



It was not how we imagined it

A story of dialogue, conflict and
peace building in Bolivia

Disturbance in the city of Sucre, seat of the Legislative Assembly, November 2007. Photographic archive of La Razón.



Dialogue table at the city of Cochabamba between the National Government and opposition Prefects, September 18, 2008. Photographic archive of La Razón.



On October 5, 2008, the first stage of the National Dialogue at Cochabamba is closed with no agreements but having reassured the country after the tension lived at the beginning of the month. Despite the disagreement, the President and the nine Prefects, three of them from the opposition, agree to this group picture. Photographic archive of La Razón.



On October 20, 2008, a political agreement is reached at Congress which made the call for an Approval Referendum of the new Constitution. Vice-president Álvaro García Linera makes it public surrounded by opposition and pro-government congressmen, and by a group of international observers. Photographic archive of la Razón.



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Foreword

In recent years, Bolivia has experienced major political and social changes spurred by the lifelong mission of its people to create a more equitable and democratic society.

These crucial reforms have not been removed from the socio-political conflicts that already presented large challenges to the democratic institutions in Bolivia. In particular, between 2006 and late 2008, Bolivia drafted and approved a new Political Constitution of the State in a process that incited tensions, polarization and violence.

This conflict that emerged during the constitutional reform was resolved after a long and laborious process of political dialogue and negotiated compromises paving the way for a majority approval (61.4% of votes) of a new Constitution in January 2009.

Throughout this process, the United Nations supported the Bolivian people and its government in their efforts to achieve a peaceful end to the conflict. To this end, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided key technical and political support to Bolivian institutions and individuals, and served as an observer and facilitator of the political dialogue of September to October 2008. Along with other international organizations, UNDP was central in resolving many of the socio-political challenges present in Bolivia during that time.

For UNDP, the process also represented an opportunity to test the skills, knowledge and creativity of its staff through the delicate task of contributing to conflict prevention and strengthening democratic governance in the nation.

Once the constitutional drafting process was complete, UNDP commissioned a study of this major political dialogue to the UNDP Democratic Dialogue Regional Project. One of the main objectives of this project is to support, systematize and evaluate peaceful dialogue efforts at different levels, as well as to identify and disseminate lessons learned to advance the study and practice of democratic dialogue. We also considered that the Bolivian experience was very valuable to better understand UNDP's challenges in this area.

This report identifies and analyzes key elements that allowed a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Bolivia— such as the citizens' demand for the cessation of violence, the dialogue and conflict resolution process, the importance of having spaces for dialogue and trust building, the development of sound technical proposals prior to the crisis, international observation, the first and second track negotiations, and the political will and decisiveness of the Government and the opposition.

Bolivia's experience shows the crucial importance of supporting, preserving and making use of institutional spaces for tackling conflicts in times of high tension and political polarization. The resolution of the Bolivian conflict was achieved through already established institutions: the National Electoral Court (CNE), which preserved its independence and ability to organize transparent elections; the National Congress, that became the context of the final negotiations; and the political parties, which were instrumental in coming to vital agreements. We believe that the institutional nature of the process was instrumental in helping all actors involved to comprehend and comply with decisions being made, as well as in providing democratic legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

The report also highlights the crucial opportunities that the United Nations, and UNDP in particular, can have in facilitating political dialogue processes and in strengthening democratic institutions—in so far as we are able to build sustained trust, credibility, and impartiality through our programmes, as well as strong partnerships with all sectors of society.

In short, UNDP understands that dialogue processes constitute an effective and peaceful way to create an environment for people to develop their economic and social capacities and, therefore, achieve higher levels of human welfare.

This document represents a valuable contribution to the reflection on these processes.



Heraldo Muñoz

Regional Director for Latin America
and the Caribbean UNDP



Jordan Ryan

Director of the Bureau for Crisis
Prevention and Recovery UNDP

Acknowledgment to the “Unrealistic Dreamers”

As time passes by and allows us to reflect on the experience of Bolivia’s political dialogue in September 2008 from a greater distance, I’m increasingly convinced of the importance of understanding people and their driving forces in such processes, especially in order to value certain outcomes and ethical principles that, I believe, inspired its protagonists.

As mentioned in the text, a series of complex social and political processes came together to prompt sharp controversy and political conflict that year, but at the same time, they enabled its resolution through dialogue at the end of 2008. However, we must not overlook the fact that behind such “processes”, there are human beings who could have done things in various ways, and that the path of negotiation and commitment to peace was by no means the obvious choice. Looking back on the process, this human dimension of dialogue is probably what I find most striking.

Some Bolivians find it ironic that their society is able to get to “the edge of the precipice and take a step back.” That said, it is often those involved in the conflict themselves who are the ones that have to take that “step back.” In many cases, taking that route often involves significant costs and consequences. Negotiating the non-negotiable, facing the radicalization of some of one’s followers, exposing oneself to the suspicion of hidden agreements or interests, or being content with small victories, is not always easy or “heroic.”

In fact, I understand that politicians and leaders who were able to make these decisions during these difficult months, at a time of great urgency and great uncertainty, when it might have been easier in political terms to seek refuge in flexibility or inaction, deserve much more recognition than they have received. Let’s not fool ourselves. Dialogue helped to pacify the country, but it also involved political triumphs and defeats, which makes their selflessness and willingness to negotiate a solution to the blockade even more valuable.

