



A rocky road to a gender-sensitive peace in Colombia

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Introduction

One half of all negotiated peace accords fail according to Kroc institute, which has developed a peace accords matrix that tracks the implementation status of 34 recent comprehensive peace accords by assessing 51 distinct provisions year-by-year for 10 years in quantitative and qualitative form.¹ But the Kroc institute has also said that the Colombian accord ‘addresses root causes more comprehensively than any other negotiated settlement has’ (Aronson 2016) and the institute is itself involved in monitoring the implementation of the Colombian accord.² All peace accords need special attention and support in the implementation phase, but as the most inclusive accord to date, the Colombian accord is particularly worth supporting through the rocky implementation phase. The gender sensitive aspects of the accord are in particular danger of not being implemented, both because of the controversy around them and because

¹ It is available at peaceaccords.nd.edu – though note that it does not yet include the Colombian accord. There are several other databases that compare peace agreements. One by the University of Edinburgh, available at www.peaceagreements.org focuses particularly on gender clauses in agreements – yet it only has the first version of the Colombian accord, and not even all of the relevant sections. I would not recommend it as a tool in its current form, though they say they are working to update it. The UN database, at www.peacemaker.un.org, does not point to particular clauses but simply to entire agreements that address gender. The UN worked with the University of Cambridge to develop the database at www.languageofpeace.org which does pull up particular clauses related to gender, but it is unclear when it was created and it has also not been updated with the Colombian agreement as of the end of March 2018.

² Those reports are available at <https://kroc.nd.edu/research/peace-processes-accords/pam-colombia/>

internationally research has shown that gender aspects of accords are often dropped in implementation (Bell 2015). International attention and support for the gender-sensitive approach in Colombia can have an important impact, both in Colombia and for establishing international precedent.

The Colombian context is notoriously complex, and so this briefing paper provides some basic background for international actors interested in more effectively supporting the implementation of the gender-sensitive approach. It begins with an overview of the Colombian conflict, including the armed actors, root causes, and its impact on women and men. It then reviews the peace process and women's role in it. The gender sub-commission of the negotiations established the gender-sensitive approach in the accords and this is outlined. Because it was presented alongside and functions together with the differential approach that is also briefly explained. The initially agreed upon accord was put to a popular vote in October 2016 and very barely failed. The paper offers a brief analysis of the impact of these two approaches on the vote and of how they changed in the second round as the accord was renegotiated. This is followed by a review of the implementation hurdles that have been faced, with a focus on the gender-sensitive aspects. The paper ends by reviewing the role women have played in implementation and pointing to ways that international actors could support the implementation of the gender-sensitive approach and the inclusion of women in this ongoing process by supporting Colombian women's organizations who are working to keep gender justice on the agenda and to ensure that this approach moves off the page and into daily reality.

The Colombian conflict

The armed conflict in Colombia has been between various armed actors with complicated and shifting relationships. The primary conflict was between the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia) guerillas and the government, who signed a peace agreement in 2016. However, over the years there have also been various other guerrilla groups fighting the state who have either signed peace agreements or been defeated. Today only one other such group remains, the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, National Liberation Army), and they are now conducting peace negotiations with the government.

There have also been various right wing paramilitary groups ostensibly fighting the guerrillas (though more often attacking civilians), with varying degrees of closeness to the state. Some were set up by the government, beginning in the 1960s, and others by large landowners and drug traffickers. The largest groups of these paramilitary groups negotiated a peace agreement with the government in 2005 that was widely seen as a 'sweetheart deal' whereby they kept all of their profits and paid light sentences (though

many top leaders were later extradited to the United States on drug charges when they began discussing details of their connection to the state). Not all paramilitaries demobilized (and some remobilized), but after this deal the government denied their political motivations and all connection to them and called them BACRIM (*bandas criminales*, criminal gangs). Analysts widely agree that they did reduce in size and change form, but that many if not most continue to have political ends and ties to the state, though more so now at local and regional levels. Some of these newer groups are now pushing the state for another peace deal and it appears that some version of such that does not recognize them as political actors is in the works.

