus of society.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Include culture of peace education in the curricula of educational centres. Implement comprehensive youth education programmes (values, culture, sport, etc.).
- Obtain funding to implement projects to support the creation and strengthening of youth initiative programmes. Allocate public resources for academic scholarships for young people and to support other initiatives of interest to them.
- Promote articulation with national and international youth organisations that allow them to access training opportunities.
- Dissemination of useful information for young people.
- Develop training and values education programmes for families aimed at consolidating a culture of peace in the home from an early age.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Councils and Boards for the Protection of Rights, municipal governments, non-governmental organisations, international cooperation agencies, citizen protection associations, universities and technical institutes.

L. Working Group 10. Access, equity and effectiveness of the justice system at the local level

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of confidence in the justice system. Insufficient dissemination of information about the processes, bureaucratic procedures and lengthy deadlines that discourage those who have filed complaints from completing the processes. Absence of mechanisms and tools that allow for personalised attention to users, including technological tools. There is also a deficient system to follow up on judicial proceedings.
- The Judiciary Council does not have sufficient human resources to deal efficiently and equitably with the high number of users. There is no regular evaluation of the performance of this institution.
- Insufficient information on the judicial system and its processes in rural areas. There is no knowledge of the routes to follow. The judiciary needs to reach out to parishes and provide assistance.

Other challenges identified:

- Limited training of citizen observers, which often results in a lack of knowledge about their functions.
- Public fear of reporting corruption due to possible reprisals.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Implement protocols to speed up the resolution of complaints. Develop a platform to monitor the progress of cases in real time, in order to ensure transparency in the processes.
- Conduct mandatory periodic evaluations of members of the Judiciary Council and other public officials with key roles in the justice system. Establish a system of audits and sanctions for officials who fail to

perform their duties in a timely manner.

- Ensure access to justice in rural areas. Designate a person in the communities as the focal point of the justice system. Provide assistance in the use of the case tracking platform.
- Establish customer service booths, equipped with technological tools, to advise users in a clear and efficient manner.
- Set up regional citizen oversight offices with trained staff and access to technology.
- Strengthen programmes for the protection of witnesses or persons who have made allegations of corruption.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

LRG, Lawyer School, Academia, NGOs, citizen groups.

Workshop
"Youth Perspectives for the Future"





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V. Workshop “Youth Perspectives for the Future”

A. Introduction

This workshop was held in Ibarra on 6 June 2024, with the aim of collectively building “ways for young people to participate in decision-making processes on global issues.” The general objective of the workshop was “to listen and understand the local perspectives of young people on sustainable development, digital tools and new social interactions”. Its specific objectives were “to learn about the concerns and realities of local youth and establish proposals and solutions to global challenges from the new generations”. Gender equality, interculturality and innovation were considered as cross-cutting themes of the workshop. The workshop was attended by 193 participants, including representatives of three public institutions, three provincial governments, five municipal governments, seven parish governments, nine universities, three educational units, eight NGOs and foundations, nine civil society organisations, two representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities and seven community organisations.

The thematic axes and sub-themes analysed during the workshop were the following, each of which was discussed in a multi-stakeholder Working Group:

Thematic focus 1. Diversity and social inclusion

- Access to quality education
- Mental health
- Eradicating violence from a youth perspective
- Artistic and cultural expressions of young people
- Inclusion of new conceptions of the family

Thematic focus 2. Sustainable development

- Challenges faced by young people in the labour market
- Resilience and environmental sustainability
- Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

- *Young promoters of a new economy*
- *Political leadership for the future*

B. Summary of the workshop

Main issues identified in the workshop

The education system faces major challenges that have a direct impact on children and teenagers. On the one hand, the lack of control in educational units allows violence and delinquency to spread among teenagers and generates an unsafe environment. This is compounded by the lack of innovation in pedagogical processes, which leads to teaching that is not very interactive and leaves out many students who could benefit from more inclusive approaches. Similarly, due to a lack of economic resources, many children and teenagers are unable to access basic and higher education because of their families' economic situation. For these and other reasons, including teenager pregnancy, dropout rates are high.

