

III. RELEVANCE OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS IN THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MDG GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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A. INTRODUCTION

ECLAC is playing an important role in the follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the regional level. Besides the work on key MDG objectives such as poverty, environmental sustainability and gender, ECLAC is also working on more general development goals, such as the situation of youth and older persons. As a result, ECLAC has been able to produce updated and comparable information on most indicators of the MDG goals. It is also developing a regional report on MDGs and a website (www.cepal.org/mdg). For ECLAC, the evaluation of the progress of achieving the MDG goals should be guided by issues of social exclusion and social inequalities and the synergies between different components and objectives, which are not always considered in this process.

Contributing to the implementation of ICPD Programme of Action in Latin American and the Caribbean Region is one of the priorities of the Population Division of ECLAC, as defined and ratified by countries in different regional and sub regional instances. This has been done through the Ad-Hoc Committee on Population and Development, as the regional body for monitoring the ICPD Plan of Action in the region. For the countries of the region, there is no conflict, but complementarities, between ICPD and MDG goals. As it has been agreed by this committee in its meeting on Santiago, Chile, March 11, 2004, the “...implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference and of the key actions is essential for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration”. Additionally, recognizes the progress made in fulfilling the objectives and goals of ICPD and “...and urge the countries of the region to implement social and economic policies aimed at reducing poverty and inequality so that the poorest groups can benefit from the measures adopted within the framework of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration”. In order to apply this declaration, countries of the region are urged to “...ensure that national and regional development policies and plans for poverty eradication, within the framework of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, incorporate the objectives, goals and indicators of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions...”.

B. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF ICPD AND ITS IMPACTS ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Poverty is assumed to be one of the most important factors affecting people's quality of life. The eradication of poverty is one of the main goals of ICPD Plan of Action. Principle 7 establishes that “*All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty...*” In fact, The ICPD Plan of Action recognizes the interdependence between poverty and population dynamics (mainly in 3.13 and 3.14). First, poverty is considered a factor that, among other things, affects population variables

(fertility, mortality, migration, spatial distribution), increases the risk of environmental degradation, reduces access to reproductive health services, and promotes unsustainable use and inequitable distribution of land. At the same time, changes in population dynamics such as a decrease in population growth is seen as a contributing factor for increasing “...countries' ability to attack poverty, protect and repair the environment, and build the base for future sustainable development.”

It is important the way how the ICPD Plan of Action deals with poverty issues and the role it gives to human rights and gender equity as key issues in a broader developmental approach. At the same time, it emphasizes population policies and its effects on this goal, for instance through investments in human capital (actions 3.17). Population policies and programmes would contribute to achieve poverty eradication and simultaneously improve reproductive rights. The issue of hunger itself is not explicitly considered in the ICPD Plan of Action, although it is implicit in many of its objectives through the eradication of poverty strategies.

Poverty in the region is still high (see figure III.1), and there was no significant decline in the 1990s in most of the countries. Furthermore, the incidence of poverty has increased in some countries such as Argentina and Uruguay, countries usually characterized by lower incidence of poverty. The inequality in our region is the worst in the world and affects the possibilities of the countries to eradicate poverty. Both poverty and inequality have been the focus of ECLAC work. In this regard, a new methodology relating poverty, economic development and inequality has been developed. The main conclusion is that small changes in income distribution would have a big economic impact in LAC, leading to subsequent years of positive economic growth. Poverty goals could be achieved in most countries along with changes in income distribution (CEPAL-IPEA-PNUD, 2003).

Studies done by CELADE-ECLAC have characterized the impact of the demographic dynamic as a key factor explaining the possibilities of a country to achieve MDG goals. At a micro level, demographic behaviour of poor sectors of the population increase their probability of remaining poor. Poor people have a demographic regime which contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and in this regard, this issue should be considered openly in the strategies for poverty eradication. Poverty is also associated with limited exercise of rights and limited access to resources. In some countries of the region these issues are being included in national policies and programmes aimed to the eradication of poverty.

At the macro level, the demographic dynamics have several effects on the structure of demands, creating new contexts for social policies aimed at reducing poverty. For example, there is a decrease in population growth, a stagnation in the younger population's growth and important changes in the population age distribution, characterized by a fast process of population ageing and an increasing dependency ratio.