Newly arrived in Bolivia in June 2008 amid the conflict, the impression conveyed to me by most people was that the option of dialogue, or even an orderly way out of the problem, was almost impossible. However, later that same year a group of Bolivians showed me that this assumption was false. Hence my reference to the “unrealistic dreamers” – to refer warmly to many of the people involved in these events, drawing on a lovely term used in a recent text by my fellow countryman, Haruki Murakami.

History will judge the quality of the agreements reached in Cochabamba and in Congress, which continue, and they probably will continue to be controversial. However, I would like to stress the fundamental value of this effort, as it managed to ward off the demons of violence and intolerance that seemed to lurk dangerously in Bolivian society in those days. For this alone the process was worthwhile, and its key participants deserve enormous respect.

My gratitude and admiration goes out to all of them, for their courage to “step back”, and for being “unrealistic dreamers”, at least for a few weeks. No dialogue would have been possible without their strong will. I am also deeply grateful to them for allowing us to be witnesses and companions in this historic effort to turn their dream into a reality.



Yoriko Yasukawa

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Author's Note

This report, sponsored by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and UNDP Bolivia, was prepared in order to systematize the experience and lessons learned from the United Nations intervention in Bolivia's political crisis of 2008, particularly in the National Dialogue process held between September and October of that year, which led to the approval of the new Political Constitution of the State.

The report is based upon a number of documents and other materials prepared by UNDP Bolivia between 2008 and 2009. Among these, a documentary video on the Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP Bolivia), ex-ante and ex-post opinion polls on United Nations performance, as well as a dozen interviews to some key national and international actors who had participated in the dialogue process. By the end of 2010, a two-week fieldtrip to La Paz was organized. Documents, essays and proposals related to the crisis and conflict, produced between 2006 and 2009, were collected and revised. Also, additional interviews to journalists, politicians, political analysts and UNDP staff were conducted. From these diverse views is that the story of dialogue and pacification in Bolivia could be woven.

I would like to thank the following persons for their contributions, time and energy while preparing this document: in UNDP and PAPEP Bolivia, Yoriko Yasukawa, Cielo Morales, Christian Jetté, Armando Ortuño and Francisco Canedo, and in Regional PAPEP, Antonio Aranibar. I am also grateful to Ambassadors in Bolivia Nigel Baker of the United Kingdom and Kenny Bell of the European Union for their valuable comments to the document.

Elena Díez Pinto

I. Introduction

Background

Some believe that Bolivians tend to move toward the very edge of the abyss and, just before falling, reach consensus and avoid disaster. The conflict and crisis during the discussion and approval of Bolivia's new State Political Constitution from 2006 to 2008 is perhaps the best evidence of such behavior, as it situated Bolivia on the verge of a serious civil confrontation.

President Evo Morales took office in January 2006 after winning the general election the previous year with 54% of the vote. This was the first time in the history of Bolivia's democracy that a candidate won the election by absolute majority. It was also an unprecedented victory considering that this is the first indigenous president in a country that has a long tradition of discrimination. During the campaign, the President and his party, the MAS¹, pledged to promote a new political Constitution that would change the institutional structure of the State.

The longing for a new constitution that would re-found the State was first publicly expressed more than two decades ago during the mobilization of lowland indigenous people who marched to La Paz in 1990. They repudiated the country's economic model, which they blamed for their poverty and exclusion. Since the mid-80's, although liberal economic and social reforms achieved a certain degree of macroeconomic stability and some institutional success, including municipal decentralization, they failed to reduce the high levels of poverty and social and economic inequality.

Indian-peasant movements led the fight against these policies in alliance with workers groups and poor neighborhoods, including the coca growers' movement, which sought ethnic and social recognition as well as acceptance of the cultural significance of coca for Andean communities. At that time, the movement was led by union leader Evo Morales.

Since 2000, social movements, indigenous organizations, left-wing forces and a large group of intellectuals promoted a strong campaign to call a Constituent Assembly. This demand grew stronger in 2002 during the administration of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, whose resignation in 2003 accelerated the process. In 2004, a constitutional amendment promoted by his successor, Carlos Mesa, incorporated the use of Referendum and Constituent Assembly, paving the way for change. The reform gave rise to two parallel demands whose agendas had been ingrained in Bolivian society for a long time. On the one hand, social groups in the West, with a nationalist, statist and indigenous discourse demanding a Constituent Assembly to re-found the country. On the other, sectors from the East and South of Bolivia, particularly from the department of Santa Cruz, linked to business as well as center and right-wing political forces that promoted “autonomy”-based decentralization.

Social conflicts in Bolivia are the result of the accumulation of a series of unresolved structural problems and the struggle for political, economic and social rights that have emerged with greater intensity from the installation of the government of Evo Morales.

Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy

The causes of conflict

Since 2006, the discussion and approval of the constitutional project was the main source of political and social conflict in the country. Many observers agree that the constitutional process was not accepted by the regional-civic sectors of the lowlands² or by the parties of the center-right opposition because it involved the introduction of deep changes in the structures of the country. Furthermore, they saw this project as an instrument designed by the MAS to remain in power without respecting the rules of representative democracy.

However, some analysts consider that the causes of conflict were historical and structural, and that the constitutional process promoted by the government of President Morales would have acted only as a catalyst to place key issues at the center of national political debate.

From that perspective, the emerging conflicts revealed and exacerbated old ideological, social, geographical, ethnic and regional-territorial divides existing in the country. According to political scientist Jorge Lazarte³:

“The crisis in the country is the combined bursting of historical divides that have prevailed over time. These

include regional-territorial divides, first between North and South, leading to civil war in the late nineteenth century, and now between East and West; ethnic divides, with a majority whose rights were excluded from the very foundation of the republic, a country that was not for everyone; social divisions between rich and poor, with a poverty gap increased by the inequalities of the past two decades; and the political divide between left and right, especially since the Chaco War.”