Other armed actors still fighting today include some FARC guerrillas who broke away and did not demobilize. Numbers given for these vary between 500 and 1,100. They were initially a much lower percent than the international norm for demobilizing guerrillas, but it has been growing as the government's reintegration programs have gotten more delayed. They are operating as several groups and are no longer considered political actors by the government. There is also a group called *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (People's Liberation Army) which is a small break off of that guerrilla group that demobilized in 1991 and is widely considered to no longer have political but simply criminal aims, despite their name. This is a relevant distinction in Colombia where *all* of the multiple armed actors have been involved in criminal drug activities, including various state armed forces. The drug trade has been an important source of financing for weapons – but it is not the source of the conflict. Rather it has served as gasoline on an already existing fire.

The war began long before the drug trade, which began in the late 1970s. The armed conflict is often said to have lasted 52 years, because the FARC guerrillas took that name in 1964. But the FARC were born of guerilla groups from an earlier war, often called simply '*la violencia*', which is widely said to have started in 1948 when the presidential candidate Gaitan was killed. Yet even that war started earlier, for before his death he had been saying in speeches that he had documentation that thousands of his followers had been killed. Repression continued after the official end of that war in 1958 and through to 1964. As such, Colombia has lived through one of the world's longest wars, alongside Burma and Palestine. Though the peace agreement with the FARC ended a large portion of it, there are still smaller armed groups fighting, as described above – and though violence over all is down, in some areas where the FARC pulled out, these other armed actors are now fighting amongst themselves to control that territory and as such violence against social leaders and displacement has in fact increased in a few regions.

The war in Colombia has caused far more deaths than any other war in the Americas. The National Historical Memory Center reports that 262,197 deaths were caused by the conflict up to the day that the first peace accord with the FARC was signed in 2016, with about 80% of these being of civilians. Yet

authors of the official *Basta Ya!* (Enough Already!) government report recognize that this is a severe undercount because, as they report, most of these deaths were carried out by the state or para-state actors - meaning that people were generally afraid to report deaths to the state. This count is also off on the basis of the years included.

The numbers of the dead are also off because they do not generally include the disappeared. The number of the disappeared has also been contentious. In 2015 the government's Victim's Unit put it at 45,515 since 1985 (Cosoy 2015). A 2016 report from the National Center for Historical Memory put the number at 60,630 over the last 45 years (CNMH 2016a), but in 2018 the same center put the figure at 80,514 (CNMH 2018). In some ways disappearance is a fate worse than death, for your family is always hoping you will return. The number of the injured is also hard to track, as again many go unreported. What is clear though is that Colombia has the second highest number of anti-personnel mine victims after Afghanistan (CNMH 2016b).

One of the biggest impacts of the conflict has been displacement. Over one in 10 Colombians has had to flee their homes. At 7.4 million at the end of 2016 (by UNHCR count) they are the second largest group of internally displaced people in the world (it has traded the category of worst back and forth with Syria in recent years). It has been mostly *campesinos*, small farmers, who have been displaced. Indigenous people and Afro-Colombians have also been disproportionately forced to displace. Some 35% of the displaced now live in extreme poverty, as compared to 7% of the population at large (Durán Díaz, Cuesta Astroz, and Mazzoldi Díaz 2018). This violent counter-land reform, largely caused by violence from the state and paramilitaries, has deeply concentrated land holdings. Colombia has always been one of the most land and income unequal countries in the world, but in the last 15 years it has gotten much worse. Both the UNDP and the World Bank have regularly ranked it as one of the 10 most unequal countries in the world in the last few years. Colombia now classifies as a middle-income country. Particularly in some areas of big cities, it is quite comparable to Europe. But the inequality is so great, that some regions rank on the human development index down with the poorest countries of the world.

