

SUMMARY



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- 03 New social pacts, an opportunity to build fairer societies
- 04 Welfare policy reform to be a beacon for future challenges
- 06 Generation Equality: towards the construction of new social pacts
- 08 Access to justice as a fundamental right for social cohesion in Latin America
- 12 New social pacts in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 14 Restoring the economy with a feminist perspective
- 16 The Chilean Constituent Process, an innovative, cosmopolitan process from which to learn
- 18 Welfare state, climate change and inclusion, the need for a European-Latin America partnership
- 20 Can we imagine Latin America without a framework? A paradigm shift and new concepts for a new era
- 22 Economic social councils to review the new social pacts
- 24 Mechanisms for the advancement of women and the feminist movement. Essential partners for transforming gender policies
- 26 Social Cohesion in the Dominican Republic
- 28 Interview with María del Carmen Maldonado
- 30 Interview with Mauricio Alarcón Salvador y Javier Macaya
- 32 Interview with José A. Zaglul y Gustavo Béliz
- 34 Interview with Alejandra López-Gómez y Laura DiHuignidili Huertas Thompson
- 36 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 38 Interview with Pilar Román e Itzá Castañeda
- 40 Interview with Leonardo Ferreira Neves y Anita Araceli Zetina
- 42 Interview with Alain Cuenca y María Dolores Almeida
- 44 Interview with Miguel Ceara Hatton
- 46 New Social Pacts. An inductive view from EUROsociAL+

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<https://eurosoci.al.eu/blog-reciprocamente/>





Welfare policy reform to be a beacon for future challenges



MARCELLA MALLEN | President of the Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASviS), and president of the Prioritalia Foundation

One thing that the pandemic has taught us is that there is a close connection between economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. A structured welfare system is needed to emerge from the crisis, which supports families and can deal with both poverty and gender and intergenerational inequalities.

■ The pandemic has shown us that the world is deeply interconnected: COVID-19, which was due to natural causes (the spillover effect or a jump between species), had its first impact on human health, but then, in a cascade, affected the economy (reduction in productive capacity, accelerated fall in investments and current and expected wealth), human capital (unemployment and underemployment, increased poverty and inequality, negative impact on training activities for young people), and social capital (less interaction, operational difficulties for the Third Sector),

triggering the crisis that we are still experiencing. COVID-19 has shown us how sectors that may seem different - environmental, economic, social - are actually deeply linked.

To interact with the world that surrounds us it is essential to find links between the different areas of society, adopting a systemic approach capable of predicting the effects that a single intervention may have in different areas of interest.

The most representative example of our systemic approach today is the United Nations



2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, signed on 25 September 2015 by 193 countries, to share the commitment to guarantee a present and a better future for our planet and its inhabitants. The global Agenda establishes 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved before 2030, divided into 169 goals that outline the way forward for the next few years.

The Agenda was created on the understanding that the model is environmentally, economically and socially unsustainable; but above all it aims to dispel the idea that sustainability is a merely environmental issue, proposing a comprehensive vision of the different dimensions of development. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Goal 4) also means providing women and girls with equal access to education (Goal 5); to ensure health and well-being for all (Goal 3) it is necessary to live on a healthy planet (Goals 6, 13, 14 and 15); decent work for all (Goal 8) which require the elimination of inequality (Goal 10).

In this regard, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also tells us that there is no economic growth without environmental and social sustainability. Therefore, an active, structured social welfare system will not only improve the dignity of the person, but also that of the environment in which we live.

One of the most difficult challenges is the fight against poverty, guaranteeing access to decent work for all and reducing social inequality. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary, among many actions: to promote people's health, ensure a balance between personal and work life, support women in the world of work, stimulate quality education, sustain the birth rate and strengthen nurseries.

Unfortunately, several countries are falling behind on many of these goals. According to the *Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile* (ASviS) Report, for example, Italy has worsened, compared to 2020, in nine Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, many of which are part of welfare policies:

poverty (Goal 1), health (Goal 3), education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), economic and labour conditions (Goal 8), inequalities (Goal 10), conditions in cities (Goal 11), terrestrial ecosystem (Objective 15) and international cooperation (Objective 17).

Because of this - and regarding the Italian case, although the same conclusion might be reached with respect to many other countries - first of all it is necessary to reform the entire current social welfare system, simplifying procedures and access to services and guaranteeing coverage to segments

■ a reduction in the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty by at least 15 million, including five million children.

The text of the declaration is also referred to in the introduction the guiding objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: "no one will be left behind"

To this end, within the 2021 Report the ASviS proposes important measures for Italy (present or proposed in other countries, and some in Latin America) such as the expansion

"IT IS NECESSARY TO REFORM THE ENTIRE CURRENT SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM, SIMPLIFYING PROCEDURES AND ACCESS TO SERVICES AND GUARANTEEING COVERAGE TO SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION CURRENTLY EXCLUDED"

of the population currently excluded. In Europe, among others, these needs are aligned with the objectives set out in the "European Pillar of Social Rights" - the Union's social strategy to ensure that the transition to climate neutrality, digitisation and demographic change is socially equitable and fair - and with what was reiterated at the EU summit in Porto. At this summit, whose objective was to define the European social policy agenda for 2030, the Commission, Parliament and the Council signed a declaration of commitment to carry out an action plan (inspired by European social rights) that includes three targets that must necessarily be achieved across Europe by 2030:

- at least 78% of people between 20 and 64 years old in work in the European Union;
- participation of at least 60% of adults in training courses every year;

of beneficiaries who can access the *Reddito di Emergenza* (ReM¹), making it a permanent tool for providing fragile segments of the population with financial support, and the single and universal subsidy for families, an instrument that responds to the need to simplify the benefit system for families with children, unifying the previous subsidies and increasing the number of beneficiaries.

Also relevant is the issue of younger generations, identified as a cross-cutting matter by the Recovery and Resilience Plans of Italy and other European countries, which must have an effective influence on all national policies, with special attention to the issue of work.

Only through these and other measures will it be possible to consolidate, strengthen and promote what is now an inseparable link between economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, based on well-being policies capable of supporting the recovery process, becoming a beacon for future challenges.

1. Economic support measure approved in Italy in May 2020 to assist families in difficulty due to the COVID-19 emergency.





Generation Equality: towards the construction of new social pacts



MARÍA NOEL VAEZA | Regional Director of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean

Twenty-six years ago, when the 4th World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, 189 countries expressed their intention to focus their efforts on the empowerment of women and gender equality.

■ In Mexico and Paris, the Generation Equality Forum announced firm commitments on gender equality and the launch of a five-year global action plan with the goal of accelerating gender equality by 2026. The forum's programme of action is backed by nearly US\$40 billion in confirmed investments, as well as ambitious political and programmatic commitments from governments, philanthropists,

civil society, youth organisations and the private sector.

UN Women plays a critical role in leading the forum's five-year action plan journey, overseeing the fulfilment of commitments to ensure accountability and progress through 2026.

Despite these commitments, in light of the situation changes in this area have been too



“THIS CRISIS HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF CARERS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF LIFE. AS A RESULT, UN WOMEN AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN PROMOTING THE CREATION AND STRENGTHENING OF COMPREHENSIVE CARE SYSTEMS AS A DRIVER OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY”

slow. According to estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in during 2020, economic empowerment and labour participation of women in Latin America and the Caribbean was rolled back by 16 years.

This crisis has highlighted the importance of carers for the sustainability of life. As a result, UN Women and other organisations have been promoting the creation and strengthening of comprehensive care systems as a driver of socio-economic recovery. We must have systems that help to recognise, reduce and reallocate unpaid care work, leading us towards a new social pact and a generation that advocates and exercises joint responsibility. Taking action to achieve these aims is not only necessary, it is also smart; because investment in care generates a triple dividend: in human capital, jobs and in the participation of women in the world of work.

On the other hand, if the COVID-19 crisis has made one thing patently clear, it is the innovation skills of the women at the forefront of many of the responses. UN Women and ECLAC presented the “Digital Basic Basket” initiative, which consists of guaranteeing that women have the devices, the technology and the resources they need to access the Internet. The idea is to provide each household with a mobile phone, a tablet and a data plan for one year initially. It is a simple solution that can have an enormous impact in terms of the capacity and agency of those women who do not have

access to these resources to get out of poverty, as well as to ensure their access to information, education and job opportunities and the change to generate income and earning a living.

One of the Coalitions for Action of the Generation Equality Forum focuses specifically on technology and innovation for gender equality, with one objective set for 2026. Therefore, it is crucial to reduce the digital gender gap between generations by half through a substantial acceleration of access to digital technologies and universal digital literacy. Women in STEM role models and mentoring programmes need encouragement. We recommend encouraging women to take part in sectors that promote technological change, create jobs and reduce the environmental footprint (renewable energy,

sustainable mobility, digital revolution, bio-economy, circular economy etc.).

We urge international cooperation to be part of the Equality Generation in Latin America and the Caribbean, reconsidering support and solidarity with countries of the region as a way out of this crisis that can advance women’s rights and socio-environmental sustainability, as well as achieving the objectives that we have set for ourselves for 2030.

Despite the difficulties and this multiplying effect of inequality that we observe in our region, I have great hope in new generations, since with a stronger and more united voice they demand that their rights be respected, that their voices are heard and their opinions are taken into account.

The demand is as fair as it is urgent. And we hope that the whole world will join us in this transformational change, that the force of change is greater than the resistance, and that this is the last generation that has to fight daily for equality as so many women and adolescents do in their daily lives.

If we can advance in these three dimensions: reincorporation of women in the post-COVID economy with stronger care systems, digital universalisation and more girls and young people in STEM careers, we will be building more just and equal societies that will allow them to face the challenges of present and future challenges.





Access to justice as a fundamental right for **social cohesion** in Latin America

Latin America remains one of the most unequal regions in the world, blighted by numerous, deep gaps where poverty and extreme poverty have worsened in recent years. These problems are common to all the States in the region, as are high rates of violence, serious prison crises, extension of the phenomenon of migration and internal displacement, and precarious access to basic public services, including access to justice, to name just a few of the challenges facing the region.

■ This has been aggravated by the pandemic, which is particularly affecting people in vulnerable situations. It is precisely these people who face the greatest obstacles to accessing justice and the possibility to enforce their rights: people in poverty, as well as those who lose their jobs or work in the informal sector; those with limited access to health, education, housing, social benefits; victims of gender violence or domestic violence; persons deprived of liberty; people in a situation of mobility (displaced persons, migrants and refugees) who have been stranded at the borders and in reception centres; children and adolescents; native peoples; people with disabilities; LGTBQ +

groups. In addition, it has been shown that violence against women and girls has intensified during the pandemic, and that female victims of violence face more obstacles in approaching justice services.

In this regional context, the States and institutions of the justice system face the enormous challenge of providing measures to guarantee recognition and effective protection of the rights of their citizens, especially the most vulnerable groups. Hence the importance of continuing to promote public policies on access to justice and other rights in the coming years as an effective tool against social exclusion and the fight against inequality, not only at the na-

tional level, but especially at the regional level within the framework of the different regional justice networks. With this objective, work has recently begun to develop two strategic instruments at the regional level. Firstly, the COMJIB is defining an Ibero-American Regional Strategy for Access to Justice that subsequently facilitates the implementation of National Plans for Access to Justice in each of the countries; secondly, under the coordination of COMJIB and the Ibero-American Judicial Summit, an Ibero-American Agreement on Access to Justice is being drafted and is expected to be submitted for approval by the States during 2022.



VOICES FROM THE JUSTICE NETWORKS



JUAN MARTÍNEZ MOYA

Spanish General Council of the Judiciary Coordinator of the Brasilia Rules Follow-up Commission of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit

"Any reasonable observer can see that there are obstacles and barriers that people have to face in order to access justice. These obstacles and barriers have causes and have a greater impact on the most vulnerable. The list of barriers is extensive and varied: trained human resources, adequate infrastructures in judicial headquarters, victim legal guidance offices, measures to counteract the digital divide in the most vulnerable. People in vulnerable situations perceive do not trust the justice system, and the lack of measures causes dramatic spaces of impunity and lack of protection for vulnerable victims. Countries must have adequate legal instruments that must have a practical translation into concrete actions.

A challenge for the systems in the region is to produce a legally binding text on the right of access to justice. If this text is also drafted inspired by the document of the Ibero-American Judicial Summit "100 Brasilia Rules guarantee effective access to justice for people in vulnerable conditions (updated 2018 version)", that company will be on the way to the right destination. Within this framework, the impact of the Ibero-American Agreement on Access to Justice would help to consolidate the rule of law and would influence several scenarios: 1) it will improve the legitimacy and reliability of the judicial system; 2) will strengthen the quality and specialisation of the public defence system; and 3) within the framework of public policies, the countries in the region will be able to carry out strategic planning on access to justice based on quality standards of justice, which will contribute to greater legal security and social cohesion."



STELLA MARIS MARTINEZ

General Defender of the Argentine Nation and General Coordinator of the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders (AIDEF)

"Since its creation, the AIDEF has set out to defend the full validity and effectiveness of human rights and guarantee the services to people, fostering widespread, equal access to justice. In this regard, the removal of legal, social, economic and cultural barriers that hinder the right to effective judicial protection is a constant concern of Public Defenders in the region. It is considered that the main objective of the entire operation of the public defence at all levels of action and stages of the process, including representation before human rights protection organisations - through Inter-American public defenders - is to facilitate access to procedures designed to ensure the effective enjoyment of rights. Therefore, guaranteeing access to justice without any distinction and to a comprehensive, free and specialised public defence helps to reduce social inequality, fostering social cohesion."





JORGE ABBOTT CHARME

National Prosecutor of Chile and president of the **Ibero-American Association of Public Ministries (AIAMP)**

"As organisations responsible for criminal prosecution, prosecution services are a crucial within the justice system and, by the way, they are also crucial in promoting and guaranteeing access to justice. In this framework, the Public Ministries of the region seek to permanently strengthen and facilitate contact with and the services of their prosecutors and officials with victims, witnesses and, in general, other parties intervening in the process. They also work to continuously improve the efficiency of criminal investigations, introducing the necessary reforms and changes within the established legal framework. The Ibero-American Association of Public Ministries, consisting of twenty-two prosecutors in the region, contribute with their lines of work to promote access to justice and to the cohesion of society. Among its projects, it enhances victim and witness protection and promotes juvenile restorative justice in the region by mainstreaming the gender perspective in criminal investigations, among other objectives. All of the above results in moving towards a more protective, inclusive and equitable criminal justice system."



ENRIQUE GIL BOTERO

Secretary General to the **Conference of Ministries of Justice of the Ibero-American Countries (COMJIB)**

"Access to justice is a fundamental axis of the work of the COMJIB, as a gateway to guarantee the fulfilment of other rights and an essential element to promote the development and social cohesion of our peoples, aligned with SDG 16 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although improving access to justice has still not been achieved in the region, we know that the global pandemic has exacerbated the need for public powers to act to make justice available as an essential public service, particularly to people and groups in vulnerable situations or at risk of exclusion, and with the essential gender and diversity approach that enriches our societies.