In addition, the central State and Bolivia’s political party system have been historically weak. On the one hand the central government has had little presence and capacity to rule the entire country because of its institutional, political and economic weakness. This fact may have stimulated the growing regional demands for autonomy. At the national level, there have been no sustained efforts and mechanisms for economic and social integration to support the construction of a shared vision that brings together the different views resulting from the country’s cultural and ethnic diversity. Instead, diversity has been a source of social fragmentation, fear and mistrust, as exhibited during this period of conflict.

On the other hand, the weakness of traditional political parties translated into a limited capacity to mediate the interests of society and reach agreements to avoid political polarization and eventually violence.⁴ Facing the unprecedented challenge of re-founding the country and achieving a new social contract, political parties, particularly opposition parties, failed to formulate alternative proposals that conveyed the needs and aspirations of most of the population. Politics as the art of the possible was weakening and, instead, confrontation and violence tended to dominate the streets.

II. The history of conflict, dialogue and pacification⁵

Various analyses agree that if the government hardliners wanted to impose the approval of the constitutional text in an authoritarian manner without respecting the two-thirds vote established by Law, the strategy of the opposition hardliners, especially those under the influence of the Santa Cruz Civic Committee through PODEMOS, would attempt to prevent the agreements in the Assembly.⁶

Raúl Peñaranda
Journalist

The inception of the Constituent Assembly: 2006

When the Constituent Assembly in Sucre was installed in August 2006, many hoped that it meant an opportunity for dialogue and a meeting space to generate a new social contract for Bolivians. Unfortunately, this hope did not last long. Very soon, the Assembly would become the mirror of a divided country.

The first conflict arose when the MAS and the opposition parties failed to reach agreement on the rules of debate, i.e., how should committee reports, draft articles and the final text of the Constitution be approved. The ruling party wanted an approval by absolute majority while the opposition by two-thirds, as established in the law convening the Constituent Assembly (*Ley de Convocatoria*). The second conflict arose from the Government's adoption of the new Land Law regulations (new INRA Law Regulations), which landowners opposed citing its confiscatory nature, especially in Santa Cruz. In both cases, demonstrations polarized political positions for and against the Government. In order to avoid further tensions in the Assembly, the Government temporarily withdrew the regulations of the Law.

Towards the end of 2006, the Constituent Assembly was paralyzed amid a strained social environment that included

huge demonstrations, hunger strikes, picketing, and riots. In an atmosphere of political and social confrontation, no one could imagine then that the problems were just beginning.

Political polarization and failure of the Constituent Assembly: 2007

In retrospect, one issue highlighted in 2007 was the growing importance and relevance of the regional civic movements. As political opposition parties weakened, they increasingly gave up political spaces to these movements that lacked political experience and responded to particular interests and to regional actors. As they grew stronger, the regional civic movements became more radical and hindered the achievement of agreements to resolve emerging conflicts related to the adoption of the new Constitution, the implementation of government policies and the demand for autonomy by the regions.⁸

In addition to conflicts in the political arena, the Constituent Assembly faced other challenges in attempting to reach agreements. According to journalist Raúl Peñaranda, “the first seven months of work during 2007 were used by the Assembly to discuss the Internal Debates Regulation.”⁹ The convergence of 255 Assembly members, most of whom had not met prior to that event, was a major challenge *per se* - not to mention the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of Bolivian society reflected in the Assembly. Under such intense political and social pressure, advancing the processes on schedule and with the required efficiency was a daunting task in itself.

In 2007, three agreements between the Government and the opposition were attempted but then rejected by the regional civic movements, resulting in strikes, work stoppages and blockades. Still, each time discussions resumed. Although leading to some progress in the constitutional process, it was insufficient to break the deadlock in the Constituent Assembly. The *first multi-party agreement*, reached in February, made it possible to agree that articles would be approved by simple majority, but the overall Constitutional text would require a two-thirds majority vote. Articles that failed to reach that percentage should be approved by referendum.

*During the Constituent Assembly, they [the civic movements] sought to politically defeat the Government and prevent the passage of a new Constitution... They failed because their actions were not suitable for a positive relationship between their interests and the Government.*⁷

Carlos Böhr
Former Senator of PODEMOS

*The civic leadership was determined to do anything to prevent the agreements.*¹⁰

Juan Cristóbal Soruco
Journalist

I was quite impressed by an old politician who once said something that usually applies to alcoholics. An alcoholic in recovery would say, «Today I have gained one day without alcohol, I will see what happens tomorrow.» This politician, playing with words, said: «Today we have sabotaged the Assembly, we will see what happens tomorrow».¹¹

*Samuel Doria Medina,
Head of Unidad Nacional*

The Constituent Assembly seemed to run smoothly until May, but several actions during the ruling party's simultaneous presentation of minority and majority reports led to the erosion of the fragile agreement and fueled confrontation. In June, two latent issues emerged on the horizon of political conflict: the demand for the "full capital" status of Sucre, host to the Constituent Assembly, and reduced revenues from the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons (IDH) to regional budgets.

Chuquisaca civic leaders once again expressed the historical demand to declare Sucre capital of Bolivia and move the branches of government from La Paz to Sucre. They were supported by the civic movements of opposing regions in order to attract them as allies. These actions also served to exacerbate the conflict and to boycott the work of the Assembly.

