

# CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN ECUADOR:

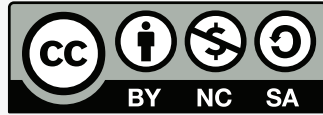
Actions to leave no  
one behind.

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# Introduction

Leaving no one behind is one of the fundamental principles of the 2030 Agenda. This guarantees that everyone would take part in the development process and that their voices and active participation will be considered. To accomplish this, other objectives such as zero hunger and no poverty must be achieved first (Ban Ki Moon, 2015).

To provide a solution to the global problems and to jointly solve the structural matters that go beyond a quantitative indicator, leaving no one behind requires ambitious, universal, comprehensive and shared objectives. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an important tool to design policies, actions and programs to achieve objectives in a shared and scaled way without leaving anyone behind in the development process.

This report presents insights on the leaving no one behind principle for Ecuador. It is the product of a workshop organised on July 2018 by Grupo FARO with the support Action 4 Sustainable Development (A4SD) where 14 civil society organisations participated.

# **The 2030 Agenda and its principles**



Since the first Earth Summit of 1972, important steps have been taken towards a comprehensive development of humanity and the planet. There is a stronger emphasis on sustainable development as a concept that could satisfy the needs of the current generation without compromising the satisfaction of the needs of future generations (United Nations, 2015).

An important milestone for humanity was marked in 2015. The global leaders from 193 countries endorsed the implementation of the agreements, programs and policies focused on achieving sustainable development. Considering that the 2030 Agenda is a comprehensive and indivisible tool, sustainable development should be accomplished through the end of poverty and the production of a thriving, peaceful and sustainable environment. These agreements are part of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs are global, action-oriented, universally applicable, concise and easy to communicate. They have a comprehensive focus since they include economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects as a cross axis for development. Although directly linked, the 2030 Agenda has a wider scope than the SDGs and its goals. The Agenda defines strategic concepts that show its transformative potential; these are: universality, comprehensiveness, articulation, normative coherence for sustainable development, leaving no one behind, the respect for the natural limits of our planet and inter-generational justice (IFP, 2017).

## Ecuador and the 2030 Agenda

Ecuador has committed with sustainable development through its policies since it has aligned the 2030 Agenda with the 2017-2021 National Plan for Development, which directly links the national programs and policies to the 17 SDGs. Moreover, this commitment has been ratified in other agencies but there is still an urgent need for joint efforts to optimise results and resources:



- The National Assembly committed by ballot, to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in all the legislative activities.
- The private sector has organised to build plans focused on accomplishing the SDGs. Among these initiatives are Pacto Global Ecuador and the “2030 Plan: Productive and Sustainable Ecuador”, leaded by the Ecuadorian Entrepreneurial Committee.
- Civil Society has implemented projects focused on strengthening local actors’ capacities and monitor the accomplishment and the implementation of SDGs on the local and national levels.

The National Institute of Statistics and Population (INEC in Spanish) has developed a statistical categorization on the availability of information to measure the accomplishment of SDGs in Ecuador. In general terms, the country has statistical capacities to measure 34% of the 241 indicators within the 17 SDGs. Nevertheless, its measurement is a challenge for the statistic institutions in any country because it appeals to a new way of measuring human prosperity along with environmental protection and economic development. The work of the official statistic institutions is not enough and therefore, the support of all the actors and areas, including civil society, is necessary to produce new methodologies and disaggregated information.

It is important to mention that the government has welcomed the participation of more actors in these processes. Nonetheless, the government’s good will must be shown into actions. A bigger commitment from the public sector is necessary along with a more dynamic participation from other sectors.

**The principle  
of leaving no  
one behind**





The 2030 Agenda has an extremely difficult challenge, it must stop focusing on the averages and start to deeply analyse what is being left behind in the development programs and policies. The real value of this process does not rely on what the numbers tell, but rather on what they don't tell.

From this point of view and with the goal of closing the gaps, one of the 2030 Agenda's fundamental postulates to end with inequality, exclusion and injustice is **"leaving no one behind"**. To achieve this, the traditionally and historically marginalized and vulnerable groups must participate actively in the development processes to achieve sustainable development in a comprehensive way. This task is difficult but necessary.