In this context, with the support of the EUROsociAL+ Programme we have started two major initiatives to achieve the SDGs. Firstly, we are developing a regional access to justice strategy that will be key to strengthening the capacities of policy makers in this area. This action requires coordination with several actors in the justice sector and the countries' commitment to develop within the framework of the regional strategy, national plans for access to justice to implement quality public policies, with monitoring and evaluation indicators, within a framework of participation by public powers and civil society organisations to coordinate efforts with the aim of improving social cohesion through access to justice. On the other hand, progress is being made with the preparation of the **Ibero-American Agreement on Access to Justice**, in which the COMJIB and the other institutions sponsoring the initiative have a central role. We are sure that the importance of Access to Justice in public policy agendas merits this strategy and this agreement, which will be the great consensus framework that will have practical and tangible results and a direct and concrete impact on those policies, especially the daily life of the societies and people in our Ibero-American community."



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New social pacts in Latin America and the Caribbean



ALBERTO ARENAS DE MESA |

Director of the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)



CARLOS MALDONADO VALERA |

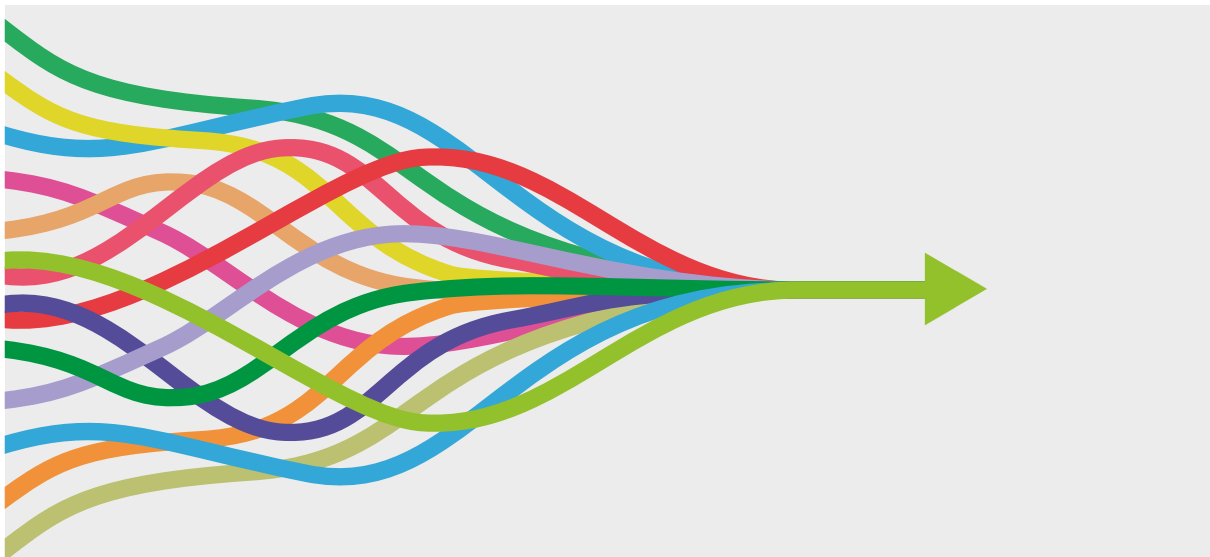
Social Affairs Officer of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

A need for reconstruction with equality and sustainability based on renewed welfare states

Almost simultaneously and ubiquitously, the Covid-19 pandemic devastated our societies and shut down economies like never before. The health crisis revealed a flaw in prevailing development models, patently obvious in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the enormous vulnerability of the established order to the threat of catastrophe, in many cases after decades of State neglect of many areas of social and economic life.

■ In LAC, the effects have been devastating: in 2019-2020 the extreme poverty rate rose to 12.5% and the poverty rate 33.7%, inequality in income increased by 2.9% (Gini index), while moderate and severe food insecurity affected 40.4% of the population in 2020, 6.5 pp more than in 2019. And yet, the State was

called upon not only to address the health emergency, but also to relaunch economies, and to support the income and jobs of millions of people and social strata not usually covered by traditional social programmes. Emergency transfers to vulnerable sectors in the region made it possible to mitigate the



rise in poverty in 2020, benefiting 326 million people, 49.4% of the population¹.

For a reconfiguration between the State, the markets, families and civil society to generate well-being and protect against adversity, far more than a package of emergency reforms from the government in power or sophisticated proposals designed by experts among four walls is required. If we add the pressing need to adopt sustainable production and consumption patterns, this type of reconfiguration entails new balance in the use and redistribution of the resources and capacities available in each society, which requires broad social and political legitimacy. In short, a new social pact is required in all latitudes for a profound change in the direction of development.

It is no coincidence that the Secretary General of the United Nations has just made a powerful call to define new social pacts in this complex scenario. In its most recent report, Our Common Agenda (September 2021), he says: "now is the time to renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. People need to see results reflected in their daily lives. This must include the active and equal participation of women and girls, without whom no meaningful social contract is possi-

ble. It should also include updated governance arrangements to deliver better public goods and usher in a new era of universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right. I invite all countries to conduct inclusive and meaningful national listening consultations so all citizens have a say in envisioning their countries' futures." In short, he urges countries to carry out extensive consultations to listen to all citizens and allow them to help imagine the future.

And he is right. We are facing an extreme situation that has opened windows of opportunity for structural change in social, economic and political terms. To be specific, ECLAC sees the pandemic as a critical juncture² that is presenting a historic opportunity for the construction of universal, comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems and for progressive movement towards true welfare states.

Historically, ECLAC has argued that the social pact is a political instrument based on broad and participatory dialogue, useful for obtaining consensus and structural agreements. As a process, it should be an explicit attempt to address issues left out by the usual channels, thereby building new bridges. Therefore, a new social pact should give voice and

influence to sectors and groups of the population subject to discrimination or marginalisation in order to broaden the dialogue and the adoption of the results. The construction of welfare states and their financing should be at the centre of this broad social dialogue to redistribute and increase the resources invested in the common well-being.

The starting point for LAC is complicated, with high levels of inequality in multiple spheres and a high level of mistrust towards governments, social institutions, political parties, the private sector and among individuals. In the short term, the social uprisings that occurred in several countries in 2019-2021 show a growing social unrest that requires responses that include vulnerable sectors and the middle class. And in the long term, there is another powerful argument to mobilise intentions and resources, within and beyond the region: without the universal guarantee of a certain level of well-being, the transition towards more sustainable modes of consumption and production will continue to appear as a hazardous, or even unacceptable, for broad sectors of our societies. In this, this new welfare state must generate certainty and sustainability, before a citizenship in the throes of a lengthy crisis.

*The references of this article are available in our [blog](#)

1. Poverty increased from 189 million in 2019 to 209 million in 2020 - which could have been 230 million -, and from 70 million in 2019 to 78 million - which could have been 98 million - in the case of extreme poverty.

2. The current global crisis can be viewed as what historians call a "critical juncture", that is, an exceptional moment of deep crisis that redefines what is possible and imaginable, where stakeholders are willing to take greater risks and change the status quo because they face enormous uncertainty.





Restoring the economy with a feminist perspective



MERCEDES D'ALESSANDRO |
Argentina's National Director of Gender, Equality, and Economy

■ The global crisis unleashed by Covid-19 is leaving higher levels of equality in its wake. The world's economies are still grappling with its many consequences: recession, unemployment, loss of income, indebtedness, poverty, negative effects on education, technological transformations, climate change, health emergency, destruction of the productive sector, among others. At the same time, structural inequalities were amplified, because the crisis particularly affected informal workers, women and young people. The impact on women has been enormous because they are also affected by another crisis, the carer crisis. Therefore, finding a way out means closing gender gaps and working towards a sustainable economic model.

Care work, mainly the responsibility of women, supports the productive system and

society. Most are workers in the so-called care economy: they attended hospitals, took care of education, were responsible for food assistance, took care of household chores, and looked after children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Without this care work in homes and community spaces, the effects would have been even worse. However, the traditional view of the economy taken by many governments still has a hard time understanding the fundamental role that care plays. This sector is essential to keep things running during the crisis, to find a way out and to build a future. Without these women - many overburdened and unable to take a break during the pandemic - there would be no economy to rebuild or recover.

In Argentina, at the beginning of 2020 and in just two months, women lost two



decades of progress in their participation in the labour market. The crisis had an even bigger impact on women who have children and adolescents in their care. The unemployment gap between young men and young women was multiplied by four. However, after more than a year in a pandemic and the recovery, many women still not managed get back into the labour market or find a job? How would you explain this? On the one hand, women are overrepresented in the most seriously affected sectors of the economy (such as tourism, culture or gastronomy) and are lacking in the most dynamic and strategic, which are dominated by men (such as industry, technology and energy). On the other hand, the unequal distribution of unpaid tasks in households and the consequent crisis of care is a central factor in understanding what happened. Women do three times more unpaid care and domestic work than men. This uneven distribution has negative effects on their employability, careers, income and future. The care burden increased during the pandemic, with the closure of schools, kindergartens, and the introduction of remote work. That was then something that had been problematic for many households became unsustainable.

The government of Argentina took specific steps to deal with the issue. We created institutional spaces to diagnose the situation nationwide, measuring the differences between women and men. We transformed management tools and prepared the first-ever budget with a gender perspective. Unprecedented social care measures were also implemented to close gender gaps.

The biggest challenge ahead is to achieve a sustainable economic recovery. For this to happen, we need to advance along two lines. Firstly, women must join the ranks of strategic sectors of the economy, such as industry, public works and technology. Secondly, the entire care value chain must be strengthened, to recognise and value these jobs and uphold their rights. The physical dimension must also be incorporated: the care infrastructure, which is an opportunity multiplication vector. So, jobs are created



“WOMEN DO THREE TIMES MORE UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK THAN MEN. THIS UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION HAS NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THEIR EMPLOYABILITY, CAREERS, INCOME AND FUTURE”

in construction, care jobs increase and improve and the women's economic independence improves because they have time to work, start businesses, study, rest, take care of their health, among other possibilities.

Women in Argentina and around the world are an essential component that keeps the

economy moving. To be fair and sustainable, economic development must take place with a feminist perspective. This also means that women take part in analysis, design, management and government. There are great challenges when it comes to plotting a future, but they are also essential.



**Ministerio de Economía
Argentina**





The Chilean Constituent Process, an innovative, cosmopolitan process from which to learn



LEÓN DE LA TORRE KRAUS |

Ambassador / Head of the European Union
Delegation in Cuba

■ The world is observing Chile and its constitutional process closely as one of the most innovative at a global level, so much so that it will mark a milestone in the history of constitution-making. The Constitutional Convention, the constituent body responsible for drafting the new Constitution, is composed equally by men and women and will have the representation of the native peoples. Elisa Loncón was democratically elected president of this Convention during the inaugural ceremony. A Mapuche woman with no party affiliation, this election is a symbol of the winds of change in this South

American country. In the president's address when taking office on 4 July, she said, "Today, a new Chile is being created: one that is pluralistic, multilingual, with all its cultures, with all its peoples, with its women and with all its territories. This is our dream for writing the new constitution."

I wish to acknowledge the example that citizens have shown so far by voting and with their involvement in public debate. The constitution-making process is a unique opportunity to sign a new social contract, based on dialogue and the achievement of consensus and broad and participatory



agreements, in which all voices and regions of the country are represented, and that marks the road map for decades to come.

The European Union has much to learn from this process. Not only is this a time of change, it is also a time accelerated by COVID-19, and there are global challenges such as digitalisation, climate change, etc., as well as new questions for which we still do not have clear or definitive answers, such as human mobility and gender inequality. Chile can be a laboratory of comparative constitutionalism to analyse how to address these major issues and the EU is interested in sharing ideas and experiences. This process also starts in parallel and with common challenges to the Conference on the Future of Europe, an initiative with which the EU aims to open an inclusive and transparent debate, giving European citizens more say about a series of key priorities and challenges with the aim of laying the foundations for the reform of European institutions in the coming years.

The EU has extensive, diverse experience - some "beautiful failures and problematic successes" - derived from constituent processes arising from right-wing dictatorships, from the left, from transformations and divisions of countries. And all these have entailed a process and a meeting of the population to reach a basic consensus that will enable future generations to coexist. We share the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the promotion of multilateralism with Chile, and have a 50-year relationship based on political, economic and cooperation ties.

Therefore, with Chilean institutions of the three powers of the State and other actors such as public universities, we have launched the Chile-Europe Union Forum, an initiative implemented with the support of the EUROsociAL+ programme to carry out different activities regarding which Chile and the EU are discussing issues of common interest such as fundamental rights, citizen participation, forms of government, decentralisation, gender equality, environmental protection, transparency, corruption and social models, among others.



“THE CONSTITUTION-MAKING PROCESS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO SIGN A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT, BASED ON DIALOGUE AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF CONSENSUS AND BROAD AND PARTICIPATORY AGREEMENTS, IN WHICH ALL VOICES AND REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY ARE REPRESENTED”

Once COVID-19 is over, the next decade will be crucial for Latin America - and in particular for Chile - and for the EU alike. I am confident that our strategic partnership will strengthen us to face the recovery and the path to economic and social development, and that these new social contracts and the institutional reforms to come will offer the capacities and legitimacy to guarantee equality, opportunities and well-being for all people.





Welfare state, climate change and inclusion, the need for a European-Latin America partnership



ALFREDO LUIS SOMOZA | President
of the Istituto Cooperazione Economica
Internazionale

■ One element that differentiates “each side of the Atlantic”, Europe and Latin America, is the difficulty on the Latin American side to establish a social pact that can open the door to policies of inclusion and environmental protection. In Europe, on the other hand, there has been a tradition of social welfare policies based on a social welfare pact since the beginning of the last century that spread, particularly after the Second World War, until it became established as a sign of continental identity. Progressive taxation, social care, respect for individual and collective rights and protection of nature are hallmarks of the current “European model”. For many Latin American countries, the definition of

a “democratic pact” in the years following the dictatorships of the 1970s was a one-of-a-kind moment, but issues such as the social pact, fiscal justice and social welfare are still not enjoyed by many. The return to democracy was more effective politically than socially. In other words, there are some countries with systems that might be classed as *welfare states*, and others with a good level of public service, but in which the Anglo-Saxon-style market model has led to unbridled privatisation or degradation of universal public service. Paradoxically, the pandemic has exposed the limits of both models. In the case of Europe, where ultra-specialisation and concentration in large hospitals is advancing,



healthcare systems have been ineffective in stopping the spread of infection, especially due to the neglect of territorial health services in recent years. There were large, excellent structures in place, but there were no domiciliary services or support structures for people who had not option but to go through the disease at home. From this point of view, Latin American countries with fewer resources but with territorial assistance networks managed to do more in a situation that took a part of European healthcare by surprise. In Latin America, public health, the only modality available to the poorest citizens, has collapsed due to a situation which exceeded the availability of resources and supplies in many countries. In these countries, and others, the impact of the counter-reforms of the preceding decades, which has reclassified healthcare into two antithetical categories: private healthcare for those with money and low-level public healthcare and without resources for the poor, suddenly became clear. Therefore, the pandemic struck across all classes in Europe, touching all segments of society; while in Latin America it was especially tough for those unable to pay for private services, living in precarious situations and with no resources to protect themselves. In short, social exclusion fuelled the pandemic in Latin America.