Struggles over land have been at the heart of the Colombian conflict since the 1940s. Displacement is not a side effect of the conflict, it has instead been used as a "development" strategy. LeGrande (1989) argues that there have been repeated cycles of small farmers being pushed further and further out to new frontiers, and then pushed out yet again after they have opened new areas. The war has fueled and been fueled by this agrarian crisis, with increasingly concentrated land ownership through violent takeovers, inadequate land use (80% for pasture), and failed land legalization (CNMH 2016b, 27). Drug money has been 'hidden' in land investments, aggravating these trends. In recent years small farmers have been run off in particular to bring in big mining & agribusiness, especially oil palm. One of the most contentious issues in both peace negotiations and implementation has been if and how companies and business leaders would

be held responsible for such violence. These business interests have repeatedly tried to disassociate themselves from the paramilitary violence that clears the land before they move in, but in a 2017 groundbreaking decision the country's Attorney General said that it would hold banana companies responsible for such paramilitary violence. It remains to be seen how that case will proceed and if more such cases will follow.

As peasants have been pushed farther and farther out, many have ended up in extremely remote areas that are very hard to get in to and out of, often over mountain paths and roads that become impassable with tropical rains. With minimal infrastructure and little or no state presence, often the only crop that is viable for them is coca leaf (used to make cocaine) because it is very lightweight and high value, making the difficult trip in and out worth it. The Colombian peace accord is the first in the world to have a section on drug substitution and all parties see this as a key aspect of peace. This section of the accord also has a gender sensitive approach.

Most of the armed violence happened (and continues to happen) in rural areas. Though many have been displaced by that violence to urban areas, other urban residents have lived in a bubble of sorts, able to deny that a war was even happening (saying it was just criminal violence). This was more possible in cities in some regions than others, as the war also varied in intensity over the large extension of Colombia. It is widely agreed that one of the major challenges in implementing the accords is to bring state presence to areas where there was none, and where the FARC often functioned as the de-facto state. Strengthening the judicial system is a particular need. It has been both an accomplice to the violence, perpetuating profound levels of impunity, and victimized when it did attempt to provide justice (CNMH 2016b, 30).

The Colombian conflict has caused tremendous trauma for many, but its impacts vary not only by rurality and region, but also by gender, age, ethnicity, and other factors, and of course all of these intersect. In general those who were already more marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable were more deeply impacted by the violence (CNMH 2016b, 31). The Colombian peace accord is internationally groundbreaking in that it recognizes these differences and the different reparation needs that they pose. To focus here on gender specifically, 9 out of 10 people killed or disappeared were men (CNMH 2016b, 310). Men were also more likely to be "kidnapped, tortured, arbitrarily detained, and forcibly recruited" (Bouvier 2016, 7). And yet it is women that have had to carry much of the heavy ongoing weight of the war. As survivors, women more often had to take on being single heads of households, and offer care to those disabled by war (Bouvier 2016, 7). They were often the ones who had to pick up the children and flee the farm, to far away cities where they knew no one and struggled to make a living. In 2009 UNHCR estimated that 83% of the displaced were women and children, and in their 2017 report again highlighted that most new displacement was happening to women. Most of these women have low levels of education, and struggle

to deal with the legal formalities of filing as victims and accrediting lost property that was rarely in their name. As one survivor put it, “there was no time for sadness” (CNMH 2016b, 311).

Sexual violence is notoriously hard to document, because of the danger, shame, and trauma involved in reporting, yet a recent historical memory report points to how widespread it has been throughout the conflict, with public and semi-public rape used to impose terror not just on victims but throughout an area, particularly leaving scars on family members forced to watch. The Historical Memory Commission documented some 15,000 conflict related cases, but it is clear that there were dramatically more (CNMH 2017). Using epidemiological survey techniques, the ‘take my body out of the war’ coalition of Oxfam Colombia with various women’s groups found that there were some 875,000 victims of conflict related sexual violence just between 2010 and 2015, but that most did not file formal complaints (Campaña Violaciones y ... 2017). Physical, psychological, and sexual violence against women was used often, by both guerrillas and paramilitaries, for social control. It often led to displacement, which ironically increased women’s risk of further sexual violence (UNHCR 2009). This all happened in a context of profound impunity. More broadly, the war intensified gender discrimination and gender-based violence throughout society, which in turn shaped the war. The emotional scars from this violence run deep, and psychological services are sorely lacking - particularly in the most affected areas. But many women’s organizations serve as emotional support groups and use various psycho-social healing techniques, ranging from personal sharing while doing group crafting to drawing body maps.