Some of these demographic changes have been included in the social mega-programmes dealing with the reduction of poverty in countries like Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Brazil. In all of these programmes, the idea of intergenerational transfer of poverty and its vicious circle is considered, but none of them make explicit: a) the fact that this transmission is closely related to the demographic overburden on poor families caused by a high fertility regime; and b) the emerging vulnerability caused by an increasing older population with limited access to economic security.

Regarding poverty reduction strategies, there is a wide range of what countries consider as determinants of poverty. Although the demographic dimension is considered in many cases, demographic factors appear isolated in these strategies, without a clear integral framework. It would be desirable that those factors were part of the effective mechanisms to reduce poverty. Furthermore, some key

demographic factors such as international migration and its impacts on the national, families and community economies do not appear in these strategies.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

In this case, there is almost a full agreement between ICPD and MDG. Furthermore, this is one of the cases in which the ICPD Plan of Action recommends a generic objective (11.5. *To achieve universal access to quality education....*) as well specific goals and dates: 11.6 *complete access to primary school or an equivalent level of education by both girls and boys as quickly as possible, and in any case before the year 2015*; and 11.8 “... *closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005*.”

Educational goals have a high probability to be achieved in the ECLAC region. With the exception of Haiti, all countries of the region have high levels of primary education enrolment and gender biases in this area are almost inexistent. The same cannot be said about the quality of education. There is no clear indication on MDG regarding this issue, but the Plan of Action recommends the objective, in paragraph 11.5.a, to achieve universal access to quality education. The evidence in ECLAC shows no clear trend towards a decrease in the gap in access a good quality education. In countries where quality of the education is measured with comparable instruments, there is a great disparity between the levels of education received by poor people and that received by high income groups.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Although Chapter IV of the ICPD PoA is on Gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, the issue of gender is comprehensively covered in all chapters of the document. The ICPD+5 document reinforces this issue by noting, in preambular paragraph 2 that “the Programme of Action acknowledges that the goal of the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself and is essential for the achievement of sustainable development.” The MDG 3, on the other hand, narrows considerably the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Thus, the implementation of the Plan of Action

ECLAC has been working to promote gender equality and women empowerment. The Open-ended meeting in Puerto Rico called “*upon the countries of the region to make all efforts necessary to provide the requisite resources to continue implementing the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo and the key actions and, in particular, to ensure their inclusion in policies aimed at reducing social inequalities, eliminating gender inequity and eradicating poverty, and urge[d] the international community to increase its technical and financial cooperation for the fulfilment of these objectives.*”

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality and Goal 5: Improve maternal health

There is some agreement between ICPD and MDG regarding these goals, but the quantitative aspects are different. ICPD goals specify the mortality level to be achieved, taking into account the level of mortality of countries. For example, on reducing child mortality, the Plan of Action recommends that “... *Countries should strive to reduce their infant and under-five mortality rates by one third, or to 50 and 70 per 1,000 live births, respectively, whichever is less, by the year 2000, with appropriate adaptation to the particular situation of each country. By 2005, countries with intermediate mortality levels should aim to achieve an infant mortality rate below 50 deaths per 1,000 live births and an under-five mortality rate below 60 deaths per 1,000 live births. By 2015, all countries should aim to achieve an infant mortality rate below 35 per 1,000 live births and an under-five mortality rate below 45 per 1,000. Countries that achieve these levels earlier should strive to lower them further.*” (*para. 8.16*). The MDGs, on the hand,

specify just proportions irrespective of the health situation in each country. In fact, the achievement of MDG would be almost impossible for most of the countries of the region with low mortality.

In the Open-ended Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development, held in Santiago, Chile, in 2004, countries of the region agreed “...to redouble efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity through basic services and comprehensive reproductive health care, taking into consideration the multiple factors contributing to maternal morbidity and mortality, including lack of access to family planning and proper essential obstetric care, and the factors referred to in paragraph 63 of ‘Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development’”. At the same time countries also agreed “to increase actions to reduce high rates of infant mortality in the framework of primary health care, facilitating access to comprehensive reproductive health, child health and nutrition programmes.”