It is a central issue is social inclusion which, although not always high on government agendas, should always be an absolute priority in Latin America. In recent decades, the European Union made significant investments in countries that joined the Union, based on the principle of solidarity. These funds were intended to balance the great economic disparities between member countries. But that is not enough, particularly in light of the growing inequality among citizens in many countries, even among the richest. Weak, poorly trained individuals, recent immigrants, the elderly etc. are the categories that receive the greatest support from social protection systems, but even if they have, guaranteed health care, for example, this is not enough for them to be rein-

serted into society and the world of work. In Latin America, the picture assumes relevant dimensions, with social protection systems still insufficient in terms of coverage, access and quality, although the situation varies greatly between countries. Also, it is not only the traditionally weak cohorts that suffer the consequences, but also the millions of informal workers who earn very little, live from day to day and in emergency situations, and run the risk of having to go without food. With a low tax base caused by soaring levels of tax evasion, it is difficult to imagine an increase in public assistance. That's why one of the challenges facing Lat-

cial pact together with the chapters on inclusion and social protection. On the one hand, there is a need to take care of people and areas affected by the productive transformations necessary for the ecological transition, and on the other, these transformation processes also require support; from training workers for sectors on the rise to the creation of local social services and creating a social "infrastructure" in areas to which the displaced population is relocated from vulnerable places due to changing weather conditions.

Social well-being and the environment are priority topics on the global agenda for

“THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE REVOLUTION IN THE WORLD OF WORK THAT THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IMPLIES SHOULD BE PART OF THE ESSENTIAL SOCIAL PACT TOGETHER WITH THE CHAPTERS ON INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION”

in American is to regularise informal work, end tax evasion, force employers to pay social security and retirement contributions, organise a new social welfare system and an unemployment insurance mechanism that allows those who lose their jobs to find new ones, combining these improvements with a new vision of the environmental and its repercussions on society and the productive world.

The other emergency that has emerged in parallel with the pandemic is the climate emergency. There are marked differences between Europe and Latin America in this field. Europe has a shared and binding environmental policy. In Latin America, each state is responsible for the environmental issue policies can change radically with the change of government. The consequences of climate change and the revolution in the world of work that the ecological transition implies should be part of the essential so-

the coming years. Collaboration in these matters between Europe and Latin America ought to be natural given the proximity of culture and values, but also because they are the only two continental "democratic islands" in the face of the advance of authoritarianism. It is important for Latin America to pay attention to the ideas and the process to reformulate the welfare state and economic and environmental policies. It would be wise for Europe to learn from the success achieved in Latin American countries in terms of social cohesion and environmental policies with few resources and plenty of innovation. This partnership can also be of great strategic value to Europe - which is becoming increasingly isolated on the international stage - and for Latin America, which is struggling due to the lack of interest from the United States and the rapid advance of China.





Can we imagine Latin America without a framework?

A paradigm shift and new concepts for a new era



SONIA GONZÁLEZ FUENTES |
EUROSociAL+ Governance Area Coordinator

■ According to the sociologist Ludolfo Paramio, policy paradigms follow a similar course to scientific paradigms. That is to say, they tend to hold fast to a theoretical framework that has proven to be effective in solving a major problem, until that framework creates more and more anomalies for understanding reality, at which point, based on previously marginal ideas, a new paradigm is created. Let us assume that this is the current time. The dominant policies so far, anchored in the Washington Consensus, seem to have been exhausted and as some such as that of the economist Mariana Mazzucato have already said, we should get rid of any prejudice and bondage with regard to the generation of a new social contract that promotes value creation over profit extraction; that moves the rewards and not just the risks into the social domain; and invests in the common good. Such exhaustion has probably been accelerated

by the pandemic, which has exposed inequalities and vulnerabilities at a time of abrupt transformation for the world with unstoppable globalisation and interdependence, a break-neck technological revolution and the climate change we are already suffering. It seems that the time has come to move towards something new.

With the 2008 recession, our period suffered a lot, but after COVID-19 I have the feeling that it has been broken, that our benchmarks have become blurred and that we are living in times of darkness. COVID-19 has not only made already existing structural problems visible, but also new ones have emerged, which still have no clear or well-defined answers and that can be considered disruptive. I do not know if we will be capable as Hanna Arendt was of thinking without frameworks, without handrails, questioning common problems, rethinking the world and



trying to understand it. When you go up or down the stairs, you can always hold on to the handrail to avoid falling and yet today we have lost that handhold. Specifically, when you think about Latin America, I get the feeling that we are still looking for support through the use of handrail sections from previous decades (both failures and successes) that no longer work. Categories from the past do not help us, and perhaps it is necessary to focus on the specifics of what is happening now and to try to understand it as a new historical-political development. This could provide an opportunity for the region to move towards sustainable development and also protect democracy at a time when fear and uncertainty is the breeding ground for extreme and authoritarian populism. In this period of transit, it is important not to lose sight of people, as we are at a point where the trend towards social and institutional detachment is a volatile risk.

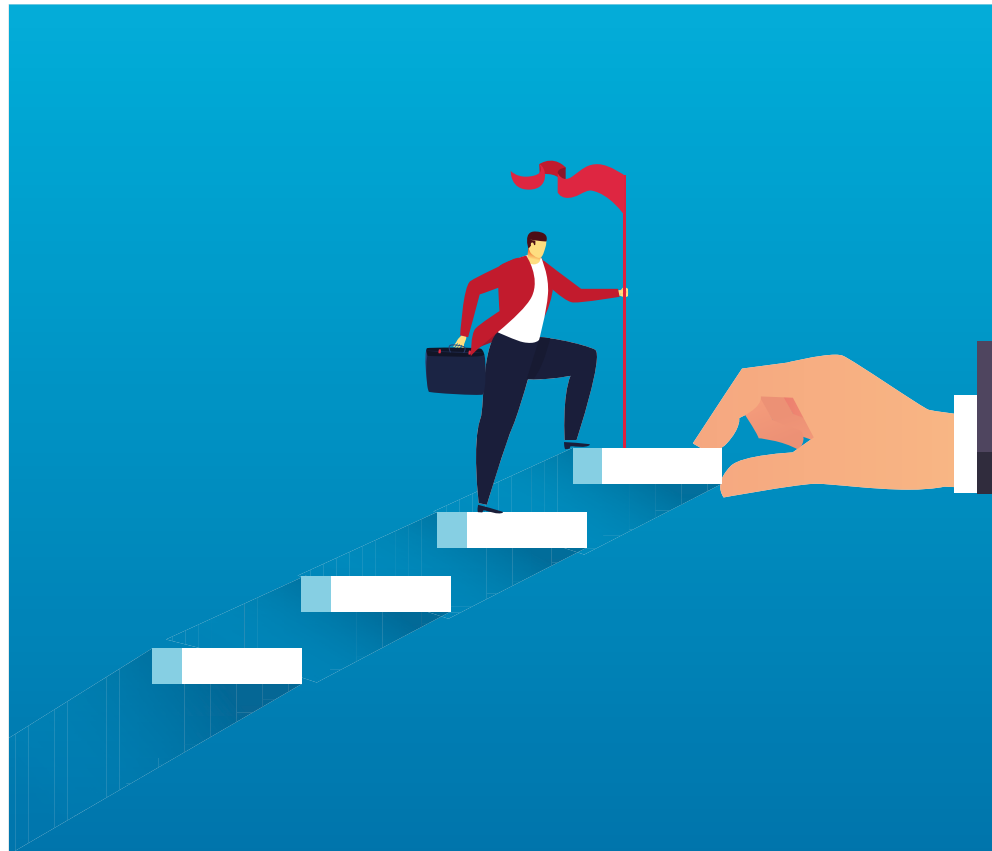
I heard the philosopher Daniel Innerarity say that democracies no longer collapse because of coups d'état and that social changes do not come about in a ground-breaking way, that we have political concepts in our hands that do not take into account the richness and diversity of society and the complexity of any new environments. Indeed, the problems we face today are much more complex and multidimensional and our institutions are limited in their capacity for action. Therefore, in this attempt to recover and strengthen the citizen dimension, it seems imperative to reinvent and recover the concept of public space, which is where social experience is distilled and how it is integrated with effective governance. With the onset of the pandemic, the public sphere has been revalued, but curiously we have also realised that the categories we use in that space have become obsolete.

We are heading towards a post-pandemic era and there is talk of "rebuilding better", something that will require reforms, I don't know if these will be gradual or radical, but I do believe that we have to agree on new meanings if we want a vibrant public space that facilitates social cohesion. Meanings related to the state-market-society equation,

the distribution and redistribution of wealth, political representation, territories, cultural diversity, new rights, security etc. Without these meanings, public deliberation and any attempt to reform our institutions will fail. Although unity has become entrenched, society is regrettably segmented and what should guarantee public space is coordination, cooperation, solidarity, and respect.

In the 21st century, a more careful outlook is demanded of everyone. We are not mere spectators. A paradigm shift is looming, but new concepts are needed to face today's enormous challenges which require the coordination of a new social contract that enables constructive movements. In that case, with the elephant in the room: how do we scale up from micro to macro? At this point, the State has to play a leading role. We need a more reflective State that, rather than intervene, can enable spaces for co-creation and shared leadership with other stakeholders. Perhaps only in this way can we achieve the great transformation.

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Economic social councils to review the new social pacts



FRANCESCO MARIA CHIODI |
EUROSociAL+ Social Policies Area Coordinator

■ The history of social contracts is a history of power and how it has been shared over time; which is why it tends to be rewritten at times of great social change. We are currently experiencing one of these moments because of the concurrence of two long-term processes. On the one hand, we face challenges that we might call “epochal” without fear of exaggeration: climate change, technological development, population ageing and globalisation. On the other, we are witnessing a crisis and the insufficiency of a model of society that had made it possible to generate growth and social progress at the same time. This model is more established in Europe and is based on the mediation between the State, the market and society, on the balance between market economy and solidarity. Persistent inequality and political disaffection are two typical manifestations of this crisis.

The need to rethink the relationship between the State, citizens and companies places Economic and Social Councils (ESC) on a

new and critical horizon. These institutions are a tool for participation that give citizens more a more influential role in political decision-making.

It is well-known that in both Europe and Latin America, the ESCs: (a) are consultative bodies of governments and (often) parliaments, which prepare proposals and recommendations on problems, legislative initiatives and public policies related to economic, labour and social matters; (b) they are made up of society’s most representative economic and social agents (sometimes they also include experts); (c) they are not spaces for negotiating demands, rather they guide decision-making in the general interest.

ESCs can improve the functioning of representative democracy. In a democratic regime, although the people hold the power, they do not exercise it. From this perspective, the ESCs are a complementary form of representation, since they stand between the representatives and the electorate. Although they do not have



decision-making powers, they guide the process as “consultants”. Unlike other forms of participation, the ESCs perform their function in an institutionalised manner, that is, they have been created precisely for the purpose of advising the authorities.

It should be noted that parliamentarians and rulers act in the interests of the general will of the people, without distinctions of culture, social group, profession, etc. By contrast, the members of the ESCs are not representatives of the population in a generic sense, but only of representative organisations of certain interest groups. Which interests? This point is essential to understanding the evolution of the ESCs and analysing the conditions under which they can effectively support the gestation of new social pacts and give new life to democracy.

Most of the ESCs were created in Europe in the 20th century and are the “offspring” of the social pact currently in crisis. This pact took shape in Europe after the Second World War and led to several decades of economic prosperity and progress in rights. The *welfare state* is its most symbolic creation. In that historical context, the world of work and production defined the horizon of political and social debate. There was a tendency to identify active citizenship with worker participation. This meant that the ESCs were essentially conceived as spaces for participation of business and trade union organisations.

The ESCs in Latin America share the same conceptual background, but are implemented in a different institutional and socio-economic context. However, that 20th century world no longer exists in either of the regions. In many cases, work has lost prominence as the main generator of income, as a source of individual and collective identity that inspires great ideological narratives. In addition, these days people are working less. Ways of working and the productive organisation have also changed. Working lives are no longer linear, continuous or stable like they were in the last century. We are witnessing the expansion of an autonomous segment of the labour force, with little guardianship and no community of peers — Semenza and Mori call it “stateless work”, which does not fall within traditional contractual categories.

“THE ESCS ARE A COMPLEMENTARY FORM OF REPRESENTATION, SINCE THEY STAND BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES AND THE ELECTORATE”

Likewise, the societies of both regions are increasingly defined by consumption. Consumerism accompanies and simultaneously drives the individualisation of lifestyles. This new “essence” is explained by different factors: changes in the sphere of work, levels of welfare achieved, more freedom and free time, the cultural and customs revolution that began in the 1960s, market pressures, among others. Subjectivity has become a hallmark of modern consciousness. In a context that encourages social fragmentation, not only have demands and initiatives been diversifying and multiplying, many of them have also entered the public agenda. Civil society looks like a mosaic of a thousand randomly arranged pieces: associations, movements, local organisations, etc.

ESCs in Europe and in Latin America have adapted to these changes by adopting a more pluralistic model of participation, which is both inclusive and open to different stakeholders old and new types of interests. Therefore, if the one hand new public policy issues have been integrated into the traditional catalogue of the ESCs, on the other, a third pillar - that of civil society - has been added to the membership of the Councils, alongside the two traditional social partners.

Although the latter is a very significant innovation, there are still some questions, particularly the following three:

1. Which social interests should be included and which should not? (environment,

gender equality, rights of ethnic and national minorities etc.)

2. How to ensure that stakeholders are adequately represented? (for example, which environmental groups? which women's organisations?)
3. How to avoid particularistic or corporate approaches, especially among some organisations accustomed almost exclusively to defending their own interests or working on specific issues, without experience in other areas?

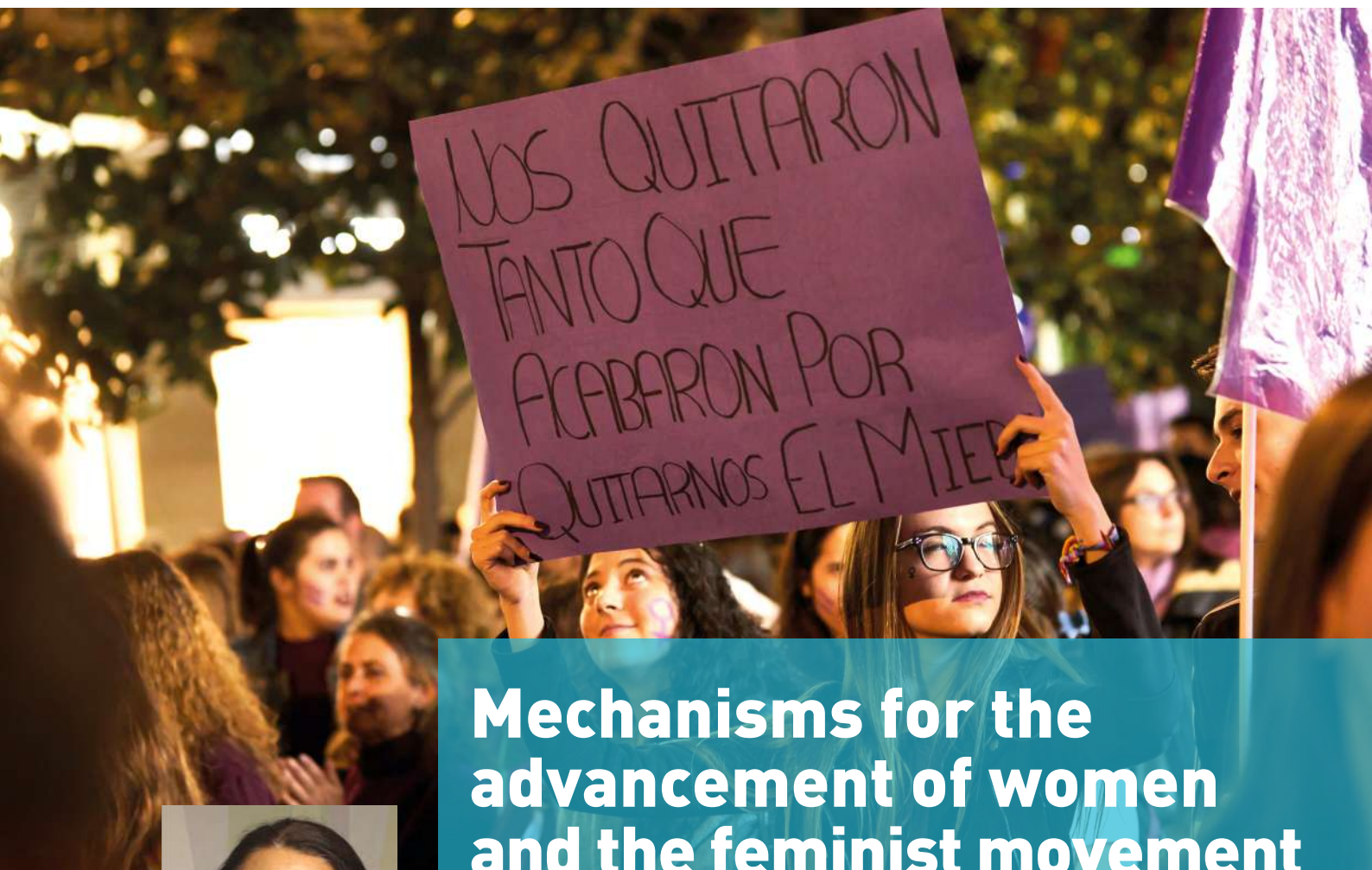
Rather than providing answers, this document merely raises the importance of these questions. These are crucial issues to understand how an ESC can cater for the plurality of expressions of civil society, especially in a time when political parties have become weary.