Leaving no one behind is a concept that goes beyond rooting out poverty; it involves producing the necessary conditions so that all the voices will be heard, empowering everyone who takes part in this process, developing the necessary capacities to measure efficiency within the implementation of SDGs, strengthening the knowledge of the youth to solve modern challenges, facing inequality and inequity in all its forms and including the territory in the debate and actions taken towards development. These issues are necessary to guarantee prosperity and to improve the living conditions of all people.

International and regional agencies have emphasised on this principle. The following table shows the positions of different agencies regarding the leaving no one behind principle.

Organisation	Description
UN	"The 2030 Agenda encourages member states to adopt crucial measures to end extreme poverty and to build a peaceful, prosperous and equitable environment for all" (Ban Ki-Moon, 2015)
ECLAC	"Leaving no one behind means that no one should be invisible. We must make sure that everyone is visible for a world that counts" (Alicia Bárcena, 2017)
European Union	A current challenge is the increasing level of longevity in the population. Old adults are often treated as invisible, unknown and forgotten within the efforts for development. The European Union is addressing some of these priorities, especially the security of their income, health access and gender inequality within old ages (EU, 2016).



<b>UN Women</b>	“Through SDGs, the whole world has committed to leave no one behind. New data and analysis suggest that the international community would not achieve its promises if important progress is not made on gender equality. This is an urgent call for action”. (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2018).
<b>UNHCR</b>	“The UNHCR is completely committed to take part in the 2030 Agenda processes within the national level to encourage SDGs implementation to increase the protection and the solutions for forcibly displaced persons” (UNHCR, 2015)

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## Prioritised groups: Why are they important?

The 2030 Agenda is an ambitious and innovative document that highly improves the framework of its predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This improvement relies on the inclusion of other governmental actors, the comprehensiveness of its objectives and the incorporation of the territory as one of the main actors for development (ECLAC, 2017). Nevertheless, the SDGs have some limitations due to their extent.

One of the stronger proposals of the 2030 Agenda is its focus on the poor and the vulnerable groups. Nonetheless, this is also one of its main limitations due to its wide scope and the way it counts these groups. Even though the Agenda specifically addresses gender equality for women and girls and it indirectly includes indicators disaggregated by age, sex and area, there is no mention or consideration to other groups that need prioritised attention from the states. The challenges of these groups cannot be addressed in a standardized way because of their condition and the specific type of work needed to close the existent gaps.



## Prioritised groups in Ecuador

In the case of Ecuador, the 2008 Constitution marked a milestone on the enhancement of the rights of groups that need prioritised attention or are in a vulnerable situation. In its third chapter the Constitution included universal rights for prioritised groups and individuals. In addition, it established specific and particular rights for each group that needs a distinguished attention.

Among the groups that need prioritised attention are adults and old adults, people in human mobility situation, pregnant women, boys, girls and teenagers, people with disabilities, people with catastrophic sickness, people with liberty deprivation, users and consumers and domestic violence, child abuse, natural or anthropogenic disasters victims (National Assembly, 2008). Differentiating these groups is highly important because it allows precession on the implementation of public policy and for achieving the expected results.

The 2017-2021 National Development Plan establishes that the design of public policy must be a dialogue-rich process that includes minorities and prioritised groups, populations and nationalities (SENPLADES, 2017). In addition, this plan seeks to guarantee human development of people along their life-cycle. To achieve this, Ecuador has designed its 2030 Vision based on the 2030 Agenda which is focused on leaving no one behind (SENPLADES, 2017).

# **Ecuador's progress on the SDGs**



With this background and considering Ecuador's commitment to align its National Development Plan to the SDGs, the country presented its first Volunteer National Report (VNR) based on its achievements on the SDGs during the High-Level Political Forum that took place on July the 9th to the 18th. The purpose of these reviews is to encourage the exchange of successful and challenging experiences, as well as the lessons learned in each national context. The goal is to speed-up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the discussion of common goals.