Although the Constituent Assembly was the initial backdrop of these conflicts, the lack of political agreement between the government and the opposition, coupled with the increasing influence of civic movements, moved the confrontation into the street, resulting in constant and spiraling clashes and riots throughout the year. All this contributed to the deterioration of the working environment in the Constituent Assembly leading to its complete standstill by mid-August 2007.

A *second multi-party agreement* was then organized with the purpose of discussing the extension of the Constituent Assembly's period of deliberations. The reality proved that after one year of work it had been impossible for the Assembly to reach consensus on a draft document. The commissions began to deliver results by the end of July but all the necessary consensuses had not been reached, and the period of operation prescribed for the Assembly was over.

Given this situation, a formal negotiation process was subsequently set up involving parties represented in Congress, which also represented a majority in the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly's rules and procedures, and its operating period were discussed. An agreement was reached to enact a Law on Expansion of the Constituent Assembly for four additional months, until December 2007.

While conducting these negotiations, the Government promulgated the Regulations of the new Land Law, which

had been suspended earlier that year. The reactions of civic movements were swift and also rejected the Expansion Law.

Violence boiled over in September when college students in favor of establishing Sucre as the capital attacked the Gran Mariscal Theatre of Sucre, the venue of the Assembly and prevented the Constituent Assembly from working for over a month.

The *third multi-party agreement* took place in October-November 2007. It was marked by the creation of the “Supra-Party Political Council” under the auspices of the Office of Vice President of the Republic with the participation of the 16 constituent political forces. The Council sought to reconcile the primary controversial issues of the constitutional process. All parties, except the main opposition party, PODEMOS, signed an agreement on the type and organization of government branches, the ownership of natural resources, the forms of ownership and the regime of autonomies – recognizing the municipal, departmental, regional and indigenous autonomies.

However, Chuquisaca civic leaders insisted on the full capital status demand over all the rest of demands. In addition, the Government decided to reallocate the income received by the regions from the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons in order to finance the “Bono Dignidad” (“dignity bonus”) for people over 60 years old.

The multi-party agreement failed to stop the mobilizations that obstructed the plenary sessions from being conducted. The civic movements had effectively blocked the Constituent Assembly with increasingly violent demonstrations. The Supra-Party Political Council was dissolved, and the ruling party declared the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly in Sucre closed. Never again did the Constitutional Assembly held a plenary session in Sucre.

Instead, its last plenary session was held on November 23 at La Glorieta Military High School, on the outskirts of Sucre. Only representatives of the MAS attended the session. The ruling party approved the main body of the new Constitution amid violent protests and clashes and police presence. Then, the majority belonging to the ruling party in Congress authorized transferring the Constituent Assembly

The demand [for full capital status] prevailed over the rest due to the support provided by “the East,” and progressively, became the center of all political conflicts within and outside the Constituent Assembly.¹²

Jorge Lazarte
Political scientist

With these tragic events the experience of the Constituent Assembly closes in Sucre. The Assembly will never come back (to Sucre) and will meet again in Oruro where the (Constituent) text will be approved in the absence of the opposition and then sent to Parliament (Congress), which will assume it as the basis to be taken to referendum.¹³

*Fernando Prado
Urban planner and researcher*

There were two agendas [that of the ruling party and that of the opposition] that seemed to be irreconcilable and resulted in a situation of confrontation.

*Armando Ortuño
Director PAPEP Bolivia
Interview*

to Oruro, where the full constitutional text was approved on December 9, with support of the ruling party and some members of the opposition.

Most representatives of the opposition did not participate in the sessions at La Glorieta and Oruro, arguing that these were not called according to agreed procedures and demonstrating their rejection of what they considered to be an imposition. To some observers this disagreement destroyed the last vestiges of trust among the political forces in the Assembly.

Therefore, the Constituent Assembly, as a space for dialogue and agreement had failed. Throughout the country a feeling of crisis and uncertainty prevailed.

None of the party agreements reached in 2007 was able to stop polarization of the political scenario, confirming that the political party-system had lost centrality and leadership. However, precisely because of this failure, a divide between opposition parties and civic movements emerged. This trend deepened over the following months. The achievement of some partial party agreements, furthermore, proved that it was possible to find viable solutions through parliamentary agreements. This experience would be instrumental a year later, in the Congressional dialogue of October 2008, when the constitutional text was finally approved.

The attempts at dialogue and the agreement for the approval of the new State Political Constitution: 2008

In early 2008, two polarized political approaches coexisted in the country. On the one hand, the Government was trying to establish the conditions for a referendum to ratify the Constitution since it did not have the necessary majority. On the other hand, opposition groups were rejecting the Constitution approved in Oruro, claiming that it was approved under irregular conditions and, as a result, opened an independent approval process of the “autonomies” in four departments in the East and South. There were several failed attempts at dialogue throughout the year until violence spilled over in Pando and all stakeholders had to sit down to dialogue.

It is worth mentioning the fundamental role played by the National Electoral Court (CNE) over this year to maintain open institutional solutions in the country, as discussed below.

In January, a “roundtable”¹⁴ convened by the Government was established with the purpose of discussing the distribution of the IDHs, and harmonize the draft Constitution and the demands for departmental autonomy, all of which required revising the constitutional text. This attempt failed due to several factors.