Given the difficulty of covering the vast range of issues, interests and formations that animate organised civil society, it seems sensible to encourage (and demand) grouping and federation. This would allow at least some sectors to elect their representatives; but it cannot be applied to all interest groups, because the issues that they deal with are so different that they barely converge.

Of course, what is crucial is the representativeness of those with a seat in an ESC (which should be able to be evaluated), and that beyond the groups that join, the ESC must be able to effectively perform its role as a bridge between citizens and authorities, systematically perform their consultative role with the population and its organisations. Several of them already operate along this line, which is decisive if citizens and civil society are to feel that ESCs are appropriate channels in which to be heard and to have influence. Therefore, the ESCs will be stronger (and more legitimate) to act as facilitators of new social pacts. And they will help to revitalise liberal-democratic regimes, which in many countries are showing clear signs of difficulty. Deep democracy requires the active contribution of civil society.

* There is an extended version of this interview on our blog: [link](#).





Mechanisms for the advancement of women and the feminist movement

Essential partners for transforming gender policies



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■ Like other crises (health, humanitarian, ecological), the **Covid-19 pandemic** has had an **disproportionate impact** on **women**, accentuating the inequalities and violence against they suffer. It has also led states to make structural policy adjustments and **budget cuts** that may potentially accelerate these inequalities and endanger the sustainability of gender policies.

However, **gender policies** are transformational and are exercised by society and the States to improve the quality of democracy. The state has a determining role in the construction and reproduction of inequality in gender relations and their transformation.

Governmental gender organisations such as **Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (MAMs)** and **the feminist movement of civil society** are essential partners for producing public policies that foster the fight against inequalities. While this link between institutionalised feminism and the social mobilisation of women is not without conflict, significant progress has been made. The **MAMs** promote a set of simultaneous interventions that respond to different manifestations of gender inequality - **the physical, economic and political autonomy** of women - and address the systemic nature of these inequalities. **Feminist discourses**



appeal to the values of freedom, equality, autonomy, social justice and human rights.

It should be noted that **MAMs** in Latin America (LA) and the Caribbean are relatively young and fragile. They were set up in the 1980s and 1990s, with varying degrees of institutional structure within the executive power. They are usually subject to continuous changes to the institutional structure and anchoring. According to a qualitative indicator prepared by ECLAC and based on the hierarchical level of the MAMs¹ in LA, **60% of the countries have high-level MAMs** (ranked as a ministry or led by a cabinet minister). **In the Caribbean, 83.3% of them have a low level institutional structure** (they report to a ministry or lower-ranking authority, such as a vice ministry, institute, council or other).

Support actions within the framework of **cooperation programmes** are excellent spaces to position the leadership of the **MAMs**. In this regard, EUROsociAL+ considers strengthening of **MAMs** a tool for the sustainability of gender policies. It implements actions to **reinforce its technical capacities and institutional architecture**; seeks to create **spaces for inter-institutional dialogue** to analyse the challenges of female participation in different branches of public policies not only as beneficiaries but also as actors, giving greater coherence and effectiveness to public action. It helps to link Latin American MAMs and their European counterparts to place them in spaces of global incidence (Sustainable Development Goals, Generation Equality Forum²), helping to

strengthen gender architecture in the region and the **legitimacy of institutions promoting equality**.

The above shows that **specific gender agendas** and **mainstreaming** are necessary to build a **new social pact** based on **redistributive political agreements³**, that promotes inclusive and sustainable development for all.

*The references of this article are available in our [blog](#)

1. The classification levels for Latin America are: high level for mechanisms with the institutional rank of ministry or when the rank of the incumbent is minister with full participation in the cabinet. At the intermediate level, the mechanisms that depend on the office of the presidency and whose incumbents are not cabinet members (offices attached to the presidency, secretariats, national institutes and other figures) have been located. At the lowest level are mechanisms that depend on a ministry or less senior authority (vice ministries, institutes, councils and other figures). In the Caribbean, the classification is similar and is expressed as: high level if the head of the mechanism is a minister, medium level if it depends on and reports to the prime minister, low level if it depends upon or reports to a sector minister.
2. The Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is a space for international public dialogue that includes both public institutions and civil society organisations, and especially youth, convened by UN Women and jointly organised by the governments of Mexico and France, for accountability regarding gender equality, tracking progress, as well as shaping a programme of concrete measures to advance towards gender equality by 2030. <https://forum.generationequality.org/> it is
3. In other words, they aim to transform the rules of the game and provide for a significant extension of benefits to populations with less relative power, unlike defensive agreements used to introduce politically costly reforms by protecting existing social and labour rights.



“GOVERNMENTAL GENDER ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (MAMs) AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ARE ESSENTIAL PARTNERS FOR PRODUCING PUBLIC POLICIES THAT FOSTER THE FIGHT AGAINST INEQUALITIES”





Social Cohesion in the Dominican Republic



OLAYA DOTEI CARABALLO |

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KATJA AFHELDT | Ambassador

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union to the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic has been classified as an upper-middle income country. The country's economy has been growing steadily in recent years above the average for Latin American countries. However, this growth has not had the same impact with regards the improvement in people's quality of life, in addition to the persistence of significant levels of inequality, the latter is one of the country's main challenges.

■ European cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries recognises the development challenges and inequalities of countries in transition. Through EUROsociAL+ and other co-operation projects focused on the social dimension, the European Union emphasises its continuing desire to build an ethical, transparent global agenda based on equity, inclusion and sustainability.

In the Dominican Republic, we feel that international cooperation and the exchange of experiences are important to continue advancing towards a more equitable society. In terms of national experience, European cooperation has played a significant role in promoting the main

reforms and public policies for the country's development.

Through the Public Sector's National Multi-annual Plan 2021-2024, the current government has increasingly made its citizens' well-being the central focus of its public policies, through the improvement of public services, such as health, education, citizen security and access to justice, as well as creating the conditions to generate quality jobs and promote a more transparent, effective and efficient state. All of this is also in line with the National Development Strategy (END) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Enormous efforts are also being made to reduce the existing gaps between the different



social strata, where gender equality and the territorialisation of all the social plans and programmes executed are highlighted as cross-cutting themes of action, with the understanding that it is in the territory where people live – one of the main spaces where inequalities are expressed.

The European Union has developed a learning process over recent decades that has resulted in the social investment approach, formally assumed in 2013. This approach is based on the doctrine that investing in the social aspect is the way to help “prepare” people to face life’s risks, rather than simply “repairing” the consequences of crises.

The progress of the Dominican Republic in this area is evidenced in the implementation of different social protection programmes, such as *Supérate* (the Better Yourself Programme), the main aim of which is to improve the quality of life of participating households through, among other things, the implementation of training actions, to build capacities for the employability and productive entrepreneurship of families, as well as to ensure boys and girls stay in the school system and that pregnant women get medical care.

Another important milestone in public policies aimed at strengthening the country’s social cohesion is the recent inclusion of two million people in the National Health Insurance scheme. With these new contributors, the state Health Risk Insurer now has more than seven million users, which means that 60% of the population has quality health insurance.

The Dominican Republic also has the opportunity to deepen its inter-institutional coordination process for the consolidation of social cohesion by taking advantage of the experience and interventionist logic of EUROsociAL+, “which over more than ten years has offered a space for peer learning and the exchange of experiences between counterpart institutions in both regions, favouring the use of a broad range of significant tools in each process”.

Among other actions in the country, prominent in this programme’s great contributions in the Dominican Republic is the realisation, together with the Ministry of Women, of a guide to create a single registry on violence against women in support of victims of a crime that is sadly common in the country. As the Dominican Republic is the country with the highest rate of child marriage in



“IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WE FEEL THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES ARE IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE ADVANCING TOWARDS A MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETY”

Latin America, EUROsociAL+ is also supporting the implementation and monitoring of the public policy on the prevention of early unions and adolescent pregnancy to end this practice.

It is important to note that EUROsociAL+ has supported the review and update of the National Employment Policy, with high-level discussion forums held with government officials, unions, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. Dialogue bridges are thus created to combat the informality of the labour force in the country and produce more sustainable and inclusive job opportunities. EUROsociAL+ also supported the design and implementation of a public spending review methodology to improve the country’s budget programmes to ensure that they are more inclusive. This strengthens the institutional structure and

participates in developing the democratic governance of the country.

EUROsociAL+ works with 18 countries in the Latin American region. The Dominican Republic was the first Caribbean country to participate in the programme, being active in various regional dialogue spaces such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Organization of American States (OAS) and customary, the Central American Integration System, among others. The Dominican Republic’s entry into EUROsociAL+ particularly strengthens the platform for the exchange of experiences between European and Central American countries in shared public policy agendas. The country’s participation in the programme is a successful example that will encourage other Caribbean countries to participate in future European regional cooperation projects on Social Cohesion. Regional cooperation will receive a strong boost from the new financial instrument for cooperation, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) “Global Europe”.

Looking towards future opportunities for regional programmes such as EUROsociAL+, we are sure that the experience with the Dominican Republic is evolving into a highly significant laboratory, since here the experience of a Caribbean country with a long history of cooperation crosses over with a programme aimed at the entire Latin American continent. It is an unprecedented event for European cooperation that can generate new leads, new models for rethinking cooperation within the framework of the new paradigm of “development in transition”. This experience will not only enable the country to become a leading force in the Caribbean, but it also connects the country with an exchange model of dynamic and horizontal cooperation with European and Latin American partners.

Through EUROsociAL+, we want to point out how together we can promote examples for a global agenda based on equality, inclusion and sustainable development. This is the essence that goes beyond the project and which forms the basis of our determination to continue working more and better.

* There is an extended version of this interview on our blog: [link](#).





INTERVIEW WITH

MARÍA DEL CARMEN MALDONADO

President of the Judiciary Council of Ecuador

New technologies as a tool for the justice sector to fight against gender-based violence



Interview by: **JACKELINE ROJAS** |
Senior Technician in the Gender
Equality Area

■ The measures taken in Latin America and Europe to control the Covid-19 health crisis during periods of social isolation exacerbated different forms of violence against women and girls, as well as against people of sexual-gender diversity, increasing institutional obstacles to address them. The judicial powers postponed work, extended terms and deadlines, and only attended to urgent matters in a less effective manner. This meant that technological modernisation processes had to be accelerated to respond to victims of gender violence quickly and efficiently.

The president of the Council of the Judiciary of Ecuador, María del Carmen Maldonado, answered some questions to illustrate how new technologies have become a tool for the justice sector to tackle gender violence.

QUESTION: How have new technologies helped the justice system to address cases of gender violence in the current pandemic situation?

■ **María del Carmen Maldonado:** The Covid-19 pandemic underlined the importance of developing technological tools for

judicial services to continue providing care to citizens, protecting health and preventing the spread of the virus. The pandemic further exacerbated the domestic violence phenomenon, with more causes of violence, but a lower rate of entry of cases to the Judicial Branch.

This situation forced rapid decision-making, to gradually enable more channels of access to justice services. This was achieved by implementing the Virtual Module of Protection Measures and the development of the Femicidios.ec tool, a follow-up mechanism on the principle of judicial speed in cases of femicide and violent deaths of women.

QUESTION: What are the main challenges for conducting online trials in cases of gender violence?

■ **María del Carmen Maldonado:** From an administrative point of view, the use of technology is not universal, since some sectors in Ecuador have no access due to the lack of internet coverage or lack of resources.

On the budgetary side, we face the challenge of conducting online trials in cases



of gender violence and providing assistance to victims through technological tools, which protect them from their revictimisation or pilgrimages in search of protection from vulnerable situations.

Another challenge is to develop channels and service routes that give victims access to justice services without conditions that endanger their integrity and that, without requiring unnecessary effort by the victims, can be served by the administration.

QUESTION: Could you tell us about some of the promising practices that have been identified?

■ **María del Carmen Maldonado:** The Council of the Judiciary carried out a representative project to automate judicial processes and information management on violence against girls, boys, adolescents and women, which automates the procedure for providing criminal and administrative protection measures, allowing justice operators protecting rights to submit requests to grant review of protection measures, interacting through Ecuador's Automatic Judicial Formalities System (SATJE).

Since the implementation of the Virtual Module of Protective Measures, 18,322 protective measures have been delivered through this technological instrument, protecting around 4,700 women, children and adolescents.

In this process, coordination with other institutions is a good practice, since it prevents the victim from unnecessary transfers between the agency where protective measures are requested and the judicial unit where this is ratified, protecting their physical integrity, security and personal protection and avoiding their re-victimisation, even before the perpetrator.

Additionally, the Council of the Judiciary, as part of the Comprehensive National System to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women, has developed the **Femicidios.ec** tool, which consists of a mechanism for monitoring the principle of judicial speed in cases of femicide and violent deaths of women. With this dynamic tool,



“WE FACE THE CHALLENGE OF CONDUCTING ONLINE TRIALS IN CASES OF GENDER VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS, WHICH PROTECT THEM FROM THEIR REVICTIMISATION”

citizens can permanently and interactively access statistics and judicial processes, in alignment with the implementation process of the Open Justice model that is carried out in coordination with all bodies of the Judicial Function.

QUESTION: What recommendations can you share for conducting online trials in cases of gender violence?

■ **María del Carmen Maldonado:** Technology has become a mechanism that evolves continuously to give people better access to services, without the need to have physical contact; technological and communication media have enabled faster and more efficient care systems. However, to make this a common, healthy practice, it

is necessary to promote the use of technological tools in the daily actions of judicial officers. The above has been achieved through training and awareness-raising for civil servants who attend to victims of gender violence, with the dissemination of the principles of “non-revictimising care”, which guarantees the right to access justice services without neglecting the human side of the people, which is essential for the efficacy of the justice system.

