

Normative dialogue addresses Swedish values and priorities and is part of Sida's global advocacy work to get better development results to reduce poverty and promote a human rights based approach, gender equality, conflict prevention and the integration of the environment and climate change perspective. This brief is an example of normative dialogue on gender equality by Sweden through the Swedish Embassy with UN Women in Colombia.

BACKGROUND

To fulfil the rights of women and girls in Colombia it is essential to achieve a sustainable peace and development in a country suffering from violence and armed conflicts since the early 1960s. Weak institutions, unsustainable use of natural resources and armed conflicts driven by guerrillas and paramilitary groups are just some of the factors hampering the country's development. In 2016, a historic peace agreement was signed between the state and the country's largest guerrilla groups.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DIALOGUE

Since 2018, Sweden is supporting UN Women in the implementation of their Strategic Note¹ for Colombia targeting the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including gender responsive transitional justice within the Integral System for Truth, Justice, Reparation, and non-Repitition Guaranties, and sustaining peace.

Normative dialogue has been part of the UN Women mandate and the Strategic Note is followed up by two annual follow-up meetings, annual reports, annual work plans. The dialogue has been essential to push

forward the WPS Agenda in Colombia and has been an important tool in the support to the elaboration of the Government Gender Policy (2012). Dialogue was used to build bridges in the process of drafting the policies and workshops were organized, whereby partners provided their inputs that resulted in the gender policy. A deliberate dialogue strategy was followed in the dialogues and consultations with CSO. The partners involved in this process were UN Women, Government/ Gender Office, Women Organizations, and Congress Women. Sida/the Swedish Embassy has participated to some extent in the dialogue but mainly through UN Women and on follow up of these dialogues.

As for follow up on the implementation of the Peace Agreement, the international component for gender² maintain constant dialogue with the local governments and women's organisations. For example, dialogues were held virtually in 2020 with women's organizations from the department of Cauca representing indigenous, afro-Colombian, former combatants, and rural and urban women to gain insights on the existing gaps in the region regarding the implementation of the "rural reform and the substitution of illicit crops". The reform should be implemented from a gender perspective as established in the Peace Agreement.

Still at the level of policy, UN Women and the Swedish Embassy have maintained permanent dialogue through the UN Women Executive Board. Discussions around certain laws require a strong political role. For instance, the involvement of the Ambassador on the discussions related to the bill on paternity has been significant.

¹ UN Women Strategic Note (2018-2022) in Colombia aims to contribute to strengthen political and economic empowerment of women, and their right to a life free from violence, both in the context of conflict as well as beyond it, in such a way that this supports the construction of stable and sustainable peace.

² The international component for gender is formed by Sweden, UN Women, and the International Democratic Federation of Women (FDIM), in alliance with the Kroc Institute.

MAIN RESULTS

The normative dialogue has contributed to several important results³. The Peace Agreement signed in 2016 was strongly impacted by the integration of gender equality and included more than 100 affirmative measures to promote gender equality. Sweden support to strengthening women's organizations has been key to women's empowerment and participation in the dialogues during the negotiations and the ongoing peacebuilding period. This achievement was based on dialogue on why gender is important and on what women's needs are as well as on capacity building sessions through UN Women.

Dialogue has also been important for the inclusion of gender perspectives in The Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition. Among the results, is the inclusion of a differentiated impact of the internal armed conflict on women and the LGBTI communities in the different cases of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and in the final report of the Truth Commission which will be finalized in 2021.



For over 15 years, the organized women's movement in Colombia demanded a negotiated solution to the long-running armed conflicts in the country, demands that led to the important peace agreement between the guerrilla organization FARC and the government in November 2016. Photo: Jocke Nyberg, Nordic Consulting Group



Women made up about a third of the fighting forces of the Colombian guerrilla organization FARC. Here is a picture from the demobilization of the FARC after the peace agreement in November 2017. Photo: Jesús Abad.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Continued normative dialogue is essential for the sustainability of the progress made on women, peace, and security:

- Dialogue on WPS needs to include a broader representation of civil society so that different perspectives and voices are heard.
- At the government level, it is important to provide them with relevant information and rationale on why the implementation of WPS Agenda is relevant and useful to them.

Important windows of opportunities for the advancement of dialogue and for follow-up on the implementation of the laws are identified as:

- An integrated approach to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, including combined efforts of the national government, territorial governments, and civil society.
- Continued dialogues with the local governments and with the Peace Commission of the Congress.
- A data base with comparative information on how norms impact women's life should be developed.

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³ UN Women briefing: "Sweden and UN Women in Colombia: Partners for Change", January 2021.