In this framework, it is understood that the achievement of the goal of reduction of maternal mortality and infant and child mortality is closely related to the achievement of reproductive health goals recommended in ICPD Plan of Action. In this regard, countries of the region have made explicit their approach based on ICPD. The MDG approach is restricted to the concept of maternal and child health, without making explicit the key concept of reproductive rights of ICPD. Even where some reproductive health indicators are included in the MDG, such as contraceptive use, they are included in the context of combating HIV/AIDS.

The evaluation made by ECLAC regarding to the achievement of these goals shows that even though some important improvements have occurred, there are still large gaps between countries and particularly within countries and in some cases, these gaps have increased. For this reason, countries must renew efforts to implement policies and programmes to increase the coverage and quality of reproductive and child healthcare.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

The issue of HIV/AIDS is covered twice in the ICPD Plan of Action, first in the chapter VII on reproductive health and rights (paragraphs 7.27 a 7.33) and then in the Chapter VIII on health, morbidity and mortality (paragraphs 8.28 a 8.35). Moreover, unlike the MDG 6, the Plan of Action deals with HIV/AIDS in the context of sexually transmitted diseases and other reproductive tract infections. In addition, paragraph 8.2 of the Plan of Action recognizes that “large numbers of people remain at continued risk of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria and schistosomiasis.”

Regarding to this issue, countries of the region agreed “...to intensify efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV/AIDS, within the context of sexual and reproductive health; to ensure access to effective treatment, including for pregnant women living with HIV and their children to reduce vertical transmission of the virus; to guarantee access for young and adult men and women to information, education and the services required to develop the skills to prevent HIV infection; and to provide, insofar as possible, access to diagnostic services and treatment free of charge to persons living with HIV/AIDS while ensuring their privacy, confidentiality and freedom from discrimination.”

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

This objective is comprehensively covered in the ICPD Plan of Action compared to MDG 7. In fact, paragraphs 3.23 a 3.32 of the ICPD focus on population and environment. The Plan of Action urges

governments to ensure that population, environmental and poverty eradication factors are integrated in sustainable development policies, plans and programmes. Consistent with the framework and priorities set forth in Agenda 21, the Plan of Action also recommends the reduction of unsustainable consumption and production patterns because they can *”cause or exacerbate problems of environmental degradation and resource depletion and thus inhibit sustainable development..”* and because they can affect the quality of life of future generations.

In addition, the Plan of Action calls for implementing “policies to address the ecological implications of inevitable future increases in population numbers and changes in concentration and distribution, particularly in ecologically vulnerable areas and urban agglomerations. It is also recommended in chapter 8, (paragraph 8.10) to give priority to measures aimed at improving the quality of life by keeping a safe and healthy environment. Examples of those measures are avoiding *hacinamiento*, reducing pollution and facilitating the access to clean water, especially in the case of the poor living in either urban or rural areas.

ECLAC considers that, even in the absence of a consensus regarding the more important interactions between population dynamics and environment, patterns of growth and population distribution should be considered in the evaluation of environment effects. Urban use of space in vulnerable areas, for instance, can be avoided if demographic changes are taken into account. In this context, ECLAC countries agreed *“...to incorporate demographic considerations into sustainable development strategies, public policy and national and local environmental management plans while ensuring coordination among the relevant institutions.”*

C. CONCLUSIONS

There is no doubt that the implementation of the recommendations in the ICPD Plan of Action and ICPD+5 documents is a key factor to improve the potential of countries to achieve MDG goals.