Regarding Ecuador's case, this review seeks to include the contribution from the government, private sector, academia and civil society on the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## What is the High-Level Political Forum?

The Forum is expected to promote the exchange of experiences. This means that successful plans and policies will be shared so that they will be replicated in other countries.

The topic of the Forum varies from year to year, depending on the objectives that are analysed. On this occasion, the debate was focused on the "Transformation towards resilient and sustainable societies". The goals analysed were:



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The making-process of Ecuador's VNR included the contributions of several actors and was the result of the "Consultancy journeys on the national progress and the challenges for SDGs implementation". This effort was led by the National Secretary for Planning and Development (SENPLADES in Spanish), along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility and the National Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC in Spanish). It took place in Quito, Guayaquil, Tena, Manta and Cuenca through a meeting with different actors in each city.

It is important to recognize Ecuador's effort to align its national plans directly to the SDGs and to present its VNR in the UN. Nonetheless, there is still work to be done. For future VNR, it should be considered that:

- Ecuador's document still does not reflect specific actions focused on achieving the SDGs. It shows progress in general terms on the selected topics without necessarily demonstrating a direct alignment to the SDGs chosen for the Forum.
- Even though there have been efforts to build participative spaces, these were not enough and did not allow a deep analysis from the different sectors on the progress of the SDGs.
- There are a lot of organisations that are not aware of the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country. Moreover, citizens do not have knowledge on the topic. It is necessary to work on the appropriation of the SDGs to build a citizens' Agenda. A greater effort from all actors is required along with the leadership of the government to facilitate the processes, spread information and empower citizens in this global process that needs joint efforts from all sectors.

**Civil  
society's role  
and  
the SDGs**



Ecuador is currently facing a fragile context due to economic and fiscal instability, a potential social fragmentation and electoral processes that in most cases would produce political and institutional changes. This would more likely interrupt the continuity of the processes in the national and local levels. There are also external challenges, such as the decrease of the international cooperation flows which historically have supported civil society's initiatives. Nonetheless, this context is also an opportunity to rethink the social contract and the relationship between the state and other actors of the public sphere. Among them, civil society is understood in a wide sense since it includes academia, think tanks, research and action centres to produce the necessary conditions that would allow different sectors to contribute to sustainable development in an articulated way.

Civil society has an important role within the necessary actions to achieve sustainable development in Ecuador and the principle of leaving no one behind. Civil society is in charge of including every actor in the debate, tracking and monitoring public policy and encouraging citizens' development towards levels that are usually unreachable for the government. These tasks must be performed by connecting and linking traditionally excluded actors in important participative processes. Considering these reasons, the part that civil society plays in working with prioritised, vulnerable and traditionally marginalised groups is fundamental for accomplishing the SDGs



**Dialogue  
meeting:  
social  
organisations,  
prioritised  
groups and  
the SDGs**



On the 5th of July 2018, Grupo FARO, with the support of Action for Sustainable Development (A4SD), held the workshop **“How civil society contributes to achieving the SDGs?”** 14 civil society organisations participated in the workshop. Most of them are led by young people and focus on working closely with vulnerable or prioritised groups.

The topics addressed by these organisations rely on improving the quality of the life for boys, girls, teenagers, youth, GLBTIQ, local recyclers and disabled populations. They also work to safeguard women and families’ rights. Their commitment involves activities related to inclusion and monitoring the necessary policies to achieve transparency and justice standards. They contribute to the decrease of inequality with a gender equality, pluricultural, multiethnic, multilevel and multisector perspective.

During the workshop, the organisations emphasised on the role of the actors of the public sphere, especially civil society, to achieve the 2030 Agenda without leaving anyone one behind. Some of the main outcomes were:

- Despite these organisations are highly recognised because of their work with prioritised groups, none of them took part of the consultative processes to build Ecuador’s VNR. During the workshop’s activities, participants identified civil society’s strengths and challenges to produce ideas, initiatives and actions focused on articulating and linking more actors in the development process.
- Civil society is a fundamental actor in the implementation of the SDGs, especially concerning the production of actions that allow the participation of all actors, particularly the vulnerable groups. Nonetheless, these organisations have low capacities to respond to current problems as a sector. Unlike trade unions and academia and due to their heterogeneity, these organisations have not been able to articulate a sectorial position. This is a limitation for them when facing the SDGs’ implementation and when a strong and articulated position that represents them all is needed.