First, an ambivalent situation prevailed in which the actors sat down to negotiate but continued to confront each other in the public space. Second, the prominence and radicalization of civic regional movements operating in parallel with the political parties. Third, the lack of established procedures, structure and organization which resulted in a dialogue lacking rules, an agenda and core base documents. Fourth, the broadcasting of the meeting which inhibited the development of an open and frank dialogue.¹⁵

Four referenda on autonomy were conducted between February and March in opposition regions, all of which were rejected by the Government and by the National Electoral Court. Ignoring the national decision, the electoral courts of the departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Pando and Beni, held *de facto* autonomy referenda between May and July. These events contributed to the exacerbation of the conflict with the Government and generated a climate of high tension.

In May, the government reconvened the dialogue, but the opposition rejected it, feeling victorious after winning the referendum on autonomy in Santa Cruz (May 4). In August, the President and four prefects were ratified in a recall referendum.¹⁶

Although authorities of the main opposition regions were also ratified, these results were instrumental in changing the correlation of forces in the country as they demonstrated the high level of national commitment to the President. The results also showed the fracture between the parliamentary opposition, which had convened the referendum along with the government majority, and the opposition prefects, who disagreed.¹⁷

2008 was the year of living dangerously – in danger of conflict, confrontation, and polarization; in danger of splitting into two Bolivias.

*José Luis Exeni
Former President of CNE*

...The presence of officials of international organizations as “observers” to mitigate the distrust that prevailed among dialogue participants was also new.¹⁹

*Fernando Mayorga
Sociologist*

The President immediately convened opposition prefects to discuss and negotiate three central issues: the signing of a fiscal pact to resolve the demand for the recovery of the IDH, the harmonization of departmental autonomy statutes with the State Political Constitution project and the agreed appointment of members of the Supreme Court and other State agencies. The dialogue broke down three days later and the opposition called a work strike which triggered the occupation of State agencies, and violence in four opposition departments.

In September, the Government called for a referendum through a Supreme Decree to approve the new Constitution. The CNE rejected it and announced that it would not carry out the process until the Bolivian Congress passed a law to officially authorize the initiatives. The country plunged into violence and unrest, which included street blockades, occupations and destruction of national institutions, and clashes between autonomy supporters and security forces.

The turning point that changed this scenario and forced negotiations and dialogue came as a result from the violent events in El Porvenir, department of Pando, on September 11, where at least 11 people were killed and 50 injured.

National Dialogue in Cochabamba and in Congress¹⁸

Between September 18 and October 5, 2008, a new dialogue process was convened and held in Cochabamba, bringing together the President, Vice President, political parties and opposition prefects. This time, the dialogue included the participation of approximately 20 international observers including the United Nations (UN), the Organization of American States (OAS), UNASUR and the European Union, as well as the catholic, evangelical and methodist churches. The press was not allowed in.

Some key elements helped to improve the conditions for dialogue. First, reducing the number of participants facilitated the establishment of a viable negotiation agenda.²⁰ Second, the media did not attend the dialogue sessions. Third, the

establishment of two technical committees helped to advance the harmonization of the draft Constitution and the autonomy statutes. Fourth, the international presence exerted a role of observation and moral pressure on participants. And fifth, the growing public demand for dialogue and for ending violence as expressed by several polls published during the process.

After nearly two weeks of grueling sessions, the Government and opposition prefects were unable to reach agreements despite the significant adjustments to the Constitution approved in Oruro, particularly on autonomy statutes (decentralized model), and the identification of an agenda of sensitive issues in the Constitution that needed to be discussed and, eventually, modified.

Perhaps none of the sectors involved in the Cochabamba dialogue were ready to sign a final agreement. The Government was not prepared to compromise on several issues and the opposition, represented by opposition prefects, lacked the political strength to negotiate all issues in the Constitution, beyond autonomy.

However, dialogue eased political tensions and put a stop to the spiraling conflict – something that seemed almost unachievable in early September. In fact, the peasant and indigenous movements had begun marching towards the city of Santa Cruz, home to a majority of the opposition, which many feared would end in violence. Observers to the dialogue made significant efforts to avoid such a scenario, and in the end, the march did not reach the city.

Negotiations in the National Congress at La Paz began a few days after the closure of the Cochabamba dialogue but lacked an explicit plan on how to proceed. The only thing that was clear was that the political forces in Congress should resolve and agree on a set of differences in the new constitution so as to achieve the two-thirds majority needed to pass the Law convening the Constituent Referendum. This required obtaining the votes of most members of the opposition.

Although some claimed that this task should fall to the Constituent Assembly, and the agreements would subsequently be rendered irregular, others maintained that the process was legitimate as it responded to the

We made great progress. In fact, the text on autonomy issues in the Constitution was drafted in Cochabamba, not in the Congress.

*Carlos Böhr
Former Senator PODEMOS
Interview*

... The presence of international observers was a kind of moral coercion... Obviously, we all made greater efforts to consolidate that dialogue... nobody wanted it to break down in the presence of representatives of the international community. That helped to consolidate the dialogue space, particularly with the departmental prefects.

*Carlos Romero
Minister of Autonomy
Interview*

.... The twenty (people) killed in Pando, the threat of civil war and the danger of dividing the country, had more influence than the arguments in favor of addressing constitutional forms, regardless of the soundness of their legal bases.

... The social acceptance of the political pact was so overwhelming that no formal legal challenge, whether constitutional or not, will be able to weaken or minimize its practical implementation.²¹

Carlos Böhr
Former Senator PODEMOS

public demand for a solution to the conflict and, in the end, massively supported the decision.

On October 21, 2008, a new draft constitution was finally agreed upon and Law 3942, which calls for a referendum for a decision on the new draft constitution, was promulgated. The new State Political Constitution of Bolivia was approved in January 2009 by 61% of voters, thus ending the corresponding cycle of conflict initiated in 2006.