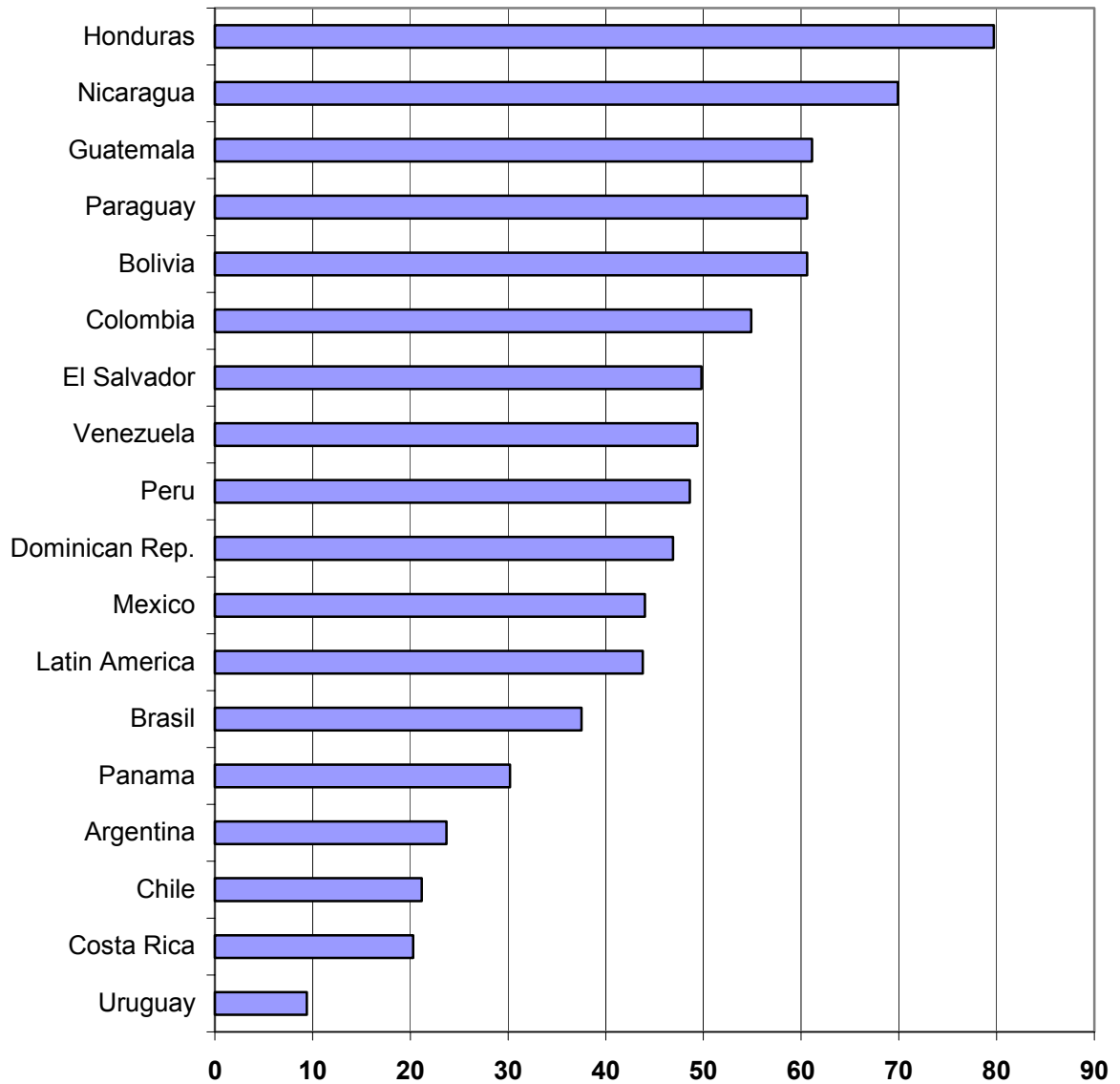
Why Cairo is important to achieve MDGs?

1. It provides a comprehensive and integrated consideration of all relevant population issues in connection with development and poverty reduction strategies.
2. It emphasizes rights as an essential issue. It is not concerned solely with “giving” development to people but to make people also responsible for their own destiny.
3. The consideration of gender issues at the same level of importance as other issues and as an instrument to achieve programmatic objectives.
4. The experience attained from the collaboration between civil society, government and private sector.

What is missing:

1. To define the connections between MDG goals and the goals and objectives of each one of the conferences. For example, the Madrid Assembly is not considered at all in MDGs. The ICPD Plan of Action includes important aspects of ageing, but Madrid goes further.
2. To establish at the country level a set of indicators of MDG and their corresponding indicators for each of the other Conferences.
3. A higher level of cooperation with civil society.

**Figure III.1. Percentage of the population under the poverty line,
selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,
around 1999-2000**



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. BADEINSO Database.

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