The peace process: women at the (sub)table

The government made several failed attempts to negotiate with the FARC before the recent successful negotiations, which began with two years of secret talks in Norway, before moving to Cuba for four years of formal negotiations from 2012 – 2016. Cuba and Norway served as the two guarantor countries, and functioned as facilitators rather than mediators.

There has been a wide and deep grassroots movement pushing for peace in Colombia for many years, and the women’s movement has played a leading role in that organizing. Some women’s groups in Colombia are explicitly pacifist, and many others prioritize peace as a women’s issue. These movements spent years pushing for negotiated solutions and pressuring the state to the table.

Although women make up 52% of the population of Colombia, and a surprisingly high 33% of FARC combatants, when negotiations began there were no women on the government team, and only one woman on the FARC team: Alexandra Nariño (Tanja Nijmeijer). As a Dutch guerrilla she was a bit of a

celebrity – but was not taken seriously as member of the negotiating team, at least by the media. The FARC named a second woman, Victoria Sandino (Judith Simanca), to the team in April of 2013 (though technically not as a plenipotentiary). Finally, because of pressure from Colombian women's groups, in November of 2013 two women were named to the then eight person government team, María Paulina Riveros and Nigeria Rentería³, but neither had any experience in gender issues, nor did they consider themselves feminists. The number of women on the government's high commission for peace, the ministry that managed the peace process, also rose, at one point reaching 60%. But pressure continued, and in September of 2014 a gender subcommission was named (the first of its kind in the world).

The subcommission invited a series of delegations of representatives of various women's and LGBTI organizations to Havana to offer input, deepening civil society's involvement in the overall process. They also heard from a panel of former women guerrillas from other conflicts around the world about the difficulties they faced as they demobilized. Many of the negotiators from the 'main table' came to these events. They issued their recommendations at the end of July 2016. But their recommendations did not just address gender.

A gender-sensitive and differential approach

That conflict affects women differently, and hits women harder, is now widely accepted around the world. The Security Council passed resolution 1325 in 2000, calling for an incorporation of gender perspectives in peace building, and has passed six resolutions since along those lines. But although there has been a slowly growing use of a gender perspective in other national peace accords, the Colombian accords are the first in the world to explicitly say throughout that they take a gender-sensitive approach.

But the subcommission did not only recommend a gender sensitive approach. They recognized that not all women are the same, and that to treat them as such is actually discriminatory. Equity requires acknowledging difference and providing appropriate reparations to those who have been discriminated against, so as to create conditions of equality. Differences among women in Colombia are particularly stark across race, region, and rurality. And so, the subcommission supplemented the gender-sensitive approach with what they called a differential approach. This is similar to what is called an intersectional

³ Rentería would resign a year later to run for governor. Five months after her departure she was replaced by María Ángela Holguín, the Minister of Foreign Relations. Because that position did not allow Holguín to be regularly in Havana, when Rentería lost her race she returned to the table as Holguín's representative of sorts.

analysis, which looks at how different hierarchies intersect in particular lives, and indeed the verification commission has at times used these two terms interchangeably.