Alongside the problems in the education system, there are also the challenges faced by young people in the labour market. This is due to the fact that educational curricula are not aligned with the demands of the labour market. Likewise, young people do not have opportunities to develop experience and attain the necessary knowledge to be able to access technical or specialised jobs, so many choose to migrate to other countries. The lack of participation of young people in the labour market hinders them from becoming promoters of a new economy. There are also no sustainable local economies that preserve the environment, that are in line with cultural and territorial realities, that link producers and consumers in a direct way, and to which young people can be linked and contribute.

Another problem faced by young people is violence. One of the least discussed is psychological violence. There are insufficient strategies and spaces to promote the psychosocial well-being and mental health of young people. This is aggravated by an overcrowded psychological care system, as the number of psychologists available is not sufficient to adequately serve the population. In addition, young people are constantly exposed to high levels of violence, which often causes it to be idealised and perpetuated in society. On the other hand, there are few cultural and

artistic spaces that young people can easily access and that can contribute to the construction of a culture of peace.

In the political sphere, spaces are characterised by stereotypes that limit diversity and hinder youth proposals and leadership. The development of critical thinking is limited by indoctrination. The possibilities for young people to make autonomous decisions are limited. Discrimination that excludes various groups is evident, which reinforces inequalities and does not allow for the participation and inclusion of all voices.

Main proposals identified in the workshop

Curricula need to be redesigned to include new pedagogical approaches and innovative subjects, including global trends, peace culture and entrepreneurship. Teaching should be based on projects that integrate different areas of knowledge, with playful and inclusive strategies that prevent school dropout. Furthermore, it is essential to implement education policies that guarantee access to all levels of education for all children and teenagers, especially those with limited economic resources. This must go hand in hand with public policies that promote the consolidation of peaceful spaces within educational units.

In the area of employment, it is essential to strengthen programmes to develop specific skills and competences that allow young people to access more employment alternatives. This should be complemented with digital tools that centralise and disseminate employment options and favour their insertion in the labour market. Likewise, mechanisms for youth participation should be created, such as consultative councils, which provide spaces for young people to get involved in decision-making processes. To guide these actions, it would be useful to have market studies on labour market needs and opportunities for youth in Ecuador.

It is vital that the government is lobbied to create bills that focus on improving public mental health services so that they are accessible and efficient for the whole population. It is important to make these services available in rural areas through the creation of specialised centres. It is also important to strengthen psychological care in educational units

and to extend training processes to the entire educational community. It is also necessary to promote the strengthening of accessible and permanently functioning cultural and artistic spaces for children and young people. Similarly, it is important to encourage projects that include artistic and cultural exchanges between different regions of the country, including the granting of scholarships.

In another area, it is necessary to influence the government for the effective implementation of policies that protect the environment and for accountability mechanisms. Support is needed to promote sustainable projects that contribute to the development of the local economy and that consider the involvement of young people. Funding is needed for capacity building processes and to promote initiatives that support their entrepreneurship. These should be framed within the potential of the territories and encourage the safeguarding of natural resources and culture.

It is essential to expand young people's access to equal opportunities in politics, so that all young people can participate, regardless of their origin or socio-economic status. This requires supportive policies and funding to accompany youth in the process of developing their political leadership skills and to strengthen their active role in decision-making processes.

C. Working Group 1. Access to quality education

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Limited access to education due to insufficient financial resources of families.
- Lack of control by teachers in educational units, which facilitates the emergence of violence and delinquency among teenagers.
- Lack of innovation in pedagogical processes, which generates little dynamism in training processes and reduces opportunities for inclusion.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Ensure that education policies are more inclusive and that they favour access to education by including students whose families have financial constraints.
- Promote public policies that foster a peaceful environment within educational units.
- Redesign curricula so that they use diverse learning techniques. Address innovative subjects including global trends, culture of peace and entrepreneurship. Implement project-based teaching that includes mathematics, engineering, technology and science.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Public security agencies, public companies, NGOs, private companies, international organisations and local networks linked to various issues.

