Civil organizations question the new framework for UN Cooperation in Venezuela for 2023-2026, due to striking deficiencies and omissions

In the face of the announcement of the signing of a new framework that will govern the United Nations cooperation in Venezuela for 2023-2026, agreed by the National Executive power and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in the country, the organizations of civil society that subscribe this statement express our concern about the striking deficiencies and omissions of the document in question.

First, the agreement fails to mention the socio-political context under which cooperation will take place and clarify the basis or scope of the consultations with civil society or other interested actors. In a country with a persisting and deepening Complex Humanitarian Emergency, it is imperative and responsible to consider the social and political conflict as the basis or fundamental cause of the crisis. This cooperation framework should not be instrumentalized to normalize this situation.

Second, the document fails to observe the foundations and contents of the Sustainable Development Agenda. The United Nations cooperation agreements are the most important instrument of the organization for the planning, coordination and execution of actions for the development and promotion of the 2030 Agenda, a commitment assumed by the UN member States in 2015 establishing a set of 17 goals, targets and indicators to advance in overcoming the current and coming challenges for humanity.

The goals of the 2030 Agenda are interdependent and revolve around the observance of human rights and the dignity of people, as well as the eradication of poverty, the promotion of economic development and the protection of the environment under the framework of peacebuilding and cooperation. In fragile contexts with a profound destructuring of capacities due to the weakening of institutions, as is the case in Venezuela today, complying with goal 16, which refers to the promotion of fair, peaceful and inclusive societies, implies a broad effort by the different actors to advance a process of structural reforms that allow the restoration of democratic governance, the rule of law and accountability.

Goal 17 establishes the need for cooperation and alliances that are essential to achieve the agenda's goals. The cooperation frameworks must express a plan of action based on the reality of the context in which it will be implemented and meet five key objectives:

- Articulate the collective response of the United Nations system to enable countries to address the problems posed by poverty, inequality, gender and technology gaps, among others, and establish priorities to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda in contexts of deep fragility caused by protracted conflicts, as is the case in Venezuela;
- Embody the spirit of cooperation and weave alliances that include governments and the rest of the stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, academia and the private sector;
- Making the motto of leaving no one behind a tangible aspiration by guaranteeing the rights of all people, especially those belonging to groups

affected by the Complex Humanitarian emergency, while addressing the structural deprivations of rights;
- Strengthen the means to ensure inclusion (respect for diversity, participation and people's rights), especially in sustainable livelihoods (referring to the ability of people to provide for themselves and their families), while addressing the structural causes of inequalities and violence;
- Ensure that the United Nations teams have the tools to adapt the responses to the scale of the needs and specific realities of the country in question, in order to ensure the fulfillment of the Agenda and guide a process of restoring capacities under the human rights standards and the recommendations of international protection bodies.

Taking into account the aforementioned, the signatory organizations consider it imperative to guarantee the following actions in the framework of the signing of a new cooperation agreement:

- Formally declare the socio-political context in which the agreement is being signed, in order to facilitate the concerted action of the multiple national actors and international protection and cooperation agencies;
- Incorporate, in the framework of said context, the set of recommendations made to the Venezuela State by different human rights monitoring and protection mechanisms of the United Nations system in the last eleven years, including the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Commission of Inquiry of the International Labor Organization and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, among others;
- Recognize the structural problems that persist in Venezuela in terms of human rights and justice. The approach to the Venezuelan conflict must prioritize the search for justice as part of the construction of peace. To ensure access to justice for all, it is essential to create and strengthen effective, independent and accountable institutions at all levels, following the principles of human rights in the implementation of goal 16;
- Understand that achieving democratic coexistence requires building an electoral roadmap that guarantees the holding of genuine elections and incorporates the recommendations made by the Electoral Observation Mission of the European Union and the United Nations Panel of Experts during the regional elections of 2021;
- Adopt a holistic perspective as the fundamental framework for addressing the problems of countries in situations of protracted crisis, as is the case of Venezuela, in order to articulate humanitarian action, development, the defense of human rights and peacebuilding to provide responses that alleviate the suffering of the people and avert cause more damage, while respecting the mandates and means of each system at all times;
- Ensure the mechanisms for the active participation of the entire Venezuelan society in the process and facilitate the means for follow-up and accountability so no one is left behind, as set forth in the Agenda, by ensuring interconnection, indivisibility, inclusiveness, and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

Caracas, October 19, 2022.

Signatories:

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2. C CEDISUC
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6. Acceso a la Justicia
7. Acción en Positivo
8. Acción Solidaria
9. Alerta Venezuela
10. Alianza Venezolana por la Salud
11. Amigos Trasplantados de Venezuela
12. Aquí se habla legal, SC
13. Asociación Civil de Planificación Familiar
14. Asociación Civil Los Naguaritos
15. Asociación Civil Saber es Poder-AsoSaber
16. Asociación Civil Vida y Luz (Asoviluz)
17. Asociación Venezolana de Mujeres
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31. CIIDER
32. Civilis Derechos Humanos
33. Clima21
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44. Fundación Aguaclara
45. Fundación BENGOA
46. Fundación FACIU
47. Fundación Iribarren Lucha
48. Fundación para la Prevencion de la Violencia contra las Mujeres
49. Fundación Reflejos de Venezuela
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67. Opción Venezuela AC.
68. Organización Nacional de Trasplante de Venezuela ONTV
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73. REDHNNA, Red por los Derechos Humanos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes
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