No other accord has used a broader differential approach as such, though Nepal's is grounded in social equality of various groups and the inclusion of the excluded (Bell 2015). Merriam-Webster gives the simple definition of differential as: "relating to or based on a difference: treating some people or groups differently from others" - as opposed to simply ascertaining what makes some groups different, which would be to differentiate. Likewise, an approach is different than a perspective, in that it does not simply see gender, but acts based on it. Indeed, the few uses of the term gender perspective that seem to have slipped in to the original 297-page accords were replaced by gender-sensitive approach in the final version.⁴

The subcommission argued that different sorts of women and men experienced different forms and levels of violence during the conflict, and as such need different forms of reparation. They added these approaches to all areas of the accord: land restitution, demobilization, victims' rights, the safety to engage in politics without threat, and more. They issued their recommendations at the end of July 2016, less than a month before negotiations were concluded, and only two months before the public vote on the accords. This did not give much time to inform the public about the accords in general, nor these approaches in particular.

A shocking loss, and a peace accord reborn

The two parties finished their negotiations at the end of August and formally signed a full agreement on September 27, 2016, just two months after the differential approach was incorporated. The agreement was then put to a popular vote on October 2, 2016. This left very little time to educate the public about a long and complicated agreement, which included a differential approach that was not immediately understandable to most, though it had strong legal precedent in a series of Supreme Court rulings. Although opinion polls said that the accords would be overwhelmingly approved, they were as mistaken as the Brexit and US election polls had been in the preceding months. The referendum very barely failed, by 53,900 votes out of 13,066,025 ballots cast, or 50.21% no. Turnout was low, 62.6% stayed home. Perhaps abstention was high because of the polling, or because people felt they did not understand a long a complicated agreement. It did not help that there was a hurricane on the Caribbean coast that kept many

⁴ The Spanish term is *enfoque de género*, which I and much of the media had been translating simply as gender approach, but the official UN translation of the accords rendered it as gender-sensitive approach so I have used that here.

from voting in a strongly yes region. Generally, those regions that had been more directly impacted by the armed conflict voted much more strongly in favour of the accords, with some towns that suffered emblematic massacres voting overwhelmingly in favour.

The gender-sensitive and differential approaches played a key role in the failure of the referendum. The Christian right did heavy turnout through their dense and growing networks, and claimed that one in three No voters were evangelicals voting to protect so-called ‘family values’ and against a so-called ‘gender ideology’ (Cosoy 2016). There are no exit polls to back up this claim, but anti-gay prejudice in particular does seem to have played a leading role. This was reflected in that the first people that President Santos met with after the vote were evangelical church leaders.

The parties returned to the negotiating table in Havana and met there with a series of representatives from the No side, as well as eventually again with women’s groups and victim’s groups. It seemed that perhaps these innovative approaches would be dropped. But there was strong grassroots organizing to save the peace accords and push for a fast renegotiation, and the women’s movement and LGBT movement played an important role in that work. For example, the No vote campaigners had emphasized that the word gender appeared 114 times in the accord, and the women’s movement responded with online #114reasons actions – and regularly used this number on protest signs. Amazingly the renegotiated accords maintained both the gender-sensitive and the differential approaches,⁵ and LGBT people stayed in as one of the groups mentioned. What the new accords did do was clarify, in the introduction, what the approach meant. It is framed as a means of respecting everyone’s constitutional rights, including the right to equality and non-discrimination. In clarifying the approach and its rationale, if anything, the new accords strengthened it. The new accords specify what the approach means for each agenda item, and make many more references throughout to taking ‘affirmative measures’ to ensure equality in regards to various aspects of implementation.

It is worth noting that Colombia’s constitution and laws already have strong protections against discrimination, and the gender-sensitive and differential approaches in the accord were based on but did not expand these. Yet they were widely misrepresented in the Colombian media as extending new rights. Dag Nylander, the Norwegian representative at the negotiation table, argues that a major lesson learned is that *how* gender is included matters, and that “a too repetitive and imprecise form of language on gender may have contributed to fostering the fear of a “gender ideology”” (Nylander and Salvesen 2017, 5).