In terms of online trials in cases of gender violence, much remains to be done. Particularly access to technology for all sectors of the population, a challenge that involves large-scale projects by strategic sectors and government administration. However, despite the limitations of technology coverage, major steps have already been taken, starting with the optimisation of technological infrastructure, regulatory and procedural development consistent with the demands of a health emergency, improving care procedures and training for operators and judicial officials, among others.

The extraordinary nature of this situation showed the importance of having technological infrastructure and trained personnel to guarantee service continuity, thus complying with the provisions of the Inter-American Court in its Advisory Opinion on “Judicial Guarantees in States of Emergency”.

Undoubtedly, the health emergency caused the justice systems to throw themselves into guaranteeing citizens' rights to effective judicial remedies.

During the pandemic, the Council of the Judiciary of Ecuador, in collaboration with the EUROsociAL+ gender area, developed a “Regional diagnosis of promising practices for the implementation of *online* trials in cases of gender violence and generating general recommendations”.

*The references of this article are available in our [blog](#)





INTERVIEW WITH

Open parliaments in latin america

Advances and pending challenges to regain citizen confidence



MAURICIO ALARCÓN SALVADOR

Executive Director of the Citizenship and Development Foundation (Ecuador)



JAVIER MACAYA

Deputy of the Chilean Congress and Chairman of Open Parliament Network of ParlAmericas

We had a conversation with Mauricio Alarcón Salvador, executive director of the Citizenship and Development Foundation (Ecuador), coordinating organisation of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency (RLTL), and with Javier Macaya, deputy of the Chilean Congress and chairman of Open Parliament Network of ParlAmericas, a body that brings together the national legislatures of 35 Latin American and Caribbean states. We talked about progress with and challenges to the parliamentary opening processes in the region, within the framework of the support that EUROsociAL+ provides to these initiatives.



Interview by: **BORJA DÍAZ** | EUROsociAL+ Head of Good Governance

QUESTION: What are the main advances made in the area of parliamentary openness in Latin America? What challenges are still pending?

■ **Javier Macaya:** The progress made with this agenda in Latin America is significant and has positioned the region as a world leader in the field of open parliament. Several national parliaments have adopted action plans and initiatives to encourage legislative openness. Despite the pandemic, legislative powers such as those of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador or Paraguay, among others, have taken action to consolidate transparency, accountability, citizen participation and ethics in parliaments. The virtual open agendas promoted in the

Argentina action plan, information standardisation of information and ease of use of parliamentary data in Brazil, the Integrity Systems of the National Congress of Chile, the inclusion of civil society organisations in the Costa Rica Parliament's Open Government Commission, the open parliament regulation of Ecuador and the creation of key concepts of the SDG monitoring portal of Paraguay.

■ **Mauricio Alarcón:** It is difficult to talk about regional progress when the evaluation of the 2020 Latin American Legislative Transparency Index shows a 19.3% drop in the regional average. Congresses and assemblies obtained 58.9% in 2018 and 39.6% in this last measurement, reflecting gaps that have not been closed in more than a decade.



Chile and Costa Rica, the countries with the highest scores, are still far from the target standard, without significant progress. This may be due to the fact that citizen participation, the cornerstone of the Index, is still deficient in terms of creating open parliament action plans.

There is no doubt that during this decade, congresses and assemblies made efforts to create action plans; however, they still face difficulties in terms of sustainability, collaboration, creation, independent evaluation and dissemination. Regarding regulations, it is urgent to update or issue new rules on access to information, as well as regulation of lobbying. Regarding budget and management, congresses and assemblies are indebted to the public in terms of transparency in the budget and administrative management. Information on civil servants engaged and legislators' expenses should be permanently available. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges, at a time when legislatures are losing credibility and trust, is to enable and strengthen spaces for citizen participation that connect constituents to the work of their representatives.

QUESTION: What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on parliamentary opening processes in the region?

■ **Javier Macaya:** Undoubtedly, the pandemic has had an impact on the functioning of parliaments and enormous efforts have been required to adapt our work to a virtual environment. However, on the positive side, technological innovation advanced by several years. In this regard, the digital creation and implementation of action plans has forced parliamentarians, officials, civil society and citizens to make use of technology. It has also facilitated citizen participation by saving time and travel expenses and decentralising participation. However, the pandemic exposed a digital divide that limits citizen participation in rural areas that have poor connectivity and that of people who are not digital natives.

■ **Mauricio Alarcón:** There is no question that the pandemic had a direct impact on legislative work at the regional level. The Ecuadorian Assembly, for example, immediately went virtual, while other legislative bodies took weeks and even months to reactivate. Therefore, there were some improvements, such as resilient parliaments that found technological, administrative and legal measures to adapt and to continue legislating and supervising, and some negative impacts, such as the difficulties for citizen control due to the restrictions imposed by the authorities.

QUESTION: EUROsocial+ has collaborated with ParlAméricas and the Transparency and Access to Information Network (RTA) to develop a Legislative Transparency Toolbox. What is the relevance of this joint effort to systematise good practices?

■ **Javier Macaya:** Since we started establishing the principles of an open state in the parliaments of the region with the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN), it has been clear to us that it is imperative to clarify and continue to facilitate spaces for inter-parliamentary exchange and good practices based on the Road Map towards Legislative Openness. In this regard, the tool kit is a valuable

effort to promote one of the pillars of this roadmap, namely transparency and access to information. It is also a meeting point between legislative powers and information guarantor bodies, where generating synergies is key to further consolidating legislative openness. It also serves as a frame of reference for future open parliament undertakings. Finally, the fact of having included more than 100 of the region's good practices makes this a very comprehensive document and facilitates the implementation of key considerations related to transparency.

■ **Mauricio Alarcón:** For several years, congresses and assemblies have been implementing changes regarding their transparency and openness. All experiences, positive or negative, offer us useful lessons. Therefore, making good practices systematic and available is a valuable collective learning exercise that can promote openness at the regional level. A toolbox like this, coupled with political will, can bring about important changes that benefit citizens.

QUESTION: On August 25, the fifth edition of the Latin American Legislative Transparency Index for 2020, was published. How would you assess the results?

■ **Javier Macaya:** The Legislative Transparency Index is an important tool in the region, because it shows us how we are doing and the indicators to which we must pay attention to improve the effective implementation of the four dimensions. The results of the most recent edition, whose methodology was changed, with support from EUROsocial+, show that we are on the right track, but we still have a long way to go, since only two legislative branches were given a "pass" mark in the Index. Numerous indicators that are reviewed and in the short term, we must make efforts in terms of budget data transparency and administrative management of parliament at the regional level. Likewise, we must continue working to institutionalise legislative openness and, thereby, achieve other levels of effectiveness and impact of this agenda by publishing data in different formats, visualisations and clear language. Open Parliament is here to stay and its benefits are in the national interest; the countries with the most experience in open parliament scored best in the Index.

■ **Mauricio Alarcón:** As some media have announced, parliamentary opening is poor in Latin America. In general, the results are not at all encouraging, even for the highest-scoring countries. As well as providing evidence, the ILTL has created a stage for debate and reflection, since it gives a clear view of the gaps in each country and the limited progress in recent years, while providing data that facilitate the possibility of improvement. We hope this is seen as a positive and constructive critical appraisal for enhanced parliamentary openness in the region. Along these lines, collaboration between civil society networks, networks of parliamentarians and international cooperation has meant the construction of a sustainable setting for Open Parliament promotion and technical assistance in the region.

* There is an extended version of this article on our blog: [Link](#).





The Economic Social Councils: key instruments to advance towards new social pacts



INTERVIEW WITH

The comparative perspectives
of Costa Rica and Argentina



JOSÉ A. ZAGLUL

President of Costa Rica's CES



GUSTAVO BÉLIZ

President of Argentina's CES

Recíprocamente talked to José A. Zaglul and Gustavo Béliz, presidents of two recently created Economic and Social Councils in Costa Rica and Argentina, to learn their points of view of possible roles of these dialogue and consensus bodies when promoting social dialogue and strengthening democracy.



Interviewers: **FRANCESCA CAPPARUCCI** | Project technique
and **VIRGINIA TEDESCHI** | Southern Cone local technician Social Policies Area, EUROSociAL+ Programme

José A. Zaglul was President of EARTH University since its inception in 1989 until his retirement in December 2016. Dr. Zaglul was the former head of the Animal Production Department at the Centre for Tropical Agricultural Research and Training (CATIE) in Costa Rica, and served as professor and vice-rector of research and extension at the Costa Rican Institute of Technology (TEC). He has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Gustavo Béliz is the secretary of Strategic Affairs of the Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Argentina. He was director of the Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) at the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). He was twice Minister in the National Cabinet (Interior and

Justice, Security and Human Rights) and twice Secretary of the Office of the Presidency of the Nation (Public Management and Strategic Affairs) in three different national governments.

QUESTION: In your country, what is the role of the Economic Social Council for social dialogue, that is, to move towards a new social pact?

■ **Zaglul:** The Economic and Social Advisory Council of Costa Rica broadly represents the most diverse sectors of the population. This creates an opportunity for discussion, negotiation and consensus building among numerous stakeholders, such as workers, employers, academia and civil society. At the same time, it poses the great



challenge of making everyone represented satisfied with the results of the dialogue and negotiation process. This challenge has been addressed when defining the mission and strategic purpose of the CCES of Costa Rica, whose priority is the well-being and development of our society. The benefit of one sector cannot be imposed to the detriment of the welfare of the country. I believe that through constructive dialogue our goals of peace and prosperity for all can be achieved.

■ **Belize:** One of the basic objectives of the CES is to collaborate in the construction of the culture of the encounter. This is what we have proposed since its creation, and we make progress from a broad and diverse call, with the participation of the business world, organised workers, social movements, the scientific-technological system and universities. The Council works responsibly, beyond short-term power bids, on the joint development of action plans that lead to the design of state policies. We need to make progress with a new social pact that understands that no one has a magic or automatic recipe to overcome the structural problems in Argentina. We need to reach common diagnoses, listen to different voices and achieve syntheses that signify specific action steps, proposals, mobilising experiences, shared medium and long-term strategies. This Council is united but with very different views, origins and heterogeneous positions, and in that diversity lies the richness of this space.

QUESTION: What are the strategic reforms in which the government and the legislative assembly would like to involve the Economic and Social Council for a participatory definition of said reform?

■ **Zaglul:** At this time, an ambition common to the executive and the council members has to do with the conversion of the current presidential decree that creates the Council in a law of the Republic that lasts over time and becomes a bridge between the executive, the legislative assembly and the living forces of the country represented in the CCES. It is clear that the decisions of the CCES are consultative and not binding on the executive, but they are extremely valuable and influential to strengthen democracy and social peace. Within this framework, during the months of April to June 2021, meetings were held with the different sectors and populations that make up the CCES, and among converging topics of interest like poverty, employment and education - particularly relevant in the post-Costa Rican pandemic scenario. He highlighted the shared need for an economic reactivation based on public policies aimed at fiscal stability, attracting investment, local employment and economic growth.

■ **Belize:** The Council has been involved in crucial debates for development in Argentina. We are making progress in the discussion of a new energy matrix for the country (National Hydrogen Strategy 2030). We convened a broad debate on the future of work, which generated 50 proposals. We promoted Argentina's adhesion to the Pact for Information and Democracy and agreed to a joint declaration to support changes in the international financial architecture, in line with global proposals to channel Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) from developed countries to medium and low income countries. A

national contest was called to support pilot experiences to make it possible to establish settlement in the interior of Argentina. In terms of democratic innovation, we are relaunching the government administrators programme, creating a public works observatory to ensure transparency and promoting the design of a new code of ethics for the judicial function.

QUESTION: In Costa Rica, as you said, the broad representation of sectors and interests within the Council poses a challenge. How do you reconcile this plurality of sectors and interests represented with the effectiveness of the work of the CES?

■ **Zaglul:** the broad, diversified representation of sectors of the population in the CCES of Costa Rica, as well as a challenge, is an excellent opportunity to resolve and mediate between differences through dialogue and negotiation. An essential starting point is to understand that diversity is the wealth and progress of a society. Different points of view, when viewed respectfully and with the ability to listen, enrich our opportunities for advancement. A key element of success, to reach agreements, are essential values of human beings such as respect, ethics, integrity, honesty and patience; through them, it is possible to show respect for one another, an open mind and humility to accept other points of view, as well as a willingness to sacrifice part of personal interests for the general good. At the same time, it will also be essential that the CCES be endowed with a regulation that streamlines and enables conciliation between the different interests. We will devote ourselves to this in the coming weeks.

QUESTION: Through EUROsocial+ it was demonstrated how some European Economic and Social Councils are structured and how they work. Which of the lessons learned do you think could or should be drawn from the European experience, based on the ongoing process in Argentina?

■ **Belize:** We have a lot to learn from the European experience in this matter, because Europe has a long tradition with these kinds of collegiate bodies that promote agreements and consensus. These experiences show us that the creation and formalisation of this type of organisation serves to institutionalise dialogue, establish priorities and draw common horizons in diversity. Therefore, the councils become excellent spaces for public-private dialogue, agreeing to public policies and the debate between diverse stakeholders in society. Beyond the characteristics of each specific council, of the binding or declarative powers, it seems important to me to highlight the spirit that led post-war Europe to create spaces of social cohesion amid rubble, death and horror. The main task of any council is to work for social cohesion and ensure well-being, bringing positions closer and avoiding harmful polarisation. This horizon, present in the genesis of the European councils, maintains its validity and our country must incorporate it to consolidate our beloved Argentina. As Pope Francis says, a new and better beginning for humanity is possible in the post-pandemic world. To do that, we must work together and with haste. This publication is an important step in that direction.





Ensuring sexual and reproductive health has traditionally been a great pending task for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Far from being resolved, this shortfall was accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic. That is why *Recíprocamente* had a talk with Alejandra López-Gómez and Laura Dihuignidili in order to find out what measures are needed to change the trend and design a response that can put an end to this problem.



ALEJANDRA LÓPEZ-GÓMEZ

Professor and researcher at the University of the Republic (Uruguay) and expert in EUROsocial+



LAURA DIHUIGNIDILI HUERTAS THOMPSON

President of the NGO Anyar, Guna Yala Indigenous Province, Panama, activist for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples



Interview by: **SANDRA BERTHELOT-ARANDA** | Eurosocial+ Technician in the Gender Equality Area

QUESTION: The gaps in the exercise of rights to sexual and reproductive health in the region have widened during the Covid-19 pandemic. What kind of actions should the State promote to prevent teenage pregnancy?

■ **Alejandra López-Gómez:** In terms of unintended pregnancy in adolescents, the region ranks second worldwide in the fertility rate in adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age, with 66.4 per thousand adolescents. In turn, pregnancy in girls and adolescents under 15 years of age has become a relevant problem in the region as a sign of structural violence, particularly gender-based violence against girls, which translates into infringements and violations of their human rights.

States must guarantee access to comprehensive sexual education in the education system from an early age. There is also a need for programmes in the informal educational context. Proven educational

interventions with a transformative gender approach are required to prevent unprotected and non-consensual sexual conduct and to strengthen sexual and reproductive decision-making skills. Therefore, one of the most important challenges facing countries in the region is to reduce teenage pregnancy by designing and implementing national inter-sectoral, multicultural strategies, with the participation of civil society and with sufficient budgets and resources.