D. Working Group 2. Mental Health

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Psychological care is given little importance. It is an area that is still stigmatised and its relevance is not visualised.
- Counselling services are not available in rural areas.
- The psychological care system is overburdened, as the number of psychologists is not commensurate with the number of inhabitants.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Promote legislation focused on improving public mental health services.
- Establish and promote the services of mental health care centres in rural areas.
- Provide quality mental health care, without discriminatory practices, in both rural and urban settings.

- Promote educational talks for families to focus on mental health, including topics such as self-esteem, well-being and social rehabilitation.
- Ensure that each educational institution has psychological support available at all times.
- Support the training of more professionals in psychology.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, Assembly, LRG, NGOs, universities, foundations focused on integral wellbeing, youth groups, private sector.

E. Working Group 3. Eradicating violence from the perspective of young people

a. Problemática identificada por participantes en torno al tema

Prioritised challenges:

- There is no allocation of public resources to work with youth in development and territorial planning.
- Insufficient strategies and spaces that promote the psychosocial well-being and mental health of young people and enable them to cope with various types of violence.
- Naturalisation of violence and impunity for aggressors.

Other challenges identified:

- There is a high exposure to violence in youth. Some young people idealise crime.
- High levels of unemployment, accompanied by the need for economic resources.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Advocate for the formulation of local regulations, with youth participation, that contribute to the eradication of violence. Prioritise

resources in government plans to create projects that address the needs of young people.

- Implement educational projects with schools and colleges, involving families and communities, to generate favourable environments for young people.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministries, provincial, parish and cantonal governments, NGOs, international cooperation agencies, private companies, media, etc.

F. Working Group 4. Artistic and cultural expressions of young people

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of support and recognition of artistic expression in both the public and private sectors.
- Few cultural and artistic spaces that young people can easily access.
- Absence of artistic expressions in academic training and lack of interest and knowledge about art..

Other challenges identified:

- Loss of customs and traditions such as rituals, ceremonies and cultural expressions in general.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Provide more scholarships for young people to promote artistic and cultural expressions.
- Create easily accessible spaces, so that young people can have an adequate space for art and culture.
- Encourage learning about cultural management and recognise the work of the people involved in this field. Generate job opportunities for young people in this type of activities.

- Promote art and encourage projects that include artistic and cultural exchanges between different regions of the country.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Public institutions, LRG, private companies, Academia, international cooperation organisations, media, artistic collectives, independent artists.

G. Working Group 5. Inclusion of the new conceptions of the family

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Families face job instability and lack the resources to finance their children's education.
- Social and traditional structures contain stereotypes that continue to fragment society.
- There is a tendency for young people to drop out of school and migrate to other countries due to lack of support from the government.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Continuously monitor how the economic resources that are destined for the most needy families are being administered.
- Encourage young people to continue their studies and stay in the country through government incentives and support for their entrepreneurship.
- Create awareness-raising campaigns that allow for the incorporation of new concepts of family, leaving behind stereotypes and confronting cultural resistance to change.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, municipal and parish governments, health districts, trustees, universities, neighbourhood leaders.

H. Working Group 6. Challenges facing young people in the labour market

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of public policies to address the lack of employment and allocate corresponding budgets.
- Young people face difficulties in obtaining employment due to the requirement of several years of work experience.
- Persistent loss of professionals migrating out of the country due to low labour supply and demand abroad.