⁵ As can be seen in the detailed online comparison at <http://bit.ly/2fNlKfV>

A rocky implementation

The revised accords were signed on November 24, 2016. They were not put up for a vote but were instead unanimously approved by Congress on November 30, 2016 (the vote was 205 out of 268 across both houses – the opponents walked out). Implementation began immediately on December 1, 2016, but there have been numerous difficulties with implementation. Congress has been far behind in passing the many laws required. Congress has also been modifying the accords piecemeal as they pass these laws, which the Constitutional Court gave them the power to do. As the president's support in Congress has weakened, these changes have become more substantial, as has foot dragging.

In Bell's review of gender provisions across various peace accords (2015, 24) she found that many of the provisions were poorly implemented, if at all, and that robust monitoring was needed. Although the accord established a Special Authority (*Instancia Especial*) to ensure the implementation of the gender sensitive approach it was not installed until July of 2017 and it issued its first report the next March (2018). Yet in the first six months it was already clear, and well documented in an overview report by the women's group Gpaz (2017a), that most of the laws and decrees being drafted to put the accords into effect did not follow through well, or at times even at all, on the gender-sensitive approach commitments. The commitment to gender parity and 'zipper lists' that alternate men and women for various implementation bodies was being widely ignored.

Gpaz also issued a report after one year of implementation (2017b) that analysed 83 new laws and regulations and put numbers on the level to which the gender approach is being included for different aspects of the accords as follows: point 1 (comprehensive agrarian reform) 30%, points 2 (political participation) and 4 (illicit drugs) 100%, point 3 (end of the conflict) 16.3%, point 5 (victims) 57.1%, and point 6 (implementation and verification) 9. Quantitative studies like this miss parts of the picture however.

One phenomena that has been noted, for example, is that front line caseworkers serving displaced families consider the gender-sensitive approach to be fulfilled if women are simply participating in the program, rather than adapting the program to address their particular needs (Durán Díaz, Cuesta Astroz, and Mazzoldi Díaz 2018, 32). There is also a real concern that, like many programs in Colombia, this policy will only function at a national level and not be well implemented at local and regional levels. At all levels it will be a challenge for programs to see people not just as women or men, but to use the differential approach and also address their other particular needs. There is a risk, for example, that reparations being offered in a program that focuses on indigenous people will result in an effort that primarily benefits indigenous men, and a program aimed at women will primarily benefit non-indigenous women, and as such indigenous women will be left in the lurch.

A June 2018 report of the first 18 months of implementation of the gender sensitive approach issued by the Technical Secretariat (*Secretaría Técnica*) of the International Verification Component (2018) notes that the new peace courts are being particularly attentive to such intersectional concerns; and that the efforts to design the new development plans for regions most affected by the war, as established in the accords, were also doing so by considering women's rurality as well as their ethnic identities. More broadly they found real advancements in the participation of women in implementation at both national and regional levels, but also gaps in mechanisms for the participation of LGBT women, women from particular ethnic groups, and women's organizations (as opposed to women as individuals). The report includes a close reading of each of the clauses related to gender in the regulations (both laws and decrees) passed to implement the accords and argues that many of them are simply vague references to considering gender, and are not specific enough about the affirmative measures that will be taken to be measurable. It also notes that statistics regarding aspects of the reincorporation of former combatants are often not disaggregated, making it hard to track women's access to appropriate health care, development projects, etc., though it notes various barriers. Their final recommendations exhort other institutions to better attend to the differing needs of different groups of women, to better train their staff to do so, and to better coordinate their work across entities.

Other reports by civil society women's organizations, such as those by the International Democratic Federation of Women (FDIM 2017), are more scathing in their critiques of implementation failures. Perhaps the most serious implementation crisis is the skyrocketing levels of assassinations of social leaders who are defending and working to carry out aspects of the peace accords, particularly returning land to the displaced and manual eradication of coca crops. There is disagreement as to the numbers of those killed since implementation began (different entities cite between 178 and 330 in July of 2018) – but all agree that the rate of murders is continually going up and that it is causing real fear and intimidation and putting a serious damper on the local organizing required to fully implement the accords. The report of the Technical Secretariat (2018) notes that security measures for social leaders do not specifically address the needs of women, and recommend that more women police and military officers be assigned to this work.

