

13th Session CEPA: Contribution to the “Call for Inputs”

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Subject: Strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management

Summary

The paper notes that the need for strengthening development planning and public institutions in the region requires sustained capacities. In this regard, it highlights training and experience exchanges promoted by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES). These activities have an integrated “learning by doing” approach that includes social, economic and environmental aspects to respond to multidimensional development problems (inequality, insecurity, environmental degradation and persistent poverty that affect the region).

Areas of focus Include:

- a. Development and use of planning instruments (e.g. regional, sectoral development plans, land use plans and national development strategies). Capacity is developed on coherence and coordination of policies through enabling dialogs among "sectoral experts" providing basic tools for proper design, monitoring and evaluation of projects, presenting best practices, and promoting strategic partnerships.
- b. Creating spaces for inter-regional dialogue (e.g. macro-regions, associations of municipalities, integrated border areas, etc.) because of the need to develop sustainable solutions to problems that normally affect more than one territory. This includes encouraging citizen participation, political leadership, corporate social responsibility, governance, and planning aligned with international development policies.
- c. Formulating national long-term development strategies (for instance to anticipate negative effects on economic performance, to preventively identify human capacities needs, etc.). This includes articulating interests of different actors (state, society, etc.) at different levels (national and local level) through shared long-term visions.

The paper also notes that ILPES is planning to develop a digital repository to serve as a knowledge centre that will enable the analysis, comparison, monitoring of strategies, policies and planning instruments in Latin America and the Caribbean. This will contain a wide range of plans and programs for national, regional and sectoral development, and other planning instruments that are currently scattered in different national institutions. It will provide analytical tools for both planning authorities in the region and users in general.

Since 2009 the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has developed a series of research initiatives and training activities in Latin America, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of local governments to incorporate the development agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in local development plans¹. More than 1,000 government officials, from the national and sub-national level, have been trained through a series of workshops and -learning courses on the "municipalization of the Millennium Development Goals" or on how to adapt the global agenda to the region's needs and realities.

The research conducted by the ILPES consisted on calculating and analyzing selected MDG indicators at the subnational level (state and municipal), with information from Population Censuses. This territorial overview of indicators shows the result of the diagnosis for 17 countries in the region, through more than 50 maps disaggregated by States/Departments and municipalities showing the territories with their different gaps and progress in achieving the MDGs. The assessment showed that in the region there is a large territorial heterogeneity, and that gaps increase between urban and rural areas, and also when education indicators are disaggregated by gender.

The main message in training is the relevance of the MDGs agenda and their alignment with the planning process. ILPES argues that planning aligned with the MDGs agenda contributes to national and regional integration by giving coherence and a roadmap that guides public policy for development. The global development agenda represents a thread for multilevel coordination because it includes many of the basic variables the affect development and poverty overcoming.

Strengthening capacities

Since its beginning, in July 1962, ILPES accompanied governments in building institutional and human capacities, responding to emerging demands and providing a place for learning, reflection, analysis and proposing ways to overcome problems that affect development on Latin American and Caribbean. Strengthening development planning and public institutions in the region requires a sustained capacities and competences building process.

ILPES promotes **training and experience exchanges**, through a "learning by doing" method, with a holistic approach, considering that the problems associated with development are multidimensional and therefore require an integrated view that includes social, economic and environmental aspects, in order to be able to adequately respond to the problems of inequality, insecurity, environmental degradation and persistent poverty that affect the region.

What kind of capacities need to/should be developed?

The construction and use of **planning instruments** such as regional development plans, sectoral development plans, land use plans and national development strategies should be coherent and

¹ First initiatives on the subject were developed by the project to "Strengthening capacity of local governments in Latin America to address critical issues arising from Internationally Agreed Development Goals"

share a common horizon. Both the MDGs and the future SDGs are frameworks that guide the design of plans and policies and enables monitoring of progress towards fulfilling its goals and targets. ILPES coordinated an exercise to guide the local planning process aligned with the MDGs in areas that evidenced an important lag in the advance of MDGs, for example, in Rocha, Uruguay; Ayacucho, Peru; Chiapas, Mexico; Pampanga - Chile. In these localities, the development agenda was presented, lags on MDGs were identified and actions that contribute to achieving goal were proposed, all in a participatory discussion.

The imprint of ILPES training is working in multidisciplinary teams, enabling dialogs among "sectoral experts" , providing basic tools for proper design, monitoring and evaluation of projects; presenting best practices on land use planning; promoting results based management; advocating for e-government for greater transparency in public management; and strengthening the capacity of prospective studies in the region.

The role of the State as a coordinator

On the other hand, **coordination** is a key element for efficient use of state resources, ensuring coherence and coordination of policies to promote the achievement of strategic objectives. Likewise, public - private articulation through promotion of strategic partnerships and productive clusters are synergistic elements for development. In the "Municipalization of the MDGs" workshops experience, many of the proposed actions aimed at creating dialogue forums to address common problems among different social actors.

Creating **spaces for inter-regional dialogue**, such as macro-regions, associations of municipalities, integrated border areas, etc. is fundamental to the development of sustainable solutions to problems that normally affect more than one territory. To generate convergence in these agreements it is necessary that the spaces for dialogue encourage citizen participation, political leadership, corporate social responsibility, governance, planning aligned with international development policies, among other factors. The Millennium development agenda is a global and inclusive agenda that opens the discussion for local issues.

National long-term development strategies

One area where ILPES has been conducting studies to systematically build capacities both within the organization and outside it is "foresight for development". Indeed, Latin America has not constructed long-term visions or prospects, to harness opportunities or anticipate negative effects on economic performance, or to preventively identify human capacities needs that will be required to deal with the changes that affect regions.

Strategic foresight for development can be an instrument capable of articulating interests of different actors (state, society, government, the world) of various scales (national and local level) , through shared long-term visions. ILPES has accompanied several Latin American governments in the construction of country visions and also in the formation of proper institutions when countries do not have them. ILPES has identified some areas where public officials require skill and knowledge strengthening, particularly in the area of planning. One of

these areas is foresight for development; other ones are techniques for public policy evaluation and coherence in planning from country visions to sectoral instruments.

Planning Digital Repository

To support the need for a joint and integrated planning vision for development, ILPES is leading the building of a planning digital repository that will serve as a knowledge centre that will enable the study, comparison, monitoring and analysis of strategies, policies and planning instruments in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

With this repository ECLAC seeks to exploit the benefits of information systems and information and communication technologies (ICT) to group, **in one publicly accessible place**, a wide range of plans and programs for national, regional and sectoral development, and other planning instruments that are scattered in different national institutions.

The Repository will allow the identification of goals, objectives, priorities and policy actions, and may include indicators to monitor plans, programs and social pacts. The repository will be an instance for assessment of the alignment between regional planning and the MDGs, the goals of the post-2015 Development Agenda and other commitments made by countries in UN summits, agreements, international conventions and treaties.

The repository will provide analysis tools for both planning authorities in the region and users in general and, through this, contribute to XXI century planning, regional and extra- regional cooperation and exchange of experiences and good practices in public management, becoming a tool to promote a new “culture of integration”, through planning with a systemic approach for sustainable and inclusive development.