- 1 Movimiento al Socialismo [*Movement Toward Socialism*].
- 2 Lowland refers to southern and eastern departments, particularly Santa Cruz, Pando, Tarija and Beni.
- 3 Lazarte, Jorge. "Crisis y percepciones en la crisis. Actores y estrategias". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 304.
- 4 Mayorga, Fernando. "Conflictos y acuerdos políticos 2006-2008". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 52.
- 5 See Annex 2: Conflict and Dialogue Timeline
- 6 Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 117.
- 7 Interview with Senator Carlos Böhrt by Raúl Peñaranda. See Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 120.
- 8 According to Jorge Lazarte, the opposition was formed by conservative political parties –rejected by the majority of the population in the 2005 general election and in the July 2006 constituent election– and by an emerging civic social front (civic committees supported by prefectural authorities in the departments of Beni, Pando, Tarija and Santa Cruz – the *Crescent* or *Media Luna*) that fulfilled political roles despite their social nature. The civic committees were organized in the National Council for Democracy (CONALDE) and, despite its political inexperience, played political roles in each department. Their performance was characterized by their "ideology and regionalism" (2009, p. 337).
- 9 Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional*. FES-ILDIS y fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 114.
- 10 Interview with Juan Cristóbal Soruco by Raúl Peñaranda. See: Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 118.
- 11 Interview with Samuel Doria Medina by Raúl Peñaranda. See: Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 120.
- 12 Lazarte, Jorge. "Crisis y percepciones en la crisis. Actores y estrategias". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 295-360.
- 13 Prado, Fernando, "Conflicto y pacto político 2006-2008: Una Visión desde Santa Cruz". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 155.
- 14 More than a roundtable, it was an attempt for political negotiation.
- 15 For further information refer to: Lazarte, Jorge. "Crisis y percepciones en la crisis. Actores y estrategias". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 295-360, and Mayorga, Fernando. "Conflictos y acuerdos políticos 2006-2008". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 51-92.
- 16 The results of the recall referendum confirmed the President in office by 67.7% of the vote and four prefects of the Crescent with percentages ranging from 54 to 70%. The prefects of La Paz and Cochabamba, both opponents of the government, were recalled. CONALDE protests intensified. In general, as the opposition weakens, the popularity of the President is confirmed and strengthened, also increasing his electoral support.
- 17 PODEMOS senators passed the law convening the national recall referendum. Both Government and opposition were surprised by this decision.
- 18 Rather than a "dialogue", it was a political negotiation between government, prefects and MAS and opposition politicians, with the presence of national and international observers.
- 19 Mayorga, Fernando. "Conflictos y acuerdos políticos 2006-2008". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 80.
- 20 The number of opposition prefects decreased as a result of the revocation of the prefects of Cochabamba and La Paz and the detention of the prefect of Pando. Therefore, CONALDE was represented by the prefects of Tarija, Santa Cruz and Beni.
- 21 Böhrt, Carlos; Carlos Alarcón y Carlos Romero. *Hacia una Constitución Democrática, viable y plural. Tres miradas*. FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, 2009, p.64-66.

III. The United Nations addressing crisis and conflict

The United Nations in Bolivia: mediation and facilitation initiatives

The UN played different roles throughout Bolivian conflicts and crises including facilitator and mediator, as well as technical and policy advisor. It has also been recognized for its impartiality, prestige and credibility, in addition to its management and dialogue abilities.

The United Nations in Bolivia is influential, has a tradition and credibility, and opens doors everywhere it goes. Its greatest asset is its capacity for management and dialogue.

*Grover Yapura, journalist
Former Director of La Razón newspaper
Interview*

In 2003, following the resignation of Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada, Vice-President Carlos Mesa assumed the Presidency and asked the United Nations to mediate the ongoing conflict. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed José Antonio Ocampo, then the UN's Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, as his special envoy. Beginning in 2004, Ocampo visited Bolivia several times, facilitating discussions between the political parties and mediating between the social movements and the government.

In 2006, at the request of Morales, Ocampo began to advise the Government on economic planning, despite the new government's strong skepticism about the role of bilateral and multilateral organizations in the country. The new Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, appointed Jan Egeland to replace Ocampo, but the government was no longer interested in this type of UN support.

In addition to the direct efforts of the Secretary General, the role of the UN system in each country includes conflict prevention, which is undertaken by its various agencies. In the case of Bolivia, prevention efforts were deployed primarily by the Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose Resident Representative also serves as the UN Resident Coordinator.

UNDP Bolivia Country Office and conflict prevention

The constitutional process conducted between 2006 and 2008 provided UNDP Bolivia with an opportunity to contribute to democratic governance in the country.

Furthermore, by accompanying the process, the country office had the opportunity to test the capacities, knowledge and creativity of its staff in a context of political crisis and social conflict, and add a unique value to conflict prevention.

During this period, the office faced two major challenges. First, the UN mandate is clear when it comes to open conflict: the leadership of operations rests with the Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs (DPA). However, the mandate is ambiguous and leadership remains unclear. Furthermore, there are major limitations with regards to conflict prevention when countries face political challenges but not institutional breakdown.