Women's involvement in implementation

UN guidance emphasizes that women's civil society organizations should be actively engaged during both peace accord negotiation and implementation, and that involving them increases both the legitimacy and the quality of a peace process (UNDPA 2017, 40, 16). There is a growing academic literature on ways to include women in peace negotiation processes (O'Reilly, Súilleabháin, and Paffenholz 2015; Paffenholz

2015; Paffenholz et al. 2016) but little on how to incorporate women, and women's different ways of knowing and doing, in making those processes stick. UN Women Colombia though has published several manuals with tips for increasing women's participation in implementation of particular aspects of the accords.

Colombia's experience is particularly useful for thinking about how women's organizations can support implementation not only because they are currently engaged in the implementation of a recent peace accord, but also because that accord is the most inclusive peace accord in the world to date. Colombia also has a strong women's movement, which played a key role in pushing for the gender-sensitive and differential approaches in the accord and continues to closely monitor and push for their implementation, even producing reports suggesting how regulations should be crafted to implement each section of the accord (Cinco Claves 2017).

Many women's groups across the country met regularly during the negotiations to discuss aspects of the accords and do so now to discuss the recent laws and decrees relating to implementation, and to understand what they mean on the ground for them - so that they can be involved in shaping the implementation. In that process, they have at times faced disagreements on what to focus on and what to push for. Notably some groups thought it was unrealistic to push for crimes of sexual violence to not be eligible for amnesty, a clause that *was* eventually added to the accord. Though it is unrealistic to expect all women's groups to agree and coordinate on all aspects, in different groupings they are building points of consensus that then make their advocacy for implementation stronger.

Women's groups are discussing and working out their positions regarding aspects of implementation and peacebuilding in this post-accord period in (1) their own organizations, at local, regional, and national levels; and (2) in various alliances with other women's groups and mixed gender groups, at regional and national levels. This is important movement building work, that then makes them more able to also do so (3) in dialogue with various formations of the state, at local, regional, and national levels. This process will not only make specific aspects of implementation more effective, but works to rebuild the social fabric more generally, a key component of sustainable peace.

This is a continuation of the work many of these groups did to push for the peace negotiations to happen, and then to provide input for the negotiations themselves. This included specific crafted proposals, a good number of which were incorporated in the accords. Yet some of the support that these groups received for earlier stages in the cycle, such as funds for facilitated dialogue from the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), has ended. For Colombia's peace to more fully inclusive, women's groups need continued support for their work on implementation.

One of the differences that women's organizations are working to bridge through dialogue is the vastly different realities of urban and rural women, who experienced the war very differently. Rural women are often severely disadvantaged and it is much harder for them to participate in these dialogues. To use the terminology of the Colombian peace accords themselves, they need stronger 'affirmative measures' to help them even get to the table to speak. This can be as basic as financial support for transportation to events so that they can come together.

But they also need targeted technical support. There are 35 new Colombian government agencies being established as part of the peace accords, and thousands of new laws. For their participation in the implementation process to be meaningful, women's groups need support for understanding the many new and rapidly evolving implementation laws, decrees, and agencies and their impacts (in Colombia this is often described as '*orientacion sociojuridica*', sociolegal orientation). As it is, international agencies widely agree that Colombian laws are conflicting, overlapping, and often hard to understand. This is bound to become even more so with the new laws and agencies set up to implement the accords. External actors could help to fund this sort of technical support, which would be particularly helpful for those women who are marginalized and have less formal education, such as rural women.

One of the longstanding challenges in Colombia, and in many other conflict countries, has been to have a fully functional state in all areas. Armed conflict occurred largely in areas where there was not a strong state presence. Many national programs do not get implemented in certain regions or localities. State agencies also historically have a very difficult time coordinating work across agencies, and sometimes work at cross purposes. It will be a challenge for the new agencies established as part of the peace accord to function well, and particularly to carry out the gender-sensitive approach mandated in the accords. But women's groups are an important resource that these agencies could draw on.