Other challenges identified:

- Lack of clarity in young people's career orientation and life purpose.
- There is no culture that encourages entrepreneurship, due to a lack of information and seed capital.
- Young heads of households, whose responsibilities make it impossible for them to get a job.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Strengthen programmes to develop specific skills and competences that enable young people to access more job opportunities.
- Implement accessible digital tools that centralise and disseminate job opportunities for young people, in order to favour their insertion in the labour market.
- Create mechanisms for youth participation in the form of consultative councils.
- Conduct market research to gain a thorough understanding of the country's needs and take action based on these results.
- Create a youth observatory to monitor the implementation of public policies.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Government Ministry, private companies and youth groups.

I. Working Group 7. Resilience and Environmental Sustainability

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Lack of mechanisms to strengthen sustainable local production and consumption. Lack of alternative models such as agroecology, which is negatively impacting rural communities.
- Increased vulnerability of populations due to deforestation, fires and lack of information at the local level on how to adapt to climate change impacts such as landslides and floods.
- Water pollution from industrial waste and urban pressure on water resources limit access to quality water for drinking and production.

Other challenges identified:

- ▪ Lack of effective regulations and effective environmental policies, allowing private companies to pollute the environment without facing consequences.
- Exclusion of the voices of youth and local communities in policy-making, which means that policy decisions do not reflect real needs and do not respond to environmental challenges.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Implement effective public policies, as well as transparency and accountability mechanisms for public investments to combat climate change.
- Establish regulations for water management, develop watershed management plans and technify irrigation in rural areas.
- Establish stricter and more effective regulatory measures to control pollution and the environmental impact of private companies.

Promote sustainable tourism and strengthen local capacities to develop sustainable projects, with access to financing.

- Invest in the training and empowerment of young people and local communities so that they can influence the creation of public policies that reflect their needs and challenges.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Municipal governments, international cooperation agencies, national and international collectives, private companies, communities and other actors in rural areas.

J. Working Group 8. Making the most of information and communication technologies (ICTs)

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Limited access to technological tools and lack of knowledge on how to use ICTs properly.
- Information is provided on digital platforms that is not necessarily truthful. This generates misinformation.
- The software and hardware available are not up to date.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Disseminate information widely so that people can take the step towards the use of technological tools.
- Promote environments in which safe use of the technological tools available can be made.

K. Working Group 9. Young promoters of a new economy

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Public policies are not adequately adapted to the new economies. This causes an obstacle to the development and prosperity of communities.
- There are no mechanisms for an effective relationship between local producers and consumers. This disconnection limits the development of local and sustainable economies in which young people could participate.
- Young people often lack adequate experience and knowledge to successfully enter the labour market, including technical or specialised positions. This is partly because the education system does not respond to the demands of the labour market. The lack of participation of young people in the labour market hinders them from becoming promoters of a new economy.

Other challenges identified:

- Current production models are often not in line with territorial realities. They do not take into account climatic conditions, the sustainability of natural resources, cultural practices and the socio-economic needs of the population.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Promote public policies aimed at helping young people to enhance their skills. Create tax incentives, entrepreneurship and business counselling programmes and increase financing for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Support local consumption and design projects that contribute to adding value to traditional products, ensuring that communities receive a fair share of the economic benefits.
- To offer up-to-date and specialised education that can respond to the demands of the market and its emerging trends. In addition, to encourage the creation of community spaces that provide support to young entrepreneurs.

- Ensure an inclusive representation of women and youth who can make a valuable contribution to productive initiatives, based on their specific needs and concerns.
- Revitalise mechanisms such as exchange and barter within communities.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Public institutions, NGOs, private enterprise, Academia, producers and exporters, youth. Alliances with local communities.

5.12 Mesa de Trabajo 10. Liderazgos políticos para el futuro

1. Problems identified by participants in relation to the theme

Prioritised challenges:

- Stereotypes and stigmas continue to limit diversity in politics, closing the space for new ideas and youth leadership.
- Political indoctrination prevents the development of critical thinking, reducing young people's ability to make autonomous decisions.
- Discrimination in politics excludes certain groups, reinforcing inequalities and leaving many voiceless in decision-making processes.