## Planned actions for the short and mid-term

The group recognised that there is an increasing need of a joint-platform to raise awareness on their work and to articulate the civil society organisations focused on achieving the SDGs. There is currently not a platform or an organisation that represents them all and therefore, their efforts have been powerful but disarticulated.

Considering the challenges that the organisations face while identifying funding opportunities, job duplicity must be avoided and work activities in the local territories must be articulated to guarantee the sustainability of their initiatives. In this context, the 2030 Agenda is highly useful to design policies, actions and programs focused on accomplishing common goals for the countries.

By the end of the workshop, the organisations agreed on the increasing need to establish a civil society group to work for the SDGs with emphasis on vulnerable groups. As a next step, they agreed to hold regular meetings with the members of the group. The participants committed to strengthen the role of the coalition to articulate initiatives and use collective action to increase their advocacy levels.

14 organisations have initially started this coalition. We would like to thank them for their time and commitment:

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Fundación Apoyando Ecuador              | 8. Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano |
| 2. Asociación ASIRIS                       | 9. Fundación Panal                  |
| 3. Minga: Democracia para todos            | 10. CARE Ecuador                    |
| 4. Asociación ALFIL                        | 11. Fundación Sembrar               |
| 5. ReciVeci                                | 12. UICN América del Sur            |
| 6. Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad | 13. Fundación Pachamama             |
| 7. Fundación KIRU                          | 14. Grupo FARO                      |



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This coalition may contribute to the leaving no one behind goal. To achieve this, it is necessary to raise awareness on the contributions of community-based and emerging organisations in Ecuador. Moreover, a social commitment must be made so that civil society organisations could articulate and optimise efforts and resources.



This group plans to hold meetings every two months to build a roadmap for the coalition. A specific virtual tool has been created to encourage the collective exchange of resources and initiatives. It is necessary to consolidate this initial effort by correctly channelling the resources; this would contribute to the proper operation of the civil society coalition and to the progress of the SDGs. This initiative seeks to develop into a space that would allow the exchange of experiences, projects and actions focused on the achieving the SDGs in Ecuador, considering that all the voices must be included to accomplish sustainable development without leaving anyone behind.

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## CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN ECUADOR:

Actions to leave no  
one behind.

In September 2015, the global leaders committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their countries. This should be achieved through the fulfilment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These are global, action-oriented, universally applicable, concise and easy to communicate. The purpose of these goals is to eradicate extreme poverty, produce prosperity, respect the natural limits of the planet and guarantee safe places to live.

One of the fundamental principles of this new Development Agenda is the one of “Leaving no one behind”. This principle seeks to benefit everyone, everywhere. It represents the commitment with humanity to end inequity, inequality and exclusion.

This report presents insights regarding this principle in Ecuador, as a product of a workshop organized on July 2018 by Grupo FARO, with the support of Action 4 Sustainable development, A4SD and with the participation of 14 civil society Ecuadorian organisations.



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### Grupo FARO

Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades is an independent, plural, non-partisan and secular think and do tank that supports the state, the private sector and civil society to promote public policies and practices to contribute to a more inclusive, democratic and sustainable society.

Since Grupo FARO was founded in 2004, it has worked on several topics while promoting practices for the transformation and social innovation in partnership with different levels of governments and citizens. Grupo FARO is currently focused on promoting innovative and sustainable cities. It also supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country.



**ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

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### Action 4 Sustainable Development

Is a global platform of social organisations that work on the local, national and regional levels in partnership with citizen and civil society networks.

The network seeks to inspire, commit and generate actions to empower people, especially those that have been marginalised, to collectively tackle the causes of inequity, injustice, human rights violations, poverty, environmental degradation and climate change.