The second challenge was the absence, for more than a year, of a UNDP Resident Representative –who also acts as UN Coordinator– in Bolivia. This absence affected the continuity and consistency of the organization's strategic actions in the country. Furthermore, the situation eroded the United Nation's public profile as well as its capacity for dialogue and joint action with other international stakeholders. This situation changed by mid-July 2008 with the arrival of the new Resident Representative Yoriko Yasukawa who, according to many observers, brought consistency back to the organization's interventions, and became an important partner for other international community members concerned about the situation. Beginning in August 2008, the

As in other cases in which the United Nations engages in prevention efforts without the benefit of a clear mandate, effective prevention depends on the skills and creativity of country staff and headquarters.²

new Resident Representative made relevant decisions that guided the UNDP and the UN System in Cochabamba and the Congress dialogue processes, and during subsequent events.

Meanwhile, unrest grew in Bolivia. In 2007, the UNDP office was forced to review, deepen and expand its efforts in conflict prevention in order to address the situation. A strategic plan was designed to establish ties between governance and social cohesion efforts. The strategy would support the National Electoral Court, facilitate social dialogue and conflict resolution processes, promote political debate and support the work of the Constituent Assembly, primarily through sharing of experiences and lessons learned in other countries in the region undergoing similar processes.¹

Existing capacity

UNDP Human Development Reports and PAPEP form the backbone of office operations and are widely recognized for their quality.³

The office began by strengthening its existing capacities for producing and disseminating strategic information. Over the course of several years, Human Development Reports had gained broad recognition for their capacity to generate information on the political and social trends in Bolivia. Moreover, they had built a reputation for rigorously and accurately addressing key development issues.

At the time of the impasse in Constituent Assembly in October 2007, PAPEP commissioned a study on the issue of autonomies, which was used during the convocation of the consultation committees.

Similarly, the Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios (PAPEP) project, although more recently established, was being developed as a tool for political and strategic analysis that contributed quality input to decision-making. This project was born in Bolivia during 2003-2005 within the framework of Human Development Report activities and was later integrated into the UNDP Governance Team in Bolivia. The PAPEP is currently being replicated in other countries. One key element of PAPEP is that it focused on political analysis of specific issues and practices and the production of information for policy dialogue at a crucial moment of the crisis affecting the country.

*Antonio Aranibar
Director, PAPEP Regional*

Establishment of the democratic governance team

A second factor enabled the office's strategic actions in early 2008: the establishment of a solid and professional democratic governance team, with support from the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

The team was organized around a number of the traditional conflict prevention areas, such as conflict transformation, peace and development, democratic strengthening of political parties and civic organizations, and the strengthening of democratic institutions; but it also had the added value of exploring new emerging areas, characteristic of the Bolivian context. In recent years, these have included support of legislative development, the implementation of the autonomy process and an emphasis on social movements and indigenous peoples.

The work of the governance team led to at least four key outcomes that contributed, in general, to improved effectiveness and to the political positioning of the UNDP office. First, the actions provided the team with density, depth and strategic presence, allowing for a continuous evaluation of political developments. In turn, it also enabled the timely development of relevant actions required by the existing complex and changing context.

Second, building trusting relationships with a range of political and social stakeholders, who were often direct counterparts of the projects and programs, facilitated and ensured UNDP's ongoing access to these stakeholders, even at critical moments, when political polarization in the country led to the closing of discussion forums.

Third, the UNDP country office took the lead in cooperation in some key areas of democratic governance in the country.

Finally, UNDP became a source of technical advice and strategic information for the UN System, international cooperation and groups from Bolivian society.

By mid-2008, the conflict in Bolivia worsened and became increasingly confrontational. Several attempts at dialogue

In 2007, the governance team was very limited. BCPR understood the challenge and devoted funds to the democratic governance team, its structure and capacity.

*Armando Ortuño
Director, PAPEP Bolivia*

UNDP had assisted the constitutional process, through more traditional sources of support. The projects [of the governance area] helped to establish trusting relationships with key leaders and stakeholders. That is, the projects served as channels for reaching these stakeholders.

*Christian Jetté
Coordinator, UNDP Bolivia
Governance Practice Area*

failed, both in multi-party consultation and in Congress, and even in the presidential call for referendum. The dialogue track, as well as partners who could develop it, was practically exhausted.

The UNDP office and the Democratic Governance team were already working within this complex political “checkerboard”, promoting meeting spaces, building relationships of trust, exploring scenarios, producing and disseminating strategic information. However, they soon had to test these capacities in order to contribute, along with other national and international organizations, to a peaceful resolution of the tensions in the country.

1 Segura, R. & Bellamy, C. Conflict Prevention in Bolivia and Ecuador: The Role of the International Community. Center on International Cooperation. New York, February 2009.

2 The strategic plan resulted from the collaboration between the United Nations Framework and country teams, and was based on the analysis of the main challenges facing social cohesion in Bolivia: inequality, disputes over natural resources, demands for local and indigenous autonomy, legitimacy of representative institutions and limited capacity of the Bolivian State in the design of policies to promote participation, equity and efficiency.

3 Idem.

IV. Dialogue and agreement: enabling conditions

Questions arise when reviewing the escalating conflict in Bolivia during 2008: What finally motivated the parties to sit down to talks in Cochabamba in September of that year? And what, despite the absence of an agreement, enabled stakeholders to continue the dialogue in Congress? What conditions facilitated the agreement and made a political solution to the crisis possible?

The analysis of these questions inevitably leads to exploration of at least three dimensions that facilitated the resolution of the conflict: the citizen dimension, referring to the pressure of public opinion that called for peace and dialogue; the process dimension, represented by key inputs that created conditions for the agreement; and the political dimension, involving the recovery of political power by political parties, as well as the determination and will of the Government and the opposition to agree on a solution.