2. Proposals suggested by stakeholders to address these challenges

- Implement subjects in the curriculum that include politics in order to provide strategic tools for young people to participate in this area.
- Allocate specific funds to support young people in developing their political leadership skills and active participation in decision-making.
- Expand young people's access to equal opportunities in politics, ensuring that all young people can participate, regardless of their background or socio-economic status.

3. Suggested partnerships to implement the proposals

Ministry of Education, Higher Education Council, provincial, municipal and parish LRG, Cantonal Councils for the Protection of Rights, international cooperation agencies, NGOs, Academia, youth political networks, communities.

Bibliography

Documents related to and/or elaborated by the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments:

- Terms of reference for members of the Advisory Group.
- Output 2: Guidance note on ways and means to improve institutional mechanisms to strengthen LRG participation in intergovernmental processes. March, 2024.
- Addendum on the gradual increase of the structural representation of LRGs in the UN System. March, 2024.
- Catalogue of options for mechanisms to strengthen LRG participation in UN intergovernmental processes. March, 2023.



Annexes

Annex 1. Lists of organisations participating in the workshops

1.1 Workshop “Sustainable Development and Climate Change”

Ministries

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

Other public institutions

- AGROAZUAY
- Centrosur
- CELEC South
- Environmental Fund for Water Protection
- Sustainable Environmental Investment Fund (FIAS)

Provincial LRG

- ADG Azuay (or LRG Azuay)
- ADG Cañar
- ADG Guayas

Municipal governments

- ADG Camilo Ponce Enríquez
- ADG Cañar
- ADG Cascales-Chaucha
- ADG Pucará
- ADG San Cristóbal

Parish LRG

- ADG Chumblin
- ADG Cochapata
- ADG El Progreso
- ADG Güel

- ADG Octavio Cordero
- ADG Palmas
- ADG San Bartolomé
- ADG San Martin de Puzhio
- ADG San Salvador de Cañaribamba
- ADG San Vicente
- ADG Simón Bolívar
- ADG Sinincay
- ADG Suscal
- ADG Tomebamba

Academy

- Catholic University of Cuenca
- Cuenca State University

International Cooperation Agency

- UN Women

NGOs, foundations and others

- AGP ELTRONIC
- Action Aid
- Amaru Foundation
- Juntar
- Pasos

Civil society organisations, representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities

- College of Agricultural Engineers of Azuay
- Coordination of the San Francisco River Basin of Pucará

1.2 Workshop “Challenges for Financing Development in Local Governments”

Ministries

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- Ministry of Education - District Directorate
- Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion - District Directorate
- Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries
- Ministry of Health - District Directorate
- Ministry of Tourism

Other public institutions

- Government of Pastaza
- Agency for Plant and Animal Health Regulation and Control
- Municipal Traffic Agency
- Ecuadorian Institute of Social Security - Provincial Directorate
- CONAGOPARE Sucumbíos

Provincial LRG

- ADG Bolivar
- ADG Chimborazo
- ADG Cotopaxi
- ADG Napo
- ADG Pastaza
- ADG Pichincha

Municipal governments

- ADG El Triunfo
- ADG Morona Santiago
- ADG Pastaza
- ADG Santa Clara

Parish LRG

- ADG Diez de Agosto
- ADG Fatima

- ADG Pacayacu
- ADG Pomona
- ADG Pumpuentsa
- ADG Riochico
- ADG Rio Tigre
- ADG Sarayaku
- ADG Lieutenant Hugo Ortiz
- ADG Veracruz

Financial sector institutions

- Banco del Austro
- Savings and Credit Cooperative (COAC) Educators of Pastaza
- COAC OSCUS
- COAC Provision
- CACPE Pastaza

Academy

- Uniandes University

International Cooperation Agency

- German Agency for Technical Cooperation GIZ
- Andalusian Municipalities Fund for International Solidarity, FAMSI