Various women's organizations have repeatedly emphasized that they want more spaces for participation in the implementation process that are not simply for civil society to present comments to the state, but where there could be more engaged dialogue and discussion about implementation dynamics on the ground with various levels of the state, where actual decisions about implementation specifics could be made. Women are tired of participating in spaces where they seem to be speaking into a black hole, where their voices have little impact. This is a challenge that has also been faced in other countries (International Peace Institute 2016).

Relatedly, there is wide agreement amongst women's groups that they would like to see more women named to official positions on committees and agencies involved in implementation, and many are

concerned at the dismally low percentages of women named so far, at both national and regional levels. The new transitional justice/ peace courts are a notable exception, with 50% women. The women's movement engaged in a concerted campaign to achieve this, with the hashtag #MujeresSíHay (thereAREwomen) through which they proposed names, and then circulated short videos describing the women nominated and why it was important to have women on the court. One group (Gpaz) also analyzed the 863 women who made the first cut on a series of issues and gave them point rankings.

But the movement has not been able to engage in these sorts of campaigns for all of the new bodies being formed for implementation. And though there *are* women that can be named, women do often need extra support and training to be able to take up these positions, particularly rural women - who are even less represented. External actors could both fund such training and advocate for such inclusion. Women's groups also insist that it is not only important to count how many women are on implementation boards and agencies, but that these need to be women who know about and will support women's rights. Relatedly, in what could be seen as window dressing, the new president Duque's incoming cabinet of ministers are half women, reprising former president Uribe's gender equal cabinet of 2002 – but most are so-called family values supporters.

One positive step toward more involvement of women's groups in implementation has been the establishment, in March of 2018, of the International working group (*mesa técnica*) for the monitoring of the implementation of the gender-sensitive approach, made up of the International Accompaniment Component, the Special Authority on Gender, the Technical Secretariat (*Secretaría Técnica*) of the International Verification Component (made up of CERAC, CINEP, and the Kroc Institute), as well as women's organizations that are monitoring implementation.

Conclusion:

Colombia recently held presidential elections and the new right-wing president Ivan Duque, who took office in August 2018, stated repeatedly during the campaign that he would modify the peace accord. His latitude to do so is limited, but there is nevertheless now a real risk that key aspects will simply be defunded or only implemented half-heartedly. Even under President Santos' administration, which negotiated the accord, implementation of the peace accord as a whole was running far behind and happening piecemeal. This is likely to increase. As the gender-sensitive and differential approaches were the most controversial aspects, and particularly opposed by the right, it would be easy for them to be left behind in a partial implementation.

One of the key ways to avoid this, and truly implement this as the world's most inclusive accord, is to

support women's groups so that their voice continues to be strong and heard in the implementation process. When they have the resources to do so these groups can be effective at keeping gender justice on both the national and regional agenda – but they are currently stretched very thin as they work to monitor and be involved in all of the issues involved in implementation. Development agencies and other external actors can support their ability to do so through ongoing attention to the gender-sensitivity of implementation, urging the Colombian state to engage with women's groups around implementation, and providing financial support to those groups so that they have the capacity to both pressure for and engage in such dialogue to ensure full and equitable implementation.

As a postscript, one final complexity to mention about the Colombian situation is that as implementation of the peace accord with the FARC rebels is underway, the state has begun negotiating with the smaller ELN rebel group. This process may be ended by the new administration, but should it continue, it is expected that civil society will be incorporated more fully into these negotiations - both as a reflection of the different make up and history of the ELN and taking into account lessons learned from the last negotiation process. One challenge for this process is that many women's groups are already busy with their focus on implementation, and reticent to participate if their voices will not be heard. One take away from this case is that in other countries there may also be multiple actors at different phases of the conflict cycle and that the call for women's groups to be engaging in these different ways is a challenge to be aware of.

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