■ **Laura Dihuignidili Huertas Thompson:** There must be a strategic alliance with youth groups, indigenous women, parents and regional authorities; follow-up on the plans that have been established but abandoned, and arrange a meeting with young people to clarify deficiencies in plans in the areas in the corresponding indigenous languages and languages so as not to continue improvising on the plans that they have. The state has a fundamental role in pregnancy prevention.



QUESTION: What are your thoughts on the role of men in teenage pregnancy?

■ **Laura Dihuignidili Huertas Thompson:** The role of men is crucial, since they must accept the same responsibility as a woman because both are equally responsible. Men must be educated in safe sex to avoid not only unwanted pregnancies, but also sexually transmitted diseases and thus to enjoy a safe sex life.

■ **Alejandra López-Gómez:** Adolescent males have a very important role in the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and, therefore, it is important to implement actions that actively involve them. It is necessary to modify the gender norms that supports and perpetrates a model of male domination.

QUESTION: In your opinion, what would be the impact of including young people (youth groups, youth movements) in birth control strategies for girls and adolescents?

■ **Alejandra López-Gómez:** A relevant point in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of public policies to prevent teenage pregnancy is to involve the adolescent population in general; not only to the intended "beneficiary or user" of the actions, but also to active agents of social transformation. This involves bringing together stakeholders with political responsibility of defining dialogue mechanisms between experts, decision makers and the adolescent population throughout the process. Now the question is: Who represents the adolescents? This question applies to other groups of the population. Although the criteria in this regard must be defined in each specific context, it is important to remember that the adolescent population is diverse in social and economic conditions, gender, ethnicity-race and age. For this reason, the aim should be to create bridges and dialogues with groups that reflect this diversity.

■ **Laura Dihuignidili Huertas Thompson:** Anyar NGO believes that it is important to include youth movements, since communication between young people is direct and clear. As young people they often shy away from expressing themselves freely about their sex lives and are more comfortable expressing themselves with other young people; this is a good strategy for data collection, to exercise and create plans designed for indigenous youth, respecting their experience and particular world views.

QUESTION: In the context of Panama, an urban and rural territory with various idiosyncrasies, very marked cultural patterns and the presence of the *comarcas* - regions with an indigenous population- it is essential to include both all adolescents and women with disabilities and migrant women. What are the main challenges facing Panama in preventing teenage pregnancy?

■ **Laura Dihuignidili Huertas Thompson:** One of the main causes is the prevailing structural inequality, since there is no real healthcare within the *comarcas*, as well as deficiencies in terms of education, drinking water, access to information, and many more.

All of this leads to high rates of pregnancy and malnutrition, fuelling a perpetual cycle whose culture treats a subject that must be tackled



as a taboo. The reality is that young people in the *comarcas* do not have schools in their communities and if they do, only to the fifth grade. What's more, to reach the nearest health centre with equipment they have to travel by boat or walk for hours and when they arrive they do not have the necessary information, because the centre may be closed or the doctor may not have arrived. This means that young people are prone to health problems in general and sexual health issues in particular, and unwanted pregnancies occur in places where there is no safe drinking water which leads to countless social problems for young people. This story is a way of life in the *comarcas* where there may be plans on paper but the programmes need to be put into action so that there can be a safe sex life.

■ **Alejandra López-Gómez:** Between 2015 and 2020, Panama had the fourth-highest adolescent fertility rate in the Latin American and Caribbean region with a downward trend in the last three years, reaching a value of 67.1 live births per thousand adolescents between 15 and 19 years in 2019. As for the early fertility rate (10-14 years), there is a slight downward trend with a rate of 2.6 live births per thousand adolescents of those ages. When these data are analysed, depending on their territorial distribution, it can be clearly seen that where adolescents live is a primary determinant of the likelihood of pregnancy, particularly if the adolescent resides in an indigenous region. For example, in some regions of the country, the rate of adolescent mothers is higher than 25%.

Therefore, Panama has a huge challenge ahead to reduce and prevent unwanted pregnancies and pregnancies in adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age. To this end, with the technical assistance of the EUROsocial+ Programme, it was proposed to update the *National Strategy for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and the accompaniment of adolescent mothers and fathers* dated 2018. The main challenge is to develop an intersectoral and multicultural nature policy with emphasis on reducing and preventing unwanted pregnancy. This is the enormous challenge that Panama and the region have to provide guarantees and promote human rights and gender equality for adolescents and young people.

*There is an extended version of this interview on our blog: [link](#).





The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



AGUSTÍ FERNÁNDEZ DE LOSADA | Director of the CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) Global Cities Programme



EMANUEL PORCELLI | Coordinador de Cooperación Internacional del Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales, Argentina

A global agenda to territorialise public policies in a context of the recovery

Although it may seem contradictory due to its status as a global agenda with a strong universal aspiration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approved in 2015 has a significant territorial and local dimension. Proof of this can be found in the definition of an objective focused on the sustainable development of cities (SDG 11); and in the fact that a very important part of the goals defined in the framework of the 17 SDGs requires the participation of local and regional governments for their implementation. In fact, according to an estimate by UN Habitat, two-thirds of the goals articulated by the SDGs are deployed within the framework of the competencies and responsibilities that, in most of the countries of the

world, are partly or totally assumed by local and regional governments.

This reality, however, poses an important challenge, since local and regional governments often operate in circumstances of limited resources and capacities. Latin America is no exception to this situation. According to recent estimates, their participation in public spending is no more than 15% of GDP, with that of local governments is only 3.6%¹. Therefore, making progress in localisation processes that allow effective implementation of the SDGs at the territorial level requires processes to strengthen institutional and operational capacities of local and regional governments.

1. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Fiscal Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/PUB.2021/5-P), Santiago, 2021.



And although this was already a major challenge, the COVID-19 health emergency has made this a matter of urgency. In fact, the pandemic has revealed a convergence of numerous crises - the climate, the economy, social and global health - that has placed local and regional governments in a position of significant centrality. For a long period marked by social isolation and restrictions, they have been in the forefront trying to guarantee rights and ensure the provision of highly sensitive basic services for citizens. Even in a context of severely limited resources, cities, departments, provinces and states throughout the region have shown a significant capacity when it comes to offering responses and solutions adapted to local situations in areas such as mobility and the management of public space, support for particularly sensitive sectors of the local economy, care for the vulnerable and addressing inequalities and the many gaps caused by digitisation and technological disruption. This they have done without losing sight of the global commitment to move towards climate neutrality schemes.

But this capacity to offer answers and solutions must transcend the crisis generated by the pandemic and make local and regional governments key actors in the recovery. The commitment to make progress in a double transition, ecological and digital, that is fair, inclusive and sustainable, requires territorial policies aimed at transforming productive structures, rethinking behaviour patterns of societies, enhancing resilience and ensuring that no one, no territory and no ecosystem is left behind.

In this context, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers an invaluable frame of reference to encourage more sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery processes. Beyond its undeniable symbolic potential, the Agenda offers us a story and a model with the potential to mobilise the commitments, resources and knowledge that will be necessary to support a recovery that will speed up the transformations needed by Latin America and the planet.

Among other foundational elements, the model is based on the notion of partnership (SDG 17) and the necessary coordination between all the stakeholders that play a relevant



“THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OFFERS AN INVALUABLE FRAME OF REFERENCE TO ENCOURAGE MORE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY PROCESSES”

role in sustainable development processes. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is a clear commitment to reinforcing the essential collaboration between, on the one hand, different levels of government - international, national, regional and local - and on the other, between them and the private sector, civil society and the knowledge sector.

Moving towards efficient forms of multilevel governance will be essential to coordinating the partnership between national and territorial, regional and local governments, forms that consider distribution of competency schemes defined in the legal systems, as well as the need to promote non-hierarchical collaboration based on institutional loyalty and principles such as subsidiarity; that aim to seek complementarity, mobilise resources and knowledge and accept shared responsibilities.

In this sense, it is essential to ensure the support of national governments so that

the localisation processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are effective and local and regional governments can implement the SDGs in their respective territories. Ultimately, it is about national governments supporting and facilitating sustainable territorial development, activating all the necessary resources for the deployment of the necessary transformations.

Some Latin American countries are taking advantage of the commitment to localise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote and strengthen their partnership with territorial, local and regional governments. They are doing this while accepting the need to strengthen their capacities to be able to lead the recovery processes of their territories, using the SDGs as a frame of reference.

* There is an extended version of this interview on our blog: [link](#)





Leticia Benedet, Master in Gender and Public Policy and expert in the Gender Equality Area at EUROsociAL+, interviewed Pilar Román and Itzá Castañeda for *Recíprocamente* to learn about the synergies between gender and environmental claims and which should be established in the future to address both issues intersectionally.

**PILAR ROMÁN**

Gender and Climate Change Expert

**ITZÁ CASTAÑEDA**

Gender and Climate Change Expert

Interview by: **LETICIA BENEDET** | EUROsociAL+ Expert in the Gender Equality Area

QUESTION: Which are the most recent and important collaboration milestones between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe on the nexus between gender and climate change?

■ **Pilar Román:** Both Europe and Latin America have been pushing the international gender and climate change agenda strongly. It is no coincidence that the first gender and climate change work programme of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) was decided in Lima (Decision 18/CP. 20), nor that Latin American negotiators had a very important role in this achievement. Nor is it by chance that five years later, at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change 2019 (COP25), under the Chilean Presidency and with support from the Government of Spain - the country that hosted the COP, all the countries decided unanimously to make an improved version of this work programme and a five-year gender plan (Decision 3/CP. 25).

In 2020 and 2021, UN Women and the governments of Mexico and France worked on the creation of a global meeting for gender equality, the Generation Equality Forum, highlighting the creation of the Coalition for Action for Feminist Action for climate action, which has

placed squarely on the global agenda the need to start the transition towards an inclusive green economy that recognises the interconnectedness of climate change and gender justice issues and that protects and amplifies the voices of indigenous communities

QUESTION: As an expert in the EUROsociAL+ Gender Area, you recently carried out a study on the state of the art of climate change policies with a gender perspective in Europe. If you had to choose the three European experiences that you consider good practices to replicate in LA, which would they be?

■ **Pilar Román:** I would particularly highlight an experience related to women in the fishing sector. Latin America is making great strides in recognising the role of these women and guaranteeing their rights and equal access to benefits; however, I consider that the European experience in Spain, France and Finland, called "State of the collaborating spouse" (CSS), gives women a status that goes beyond supporting the family, treating them as professional workers with a voice in professional committees and organisations.



“BASED ON THIS INTERSECTIONALITY, AGENDAS ARE GUARANTEED TO BE PLURAL AND CONSENSUAL, AS WELL AS PRE-EXISTING INEQUALITIES BEING ADDRESSED AS PART OF CLIMATE ACTIONS”



There are also regional strategies in the European Union that I consider valuable because of their coherence and coordination, and perhaps the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with its working group on gender that could be replicated. Among these strategies I would mention:

- The appointment of a dedicated commissioner to integrate the equality perspective into all major EU policies and initiatives, particularly in the context of the Green Deal.
- The creation of a Gender Equality Strategy that ensures the integration of gender in the policies of the member countries.
- The creation of a Social Climate Fund to support the citizens most affected by energy or mobility poverty and those who are most exposed to it. The goal is to mitigate costs for those most exposed to change, to ensure that the transition is fair and that no one is left behind.

QUESTION: As an Expert in the EUROsociAL+ Gender Area, you recently carried out a study into the State of the Art in climate change policies with a gender perspective in Latin America and the Caribbean. If you had to choose the three European experiences that you consider good practices to replicate in LA, which would they be?

■ **Itzá Castañeda:** I would highlight two: Firstly, the interministerial mechanisms on gender and climate change in which the sectors leading the mitigation and adaptation actions to climate change take part, the very mechanisms for gender equality, groups of women and young people, indigenous people, peasants and Afro-descendants, and LGBTBI+ people. Based on this intersectionality, agendas are

guaranteed to be plural and consensual, as well as pre-existing inequalities being addressed as part of climate actions (gender-responsive).

The other would have to do with internal climate displacements in Nationally Determined Contributions. Countries like Mexico have included this issue from a human rights and gender perspective. There are regional studies that provide empirical evidence and replicable analysis methodologies.

QUESTION: How can we ensure that the gender approach is included in climate action projects and programmes?

■ **Itzá Castañeda:** There is a consensus that gender-based violence and structural inequality hinder the ability of individuals and communities to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as the ability to achieve peace and human security. In this regard, climate change poses great challenges that are mutually reinforcing and must be addressed intersectionally.

The actions supported by EUROsociAL+, such as the integration of data in agricultural censuses, women's access to land, prevention and attention to gender-based violence, and the political and economic empowerment of women, are crucial to address the negative effects of climate change such as food insecurity linked to drought or loss of land and livelihoods.

EUROsociAL+, based on its *expertise* and close work with the MAMs, can play a catalytic role in the gender-responsive climate action strategies that the countries of the region have proposed and contribute to their effective implementation.

*The references of this article are available in our [blog](#).





Post-pandemic social reconstruction in Central America and the Caribbean



LEONARDO FERREIRA NEVES

AI Director of the ILO Office for Central America, Haiti, Panama and the Dominican Republic



ANITA ARACELI ZETINA

General Secretary of the Central American Social Integration Secretariat (SISCA)



Interview by: **FEDERICO NASTASI** | Local technician in Central America and Mexico of the EUROSociAL+ Programme

Recíprocamente spoke to Leonardo Ferreira Neves (ILO) and Anita Araceli Zetina (SISCA) about the challenges for social integration in the post-pandemic era.

■ Leonardo Ferreira Neves is the AI director of the ILO Office for Central America, Haiti, Panama and the Dominican Republic. He has a Degree in Economics from the University of San Pablo and Master in Economics from the University of Panama. After a career in the government sector of his country, Brazil, he joined the ILO in 2004.

Anita Araceli Zetina is the general secretary of the Central American Social Integration Secretariat (SISCA). She has a Master of Arts from the Pontificia Universidad Católica, the Dominican Republic, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Murray, United States. She has been the UNICEF Programme Coordinator in Belize, her native country.

QUESTION: This publication deals with social pacts, the need to come to agreements between different interests to mobilise public investment and encourage social cohesion. The year 2021 marks the bicentennial of the independence of Central America and 30 years of Central American integration. Is this anniversary an opportunity for new social pacts in Central America, and is there a need to build them?

■ **Zetina:** As we celebrate the bicentennial, the pandemic and adverse natural phenomena are threatening to delay some of our development indicators. However, every crisis is also a window of opportunity for reconstruction.



Despite major financial difficulties, the governments of the region have adopted measures that have reduced the impacts of the pandemic.

Many of the region's social problems have structural causes, so we must connect recovery actions with the strategic objective of strengthening social protection policies and systems. Higher levels of investment are required to achieve this, which is complicated in a situation like this, marked by major fiscal limitations. This situation makes building agreements and establishing pacts a matter of great importance.

The Central American Integration System is a consensus-building space that has strategic instruments, such as the Regional Integral Social Policy of the Central American Integration System 2020-2040 (PSIR-SICA) and the Plan for Recovery, Social Reconstruction and Resilience of the SICA Region (Plan 3R). These regional frameworks determine how to advance in terms of integration, but they also serve as inputs to broaden the dialogue that gave rise to them.