NGOs and foundations

- ALTRÓPICO Foundation
- Conservation International
- Territorio de Vida Consortium - Pastaza
- Ecociencia Foundation
- Pachamama Foundation
- TNC

Private sector

- Pastaza Chamber of Tourism
- Lawyer Association

Civil society organisations, representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities

- Federation of the Shuar Nationality of Pastaza
- Achuar Nationality

Community organisations

- Lizanes Neighbourhood
- San Jacinto del Pindo Commune
- Cotococha Community
- San Ramón Community
- Putuimi Community

Local media

- CORAPE Pastaza - Radio Interoceánica
- The observer
- Pastaza per day
- Radio Mokaru
- Sonovision
- X Treme EC

1.3 Workshop “Collective Peace Building and Eradication of Violence”

National Assembly

Ministries

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion
- Ministry of Public Health
- Ministry of the Interior

Other public institutions

- BanEcuador
- Cantonal Council for the Protection of Rights of Manta
- National Youth Advisory Council

- National Council on Disability Equality
- Municipal Public Company of Land Transport and Transit - Santo Domingo
- State Prosecutor's Office
- Government of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas

Provincial LRG

- ADG Manabí
- ADG Pichincha

Municipal governments

- ADG San Jacinto de Buena Fe
- ADG Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas

Parish LRG

- ADG Alluriquín
- ADG El Esfuerzo
- ADG La Villegas
- ADG Luz de América
- ADG Monterrey
- ADG Santa María del Toachi

Academy

- Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador - Santo Domingo
- Equinoctial Technological University

NGOs and foundations

- Humanas Corporation EC
- Genesis Gabriela Foundation

Civil society organisations, representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities

- Anny Nursery
- Agricultural Centre
- Carlos Ruiz Burneo Cooperative

- Cooperative United for the People We Shall Overcome
- Women entrepreneurs
- Villa Florida Cooperative
- Unificados

Community organisations

- 4th of July
- Los Rosales
- New Santo Domingo
- Las Mercedes Campus
- San Carlos Campus
- San Miguel de Guabal Precinct
- Pisotanti Enclosure
- San Gabriel

Local media

- Radio Max

1.4 Workshop “Youth Perspectives for the Future”

Other public institutions

- National Institute of Popular and Solidarity Economy
- Warmi Imbabura

Provincial LRG

- ADG Manabí
- ADG Pichincha
- ADG Santa Elena

Municipal governments

- ADG Cotacachi
- ADG Ibarra
- ADG Otavalo
- ADG Santa Ana de Cotacachi
- ADG Urcuquí

Parish LRG

- ADG Angochagua
- ADG Imantag
- ADG La Carolina
- ADG La Esperanza
- ADG Miguel Egas Cabezas
- ADG Natabuela
- ADG San José de Quichinche

Academy

- International Centre for Research on El Niño Phenomenon
- Instituto Superior Tecnológico - ITCA
- National Autonomous University of Los Andes
- University of Otavalo
- Amazon State University
- Metropolitan University
- National University of Chimborazo
- Salesian Polytechnic University
- Technical University of the North
- Yachay Tech University

Educational Units

- Calderón Bicentennial Centre
- Caranqui Educational Unit
- Santa Marianita Educational Unit

NGOs and foundations

- CARE
- 21st Century Corporation
- The Power of a Huarmi Foundation
- Latin American Future Foundation
- Latitud Foundation
- Future Is Green
- ICLEL
- RIKOLTO

Civil society organisations, representatives of indigenous peoples and nationalities

- Youth Agendas Imbabura
- Association of Food and Cleaning Services González Suárez
- National Coordinating Committee of Black Women
- Cotacachi-Azaya Youth Group
- Guambras Pichincha
- Hampi Warmi Kuna
- Women on the Move
- World Network of Young Politicians Carchi
- UCICMA

Community organisations

- Cascales
- Chirihuasi Commune
- San Cristóbal Commune
- Zuleta Commune
- Pijal Community
- La Esperanza Parish
- Karanki Village

