

## **Project description**

### **1. Background**

In the past two decades a number of violent conflicts in Latin America came to an end, but societies remained deeply divided. Although important efforts have been made to address this divide, reform institutions and promote reconciliation, societal conflicts often continued to break out in violence in new forms. On occasion, even where successful Truth and Reconciliation Commissions operated and important steps forward were made; meaningful implementation of their recommendations was not always possible. In the meantime, the economic divide between social sectors continued to increase.

In many Latin American countries, particularly after the end of armed conflicts, the space for political participation increased but important constraints remained in relation to the control of mass-media and to a full enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression. At the same time, the separation between civil society and 'political society' also widened, alongside the loss of credibility of political parties and institutions. Conditions for real social mobility have been lacking. In addition to that, in a number of countries of the region (mainly Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia) the economic divide coincides with ethnic fault-lines, and indigenous people were by far the main victims of violence and exclusion. Diversity and identity politics also represented factors in the reconciliation processes. Notwithstanding some improvements, impunity remained substantially unchallenged with perverse effects on the consolidation of democracy in the region. The practice of corruption continued to affect most of the countries of the region with negative repercussions on the credibility of the efforts made in the democracy-building processes.

The main hypothesis of this cooperation is that successful reconciliation processes are needed to build a sustainable democracy. Yet, reconciliation has been generally seen from a narrow perspective of human rights. In most of the cases political leaderships (governments, parliaments, political parties, and mass-media) have not structurally included the issue of reconciliation in the main agenda for peace and democracy.

Currently, there is a clear need for renewed endeavours to ensure that past violence and present inequalities are dealt with in an integrated manner which fosters full social, economic and political inclusion and ultimately, democracy and human rights.

In its “Reconciliation after Violent Conflicts: A Handbook” (2003), International IDEA carried out a comparative analysis (on a global scale) of the main issues related to reconciliation in the aftermath of violent conflicts. By presenting different options of effective strategies of reconciliation and their actual impact, IDEA essentially proposed a “governance approach”. Stemming from this perspective, sustainable reconciliation is viewed as requiring the construction of deliberate and delicate political processes, and hence is best addressed within the overall context of long-term democratisation and peace-building. Reconciliation must be dealt with in an integrated way, which encompasses and goes beyond the elements of truth, justice, healing, and reparation. This includes strong institutional development to enable effective frameworks for both human security and the management of future conflicts.

## **2. Objectives**

### **Overall objective**

The joint IDEA-IIDH project on Reconciliation and Democracy in Latin America aims to support the consolidation of democracy and the respect for human rights through a wide reflection on the existing gaps in reconciliation processes in the region.

### **Specific Objectives:**

- Influence the agenda of donors/international community (including organizations like the World Bank, UNDP, etc.) drawing their attention to the impact in terms of reconciliation (and its sustainability) of assistance programmes;
- Improve knowledge/practice of international and regional actors (including OAS/OEA and UN) active in the provision of assistance to reconciliation processes in the Latin American region through the production of tools and guidelines based on comparative analysis;

- Build the capacity of national stakeholders, particularly Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), Follow Up Commissions, legislatures and other relevant institutions and civil society entities tasked with designing/implementing reconciliation programmes and democratic state reforms.

### **3. Expected Results**

Expected results include the renewal of public debate to broaden the concept of reconciliation policy and mainstream it within the democracy building agenda (by including measures that deal with root causes of conflict such as inequality or discrimination). This will be done through the analysis of selected case-studies and the realization of a regional workshop. The outputs of the project will be the production and publication of a Handbook titled: “Reconciliation and Democracy in Latin America” and dissemination activities. The Handbook will include:

- Five case-studies: Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru;
- A summary of existing IDEA’s Reconciliation Handbook;
- A regional outlook on reconciliation and democracy;
- Conclusions and Recommendations.

This Handbook will present options and provide practical tools on how to strengthen reconciliation processes in a way that will positively contribute to democracy-building and the respect for human rights.

With the work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as a starting point, the analysis aims at going beyond the classic themes of truth and justice in order to reflect on the reconciliation processes in the region with a holistic approach. The analysis will include the examination of specific national initiatives and the impact, if any, of international norms and mechanisms. In this sense, the recent coming into force of the Rome Treaty, on July 2002, establishing the International Criminal Court will also be taken into consideration. The impact of these processes on societal structures and on modes of

governance and ultimately on democracy-building will also be analyzed. The main focus will be placed on the articulation between reconciliation and democratization agendas.

The comparative material is estimated to be finished by June 30, 2005 after which a series of dissemination activities will take place. IIDH and IDEA will consider the best way to give follow up to the present project, including the identification of institutions (like the *Comisión Andina de Juristas* and other regional organizations) and the promotion of partnerships which will give sustainability to the project.

#### **4. Planned Activities for 2005**

##### Case-studies on reconciliation in selected countries

Cases authors:

<i>Argentina:</i>	Patricia Valdez;
<i>Chile:</i>	Andrés Domínguez;
<i>Perú:</i>	Rolando Ames;
<i>El Salvador:</i>	Benjamín Cuellar;
<i>Guatemala:</i>	Helen Mack;

Deadline: March

##### Global reflection on reconciliation in the region

Output:	Regional outlook on Reconciliation
Author:	Carlos Beristain
Deadline:	April

##### Production of regionalized version of Handbook

Output 1:	Summary of “Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A handbook”
Author:	Carlos Beristain
Deadline:	April
Output 2:	Conclusions and recommendations
Author:	IDEA and IIDH
Deadline:	May
Output 3:	Regional version of Handbook (140 pages, Spanish);
Chapters:	Regional outlook; Handbook summary; Case-studies;

Deadline: Conclusions and Recommendations;  
30 June 2005 (including publication);

Preliminary Dissemination activities

Activity 1: One-day launching with Donors, UN, WB, OAS/OEA, and other regional/international organizations during the IIDH “*Curso interdisciplinario de Derechos Humanos*”;

Venue: San José de Costa Rica;

Period: July 2005;

Activity 2: Five half-day seminars/launching in countries analyzed;

Period: Between August and November 2005;

Activity 3: Half day seminar at the University for Peace (UPEACE);

Period: Between August and November 2005;

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