QUESTION: According to the ILO Report on Social Protection, to respond to COVID-19, "governments have introduced social protection, and are guaranteeing social stability". In Central America, not all countries have been able to organise a suitable response to the situation, due to lack of funds and institutional weaknesses. What lessons can be learned from this situation?

■ **Ferreira:** The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of existing social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Central America, the situation is the same. The difficulties meeting social protection aims have become exacerbated. Before the pandemic, the coverage of contributory social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean reached 46.5% of people in employment.

On the other hand, in recent years, the countries had implemented or expanded different non-contributory programmes. Most countries in the region have non-contributory

programmes for social policy and income security in old age¹. However, over 49% of people over 65 in the region do not receive a pension. When it comes to income security programmes for people of working age, these are diverse and usually combine services for labour inclusion and improving employability. None of the countries in Central America have unemployment insurance.

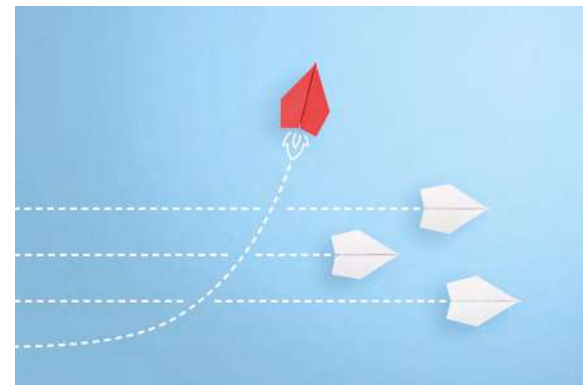
Regarding social protection in health, although many countries adopt universal coverage, in practice there are barriers to access and quality.

This pandemic shows that social protection is a human, economic and social need, crucial to ensure progress and sustainability in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

QUESTION: The strategies to overcome the crisis focus on collaboration between countries and a strong drive for social cohesion at the top of the agendas. One example in Europe is the *Next Generation EU*. Something similar has happened in Central America. What is the advantage for each country of thinking about and implementing recovery on a regional scale?

■ **Zetina:** It is important to note the success of EU actions aimed at tackling the pandemic. In Central America, we have also observed a tendency to increase public spending in the social sector. The knowledge that recovering from the crisis entails investing in social affairs has led to the proposed 3R Plan. At this point, it is important to mention the European Union's contribution through EUROsocial+ and also that of different instances of the United Nations. The SICA region and its integration process is a strategic platform for building consensus that enables countries to implement joint policies. In this vein, the Social area of the System has the PSIR-SICA, from which the 3R Plan is derived. Different actions are promoted based on these instruments that encourage the coordination of national

efforts with regional initiatives. The 3R Plan clearly reflects this regional integration as a strategic platform. It does not replace national recovery plans, but is the first regional recovery plan that where the social aspect is at the centre of recovery, alongside the economic axis, not to forget environmental and risk management elements.



QUESTION: The slight recovery in employment is led by informal occupations. It seems that informality is an intrinsic structural characteristic of the economies of the region. What short-term and long-term measures can be taken to counteract this trend?

■ **Ferreira:** The economic recovery of recent months is not fully reflected in the labour markets in Latin America. The recovery of jobs has been led by the growth of informal employment. Central American countries feature high levels of labour informality, and the current situation is tending to increase these levels. In this crisis, formal and informal employment alike contracted greatly. It is too early to say whether previously formal occupations have become informal, but it is a latent risk. As stated in ILO Recommendation 204, formalisation policies should have a triple objective: to facilitate the transition from informality to formality; protect employment and companies that are already formal; and promote formal job and business creation.

1. ILO (2020): Regional technical note "Social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean in times of pandemic. Labour panorama in times of COVID-19".





Post-pandemic fiscal challenges



ALAIN CUENCA

General Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies



MARÍA DOLORES ALMEIDA

Ex-Vice Minister of Finance, Ecuador and international public finance consultant

The post-pandemic period has opened a new cycle in the fiscal and tax field on both sides of the Atlantic. For this reason, Fernando de la Cruz Prego has interviewed Alain Cuenca and Dolores Almeida, who talk to us about the main challenges we will have to face in this area and the keys that will have to be taken into account in order to do so successfully.



Interview by : **FERNANDO DE LA CRUZ PREGO** | EurosociAL+ Technician

QUESTION: The pandemic has radically changed economic and social perspectives at the international level, which has led to new problems and approaches to fiscal policy. What do you think are the main fiscal challenges facing the European Union and Latin America in the short and medium term?

■ **Alain Cuenca:** There is no doubt that the pandemic has affected economic and social prospects, but once the health crisis is overcome, the economy will recover. We do not expect radical changes, rather that the problems that we already had before the pandemic have been aggravated and very much accelerated. And as a consequence of this, there are some new problems, which we did not expect, such as the risk of inflation.

In our opinion, in terms of the European Union, member countries face the challenge of consolidating and expanding welfare states in a context

of strong macroeconomic pressure derived from the pandemic situation. This must be done in a supplementary way to the new productive approach of the Union focused on the modernisation of the productive structure in the environmental and digitalisation fields. The current expansive monetary and fiscal policies will undoubtedly help, but combining productive modernisation with the strengthening of welfare states is still a major challenge.

Our close collaboration with Latin America leads us to think that the pandemic is an opportunity for the middle and upper classes to understand the need for the public sector to provide some universal services, free of charge and with sufficient quality. For example, it has become clear that education and healthcare drive economic growth in both the short term, and the long term. And there is no doubt that they reduce inequalities. Having such services requires a modern, fair and effective



tax collection system. The current health and economic crisis, which is causing a fiscal crisis, is also a great opportunity to establish a new social - and fiscal - pact for many Latin American societies.

■ **M^a Dolores Almeida:** Countries are facing two main problems in this regard. Firstly, to implement progressive reforms, taxing the wealthiest and optimising tax expenditure to preserve employment and trigger economic reactivation. Secondly, on the expenditure side, it is necessary to improve its quality so that we can be more effective with scarce resources and meet the growing needs of the health sector. We must also provide non-contributory social protection for people who suffered extreme poverty due to the consequences of the pandemic. Additionally, public investment is required to address the different effects that Covid-19 is having on a population which is vulnerable in many ways. Similarly, it is necessary to move towards sustainable and inclusive public purchases that prioritise MSMEs and women. Also, in the field of financing, progress must be made with innovative financing structures, such as themed bonds (SDG, social, climate, gender, etc.).

QUESTION: Several organisations are already warning about dangerous levels of public debt. How do you think this expanded public spending should be combined with the sustainability of public finances?

■ **Alain Cuenca:** The expansion of public spending as of March 2020 has been as spectacular as it is successful. Almost all countries have responded similarly to the unprecedented fiscal stimulus. Part of the increased public spending will disappear due to its very nature. The rest will be consolidated, and fiscal reforms will be required to finance it in all countries, particularly in Latin America. In any case, in our opinion, an in-depth tax reform is also inevitable in Spain to improve the efficiency of the tax collection system and distribute the tax burden more fairly.

■ **M^a Dolores Almeida:** Most countries in the world have used countercyclical policies and increased spending, particularly on health, social protection and economic reactivation. Likewise, given the fall in tax revenues due to the economic downturn, governments have incurred central government deficits that have been financed with public debt. ECLAC estimates that central government debt in Latin America has grown by an average of 6.9% of GDP and that public debt has increased by 10.7% of GDP. It is necessary work on the reprofiling of public debt to improve financial conditions (terms and interest rate) to reduce fiscal pressure on public debt and create fiscal space that will mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, leaving no one behind.

QUESTION: One of the great challenges that the EU has set itself is the transformation of its productive and energy structure to sustainable systems, for which several measures involving green taxation have been put on the table. What mechanisms and proposals do you think will be most effective in this transition to green economies?

■ **Alain Cuenca:** The experts agree that green taxation is a central area of tax systems, and that it should no longer be seen as a closing element of the system. Environmental taxes are the most efficient instrument for transforming production systems, establishing incentives and signals that help economic agents steer their decisions in the right direction. Taxes must be imposed on consumption and products that are harmful to the environment and the additional amounts collected must be invested in supporting the necessary changes in the private sector of the economy.

■ **M^a Dolores Almeida:** The measures implemented to ensure the economic recovery must drive the transition towards a low carbon, more resilient and sustainable economy, that is, "Build back better". In this context, taxation can help us to achieve environmental objectives related to climate change, biodiversity, conservation of water sources, reducing pollution and the circular economy. For example, in terms of income, it can contribute towards incentives and disincentives in terms of green taxation, with the implementation of carbon taxes or tax benefits that encourage sustainable economic activities. In terms of expenditure, the environmental impact (positive or negative) of public spending should be evaluated to take a budget-for-results approach to the quality of spending, eliminating those expenditures that are negative (e.g. fuel subsidies) and promote transitions towards sustainable production practices.

QUESTION: Within the framework of the OECD, developed countries have recently begun negotiations to agree on a global minimum tax on companies. What is your take on this initiative? And in broader terms, what do you think of the new tax schemes that are making their way into the tax debate?

■ **Alain Cuenca:** This is excellent news, and we believe that it represents the beginning of a change in the cycle in fiscal policy in countries. A global minimum tax is undoubtedly the best way to discourage tax havens and pernicious tax regimes. A global agreement in this context will ensure that large companies make a contribution which, in addition to ensuring fairer tax, will improve competitiveness.

However, above all, beyond the new taxes that may arise, what seems most urgent to us is the adaptation of taxation to the new economic and social reality of our time, to the new models of economic activity that have emerged as a consequence of digitization.

■ **M^a Dolores Almeida:** The agreement reached by the G7 member countries on a global minimum tax on companies is a historic milestone. Companies will pay a tax rate of at least 15% in the countries where they do business instead of where they declare their profits. This will reduce the likelihood that these companies will resort to tax avoidance (for example, having their tax residence in tax havens or using transfer prices to avoid them).

*There is an extended version of this interview on our blog: [link](#).





INTERVIEW WITH **MIGUEL CEARA HATTON**

Minister of Economy of the Dominican Republic

Social Pact, implications of strengthening universal rights



Interview by : **GRACIELA IZQUIER HERNÁNDEZ** | Local Technician for the participation of the Dominican Republic in the EUROsociAL+ Programme

QUESTION: There is much discussion of social pacts in Latin America, however, implementing the concept is more difficult. The COVID crisis has revitalised the debate. What tangible elements do you think these pacts should address given the current situation?

■ **MCH.** The main problem in our societies is associated with power relations. Power relations are derived from the way that wealth is structured and the way that assets and wealth are distributed in society. Badly distributed wealth creates disparate power relations, which translate into an imbalance in de facto powers.

The first great challenge of pacts is that they require a redistribution of power that takes place by mobilising society. When society is mobilised, it becomes a destabilising power that forces us to negotiate and in the end, a pact is a negotiation, a negotiation with a more equitable foundation.

On the other hand, basically, these agreements must reflect state policies, continuity of the state in public policies. That is the other component, because you can reach an agreement, but if that agreement is not institutionalised in some way, it is lost. Therefore, they must reflect this fact, that this is a new power relationship with an institutional structure.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, there are several pacts of different types in the pipeline. For example, a pact to redistribute public

spending and public income is not the same as a pact on the water issue.

There are pacts where there may be certain strategic agreements and circumstantial differences, and pacts where there are strategic differences and circumstantial differences, but at the end of the day, I think the most important thing is to understand that a pact implies a power relationship.

QUESTION: The recovery phase must be led by the public sector. What reforms do public administrations need to make to exercise this leadership role?

■ **MCH.** The state has had an overriding responsibility to keep the economy moving during the pandemic lockdowns. It was the state that prevented society from simply breaking down. In the Dominican Republic, it was also state aid that guaranteed the workers' livelihoods, and it was the state that guaranteed the survival of the companies through its spending policy and resources, the expansion of the credit, via the Central Bank.

The main problem now is that you have to pay for it; and the losses accumulated during the year must be paid. Large deficits were incurred and the private sector has to pick up, react.

Fortunately, the private sector in the Dominican Republic is doing well. Between January and August, economic growth was 13%, and 65% of that



13% is investment and private investment representing 97% of total investment. In other words, in this country the private sector has reacted well to the state's actions to support economic activity.

QUESTION: What reforms need to be made?

■ **MCH.** In terms of spending and fiscal restructuring, what reforms can be made? I think the most important is a tax reform. It is essential to improve social inclusion and solidarity mechanisms, institutionalise them, as well as state participation and accountability mechanisms. Those are all factors that improve clarity.

QUESTION: One last question: public spending has been crucial to mitigating the devastating effects of COVID, but it will affect future generations. Who do you think will pay the bill for this crisis?

■ **MCH.** I do not think that the solution to the crisis lies in any single country. This is a global crisis, and so the solution is global.

At the G7 meeting, President Biden proposed the B3W Partnership, which entails investing US\$40 billion in developing countries through infrastructure for a set of countries that share values.

There is not a solution in a single country, and if a single country tries to go it alone this will only lead to losses in GDP and employment that will be far greater than that experienced during the pandemic shutdowns. So, the only clear alternative in the world is a global solution to a global problem.

“IT IS ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY MECHANISMS, INSTITUTIONALISE THEM, AS WELL AS STATE PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS”





JUAN MANUEL SANTOMÉ |

Director of EUROsocial Programme

New Social Pacts

An inductive view from EUROsocial+

What great doctrine is there that is easy to expound?

Kakuzo Okakura (The Book of Tea)¹

■ This new issue of Recíprocamente addresses the issue of new social pacts from very different points of view – emphasising the centrality of care and the gender perspective, democratic governance and the enabling conditions necessary to reach social pacts that reinforce democracy, expand rights and improve people's trust in public institutions and highlighting the importance of employment and social protection in these new social pacts, with an analysis of the Economic and Social Councils as stakeholders of renewed relevance as spaces favouring a multi-stakeholder dialogue (government, civil society, the private sector, trade unions, academia etc.) All of this is necessary to reach sufficient consensus that can lead to new social pacts that allow us to tackle a truly inclusive and resilient post-COVID 19 recovery phase that does not leave anyone behind, as very correctly put forward in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In our opinion, this mainly concerns moving towards new pacts that make it possible to reduce inequality and improve social cohesion, allowing growth which is sustainable and environmentally friendly and enabling the broadening of peace and trust and the consolidation of democracy. The information available, as we know, is overwhelming. Today, Latin America

continues to be the region of the planet with the greatest inequality as well as having the highest mortality from the pandemic (with only 9% of the world's population, it accounts for about 30% of global COVID 19 mortality). We might therefore ask whether it is reasonable to propose the following correlation: *the greater the inequality → the less the social cohesion →, the greater the fragility of social pacts → the less resilience there is when facing a health pandemic, for example*. The answer would be "Yes, possibly".

At EUROsocial we are convinced that strengthening social cohesion and reducing inequalities where possible continues to be – now more than ever – a global priority, particularly in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean. We therefore believe that now that there is a consensus on the need for new social pacts² to address an inclusive and resilient construction and recovery phase, it is useful to share some reflections not only on WHAT type (conceptualisation of the new social pacts, a theme addressed by several of the articles in this issue of Recíprocamente) but on HOW to do so. Some of the questions that arise naturally could be: 1) Can international cooperation contribute to the construction and creation of new social pacts? 2) Are there specific experiences and good practices of contributions to the construction of new social pacts in international cooperation in general and in EU/Latin American and Caribbean cooperation in particular? What lessons can be learnt?

1. As is obvious, "the great doctrine" refers to the social contract and how to address and renew it as a cornerstone for an inclusive and resilient recovery.

2. As proof of this consensus, it is worth noting that the LEO 2021 prepared by OECD (Development Center) together with ECLAC and INTPA, which is one of the reference documents on the context and challenges of Latin America and the Caribbean, focuses on the new social covenants as a path to an inclusive recovery.

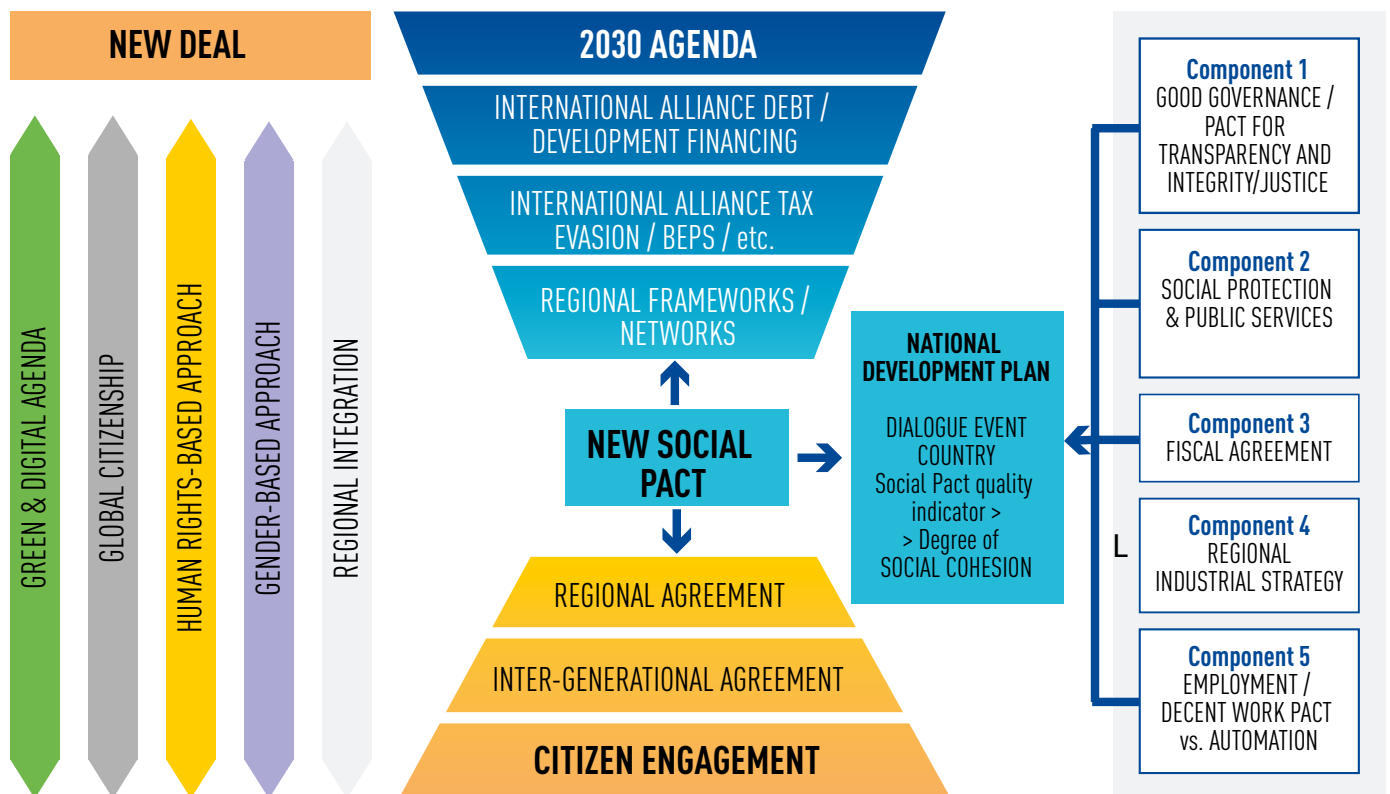


Some short answers: 1) Can international cooperation contribute to the construction and creation of new social pacts? Yes, international cooperation has an important role to play in the development of new social partnerships for several reasons: (i) in today's globalised world, any newly-minted national social pact will necessarily have to dialogue with the construction of international alliances and partnerships, a "global partnership for the provision of global public goods such as climate security, financial stability, peace, universal health – we have the example of the current pandemic – and so forth (regional and international solidarity is therefore key)" ³. (ii) More than ever learning from each other and the exchange of experiences are needed. Many of the current problems and challenges are shared and we are all committed to finding solutions together – international cooperation makes it possible to facilitate this mutual learning. (iii) In relation to the post-COVID 19 phase, the temporary "lag" in the pandemic between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries and of course within those Latin American and Caribbean countries, reinforces the relevance of the exchange of strategies and recovery plans, resulting in the exchange of experiences of special value. (iv) The pandemic has undoubtedly led to a reassessment of what is public (the state sector), and the important role of the State that once again occupies a central place not only in the recovery phase but in the medium and long-term development strategy. International cooperation provides the propitious ecosystem to favour the exchange of experiences between peers and public employees through technical assistance that acquires new relevance and interest. (v) International cooperation can assume a facilitating role in a multidimensional, multilevel and multi-stakeholder dialogue-country, with dialogue being essential to reach any agreement. (vi) International cooperation for development can play a key

role in advancing policy coherence, aligning international trade agreements with the 2030 Agenda, optimising the social and cooperation aspects of such agreements etc.

(2) Are there specific experiences and good practices of contributions to the construction of new social pacts in international cooperation in general and in EU/Latin American and Caribbean cooperation in particular? What lessons can be learnt? Yes, there are experiences that we believe are valuable in contribution cooperation to lay the foundations for future new social partnerships, to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, multidimensional, multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces and to support public policy reforms that reduce inequality and improve social cohesion. We are of course referring to EUROsociAL as a possible example that is close at hand and it is relevant with regards the case in question. We might therefore propose that programmes such as EUROsociAL have contributed to laying the foundations for the creation of new agreements (some potential and others de facto) and above all that have proven to be useful (and viable) when adopting an inductive approach to furthering the debate around new social pacts. Inductive reasoning (making an inference based on an observation) means that it is possible to learn in order to advance the development of new social pacts from practice, from what is specific, from an environment as limited as the scope of action of a regional cooperation programme of the EU with Latin American and Caribbean countries. After 15 years on the frontline, accompanying multiple public policy reforms and improving social cohesion, a number of lessons have been learnt that may be useful at this time. To draw lessons from the specific to shed light on the global.

Due to space limitations, we are forced to synthesise some of these lessons in the following "map":



3. ECLAC (2020)





AT THE CLOSURE

A brief explanation (possibly very necessary) to guide your reading:

NEW DEAL

(a) **Scope of the map to facilitate the gestation of new social pacts:** the previous “map” is ordered into different levels and categories of analysis to serve as a guide in the process of building social partnerships that respond to society’s current challenges. It is based on a premise of global consensus – the need for a New Deal, an overarching global pact for an inclusive and resilient recovery which implies a commitment to mobilise financial resources and the abundant existing knowledge through alliances for development in line with INTPA’s commitment and what SDG17 proposes, leaving no one behind – the inspiring slogan of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(b) **Essential components of the new social pacts⁴:** we have learnt that every social pact should address at least five components (box on the right of the map) to prove robust and have an impact:

Component 1
GOOD GOVERNANCE /
PACT FOR
TRANSPARENCY AND
INTEGRITY/JUSTICE

A commitment to good, democratic governance and access to justice to enable conditions for all social pacts. Only in this way is it possible to restore people’s trust in institutions.

Component 2
SOCIAL PROTECTION
& PUBLIC SERVICES

The strengthening of social protection and access to quality public services.

Component 3
FISCAL AGREEMENT

A fiscal pact as a cornerstone to facilitate the necessary redistribution of wealth and thus increase fiscal space, which includes eliminating the institutionalisation of the culture of privilege (ECLAC2020), eliminating tax evasion (amounting to \$3.25 billion, 6.1% of regional GDP in Latin American and Caribbean countries) and increasing tax revenues.

Component 4
REGIONAL
INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

A regional industrial strategy (productive model reform component with a commitment to diversification, regional economic integration, value chains, moving away from the agro-export model which is strongly dependent on global commodity prices etc);

Component 5
EMPLOYMENT /
DECENT WORK PACT
vs. AUTOMATION

An agreement to ensure decent employment and a reduction of informality within a scenario of increasing automation.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

IALOGUE EVENT
COUNTRY
Social Pact quality
indicator >
> Degree of
SOCIAL COHESION

(c) **The importance of National Development Plans:** we have learnt that the previous components, which are necessary to advance towards a new social pact, have to be implemented as National Development Plans (NDPs) as the central guiding tool of a country’s efforts towards sustainable, democratic and inclusive development.

(d) **Commitment to Policy Dialogue:** we have seen that a commitment to policy dialogue is the way to achieve NDPs that contain vectors which generate conditions for new social pacts and that international cooperation, in our case through EU-ROsociAL, can effectively fulfil the aforementioned facilitating role when rolling out a multi-dimensional, multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

(e) **Social Cohesion as an optimal indicator of the quality of Social Pacts:** We also passionately believe that the degree of social cohesion of a society/country is a significant indicator in assessing the quality of current social pacts and the effectiveness of the new emerging pacts. Social cohesion based on the rights approach and expressed in its twin meaning: objective (the reduction of inequality gaps) and subjective (a sense of belonging, the degree of trust between people and within institutions).



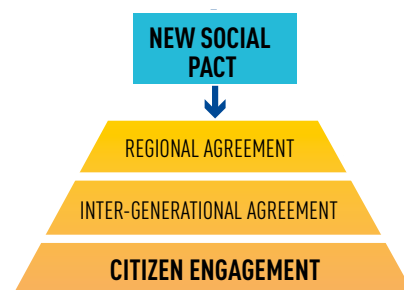
(f) **The regional and international dimensions of social pacts:** we have learnt that every advance that a country makes towards a new social pact cannot be “encapsulated” in the national sphere but must come into “dialogue” with a series of international and global dimensions that, on our map, we have placed above the new social pacts (at the heart of the

4. Chapter 4 of LEO 2021 proposes three constituent components or building blocks for any new social pact: 1st) fiscal pact, 2nd) social protection and public services and 3rd) regional industrial strategy. We include these components here because they are indeed essential and we add and propose two more at the same level of importance: the pact for employment and decent work, and the pact for good governance, transparency and access to justice (the latter - the pact for democratic governance and for the right to have rights - being considered here as enabling condition to advance in the development of any new social pact). LEO 2021 addresses governance as a cross-cutting principle to be taken into account in the conceptualization of the new social covenants.



map) in the blue inverted pyramid. **(i)** As an EU-Latin America and the Caribbean regional cooperation programme, we have confirmed the importance of the regional dimension and the relevance of multi-country regional frameworks and consensus and that of thematic networks. These regional consensuses have frequently been allowed to decline into national reforms of public policies while the networks and common frameworks have contributed to moving towards greater regional integration. Regional framework agreements have made it possible to shield great advances for social cohesion from the normal rotation of governments. **(ii)** We have also repeatedly verified the direct correlation between National Development Plans (NDPs), social pacts and the relevance of international anti-tax evasion alliances (against well-known tax havens) and the crucial importance of the international alliance for external debt relief for developing countries and the global agreement in favour of development financing etc. (all aspects that exceed the national sovereignty of any country but with structural stakeholders in making any social pact for democratic and inclusive change viable). **(iii)** Above all, we locate the 2030 Agenda, that civilising agenda which encourages us to comply with 17 SDGs and which commits us all to sustainable development and leaves no one behind. Can any emerging social pact obviate this agenda? We have learnt that there is an enormous challenge in linking national agendas with regional and global agendas and that international organisations, and the commitment to multilateralism, is the only way to do it with the required coherence.

(g) The territorial and participatory dimensions of social pacts: we have repeatedly verified that it is not possible to contribute to the



improvement of social cohesion with purely top-down public policies (from central government). Reform policies have to be implemented from the territories (bottom-up). For this reason, the advancement of new social pacts has to incorporate a multi-level and therefore territorial dimension as well as a decided commitment to citizen participation (in our map, these levels and categories are presented in the orange descending pyramid). We clearly link citizen participation to the territory, which means also emphasising the option of a multi-stakeholder approach, which includes local governments, civil society etc.

(h) The key cross-cutting dimensions for new robust and inclusive social pacts: Finally, we have repeatedly verified that it is not possible to contribute to an improvement in social cohesion (and therefore, to the creation of quality social pacts) if a decided multidimensional approach is not adopted. EUROsocial is designed by placing





AT THE CLOSURE

multi-dimensionality at its centre, comprehensively organising its areas of democratic governance, gender and social policies, facilitating multi-dimensional public policy dialogues through the aforementioned Country Dialogue Tables. However, in order to complete the map of keys and dimensions to take into account if we are to facilitate the emergence of new social pacts, it is necessary to include a series of cross-cutting vectors that must be incorporated (we place them on the left in vertical arrows):

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

(i) **A human rights-based approach:** a key commitment that ensures that new social pacts are inclusive, robust and coherent. A human rights-based approach, as is well known, is a conceptual and action framework for human development that is based on the norms and principles of international human rights law and is oriented towards their promotion and protection. Under this approach, development plans, policies and processes are built on a system of rights and their corresponding duties established in international law.

GENDER-BASED APPROACH

(ii) **A gender-based approach:** it is essential to place the gender approach at the centre of the construction of new social pacts so that they include women – 50% of the population. Due to their multiplier effect as a generator of social cohesion, they reduce inequalities, strengthen democracy and citizen participation, the construction of a welfare state and social protection systems based on the logic of care etc.

GREEN & DIGITAL AGENDA

(iii) **Just Transition/Environment:** a green agenda that is committed to progressive decarbonisation and a bringing about a change in the production, consumption and energy model that is essential as a civilising horizon. From our area of action, we mainly advocate that this transition in model be fair and undertaken without anyone being left behind, under the criteria of inclusiveness and equity.

(iv) **Digital agenda:** this is also to ensure the deployment of the digital agenda ensuring a reduction in the digital divide, the accessibility of ICT (according to ECLAC data to date, more than 40 million households lack connectivity in the region).



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

(v) **Global Citizenship:** reinforcing the commitment to the construction of new people-centred social pacts which operate as devices that guarantee the participation of an active citizenry, with engagement as a show of the commitment to the resolution of common conflicts.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION

(vi) **Regional Integration:** EUROsociAL, as part of the EU's regional cooperation effort with Latin American and Caribbean countries, is undoubtedly contributing, however modestly, to the regional integration process, weaving together networks, institutional partnerships, facilitating consensus at the regional level, etc. Nevertheless, a political commitment in favour of regional integration as a key vector to embrace the new social pacts is clearly more pertinent than ever (thus overcoming national limitations, joining forces for a resilient post-COVID 19 recovery, improving negotiating positions in the global arena in terms of access to development finance or debt relief etc.)

Someone once said "There is no treasure map, the treasure is the map". In the uncertain times in which we live, compasses and maps are just what we need to guide us along the way. We do not accept short cuts or simplifications. Let us take on the complexity of the task before us, because it is possible to carry it out. Above all, because it is necessary to do so.



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