These surveys allowed us to consistently confirm that the citizens of Bolivia wanted the stakeholders to sit down, negotiate and talk.

*Yoriko Yasukawa
Coordinator of the United Nations System in Bolivia
Interview*

... Violence had come to a point where people were willing to accept any solution to take the country out of the ongoing situation.

*Carlos Böhr
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview*

The citizen dimension

The public demand for the cessation of violence, dialogue and conflict resolution

Throughout 2007 and 2008, citizens witnessed a downward spiral of confrontation and violence rarely seen in the country, one that increasingly impacted everyday lives. Airports and roads were blocked, and public institutions were occupied and destroyed. Demonstrations and riots also contributed to mounting fears in the social psyche of civil war and division of the country.

In 2008, diverse citizen voices publicly and progressively urged the government and opposition to dialogue, but they went unheard. It was not until the peasant massacre in Pando that politicians finally paid attention to the public demand for peace and an end to violence. Several PAPEP¹ commissioned public opinion polls reflected this demand and were shared at several critical moments of the dialogue process from September to October 2008.

There was also a general awareness among the population that, in some ways, the dialogue would provide solutions to the conflict, although perhaps not conventional.

This was proven by the fact that while Congress was not formally responsible for amending the text of the Constituent Assembly, the country accepted its amendment of the Constitution passed in Oruro.

The public demand for peace, crystallized in the public opinion, put pressure on the Government and the opposition to resolve the conflict, once and for all.

The process dimension

Spaces for dialogue and trust building

In late 2007, the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy (fBDM)¹ began promoting informal meetings, which opened an important space for dialogue where politicians of different parties could interact. The purpose was to discuss aspects of the constitutional process, without

the pressure of having to reach concrete agreements at a time of increasing polarization and political crisis in the country.

Opposition Senator Carlos Böhrh and former Assemblyman and Minister of Autonomy of the MAS, Carlos Romero both attended those meetings. They could not have imagined at that early stage that they would become the main architects of the agreement reached on October 21, in which the Congress agreed to the new draft constitution and enacted the act convening the constitutional referendum.

Both politicians were perhaps naturally inclined and open to dialogue and agreement. In addition, Böhrh and Romero, like other politicians involved, were able to build and deepen a relationship of trust in the common dialogue space fostered by the fBDM. This also facilitated the coordination required among stakeholders with advocacy potential and allowed a joint analysis of the contents of the draft Constitution and the autonomy statutes. This even led to the publication of studies on the harmonization of the two texts.²

There were also other informal spheres that encouraged exchange between politicians. These were promoted by national and international organizations that used their offices and contacts to promote the need for dialogue and negotiation.³

The deep and shared understanding, the knowledge accumulated on the issues and challenges of the constitutional project, and the trust built between politicians were instrumental in facilitating agreement at critical moments of the negotiation.

The development of sound technical proposals prior to the crisis

As previously mentioned, a group of politicians from the opposition and the ruling party came together to develop efforts and activities within the framework of the dialogue and debate promoted by fBMD beginning in 2007. Beyond building trust, the draft Constitution of Oruro and the autonomy statutes were reviewed. The two parties shared thoughts, views and opinions and developed technical proposals to solve sensitive aspects of the draft constitution.

Carlos Romero (Government) and Carlos Böhrh (opposition) had worked together in various publications and workshops. There was a panel discussion on the Constitution financed by German and Dutch NGOs. This was important because it had already established a platform for discussion, maybe not at the highest level, but it was the beginning of an understanding on the technical matters of the Constitution.

*Kenneth Bell
European Union Ambassador
Interview*

In the midst of the crisis and under a lot of pressure, these proposals were essential in saving time and contributing to the negotiations in Congress. Moreover, there was already a critical mass of politicians with a profound understanding of the changes required to unravel the knots of the conflict, in addition to the capacity to find viable solutions that would be acceptable to all those involved.

Between late 2007 and early 2008, we began to hold meetings gathering two PODEMOS senators and the President of Deputies, Edmundo Novillo, Carlos Romero and someone else from MAS. We began to exchange our views on the process and the draft. Those meetings were gaining ground, time and trust. It was a trust-building process, most needed at that moment...

*Carlos Böhr
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview*

International observers

The observer role requested of the United Nations and other international cooperation organizations, including the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union and UNASUR, was instrumental in bringing confidence to the process and ensuring the continuation of dialogue.⁴

This process was closely tied to international concern about the outcome of the Bolivian conflict, as shown by UNASUR's strong support for the Government during the most difficult moment of the conflict, between August and September 2008. The OAS also sent multiple missions of high-level representatives during that period.

The invitation of these international organizations to participate in the process, however, was unexpected and occurred just days or hours before the start of the dialogue in Cochabamba in September 2008. This process took place following intense negotiations between the Prefect of Tarija, Mario Cossio, and Vice President Alvaro García Linera, who agreed to hold a dialogue between the opposition and the government, urgently needed in response to the violent events in Pando and the risk of similar events occurring in other parts of the country.

There was no clear definition of the role of international observers or the rules, phases or methodologies of the process. Lacking much of the information, the observers arrived to the scene with more curiosity than expectations, thinking that they would fly from La Paz in the morning and be back home in time for dinner. They never thought that they would stay for several days and that they should have packed at least one suitcase.

Initially, the Government was not very open to international involvement in the dialogue, perhaps as a principle of sovereignty, since this meant admitting the opposition's distrust of the government or because they believed that the problem could still be resolved internally. Most actors agree on these perceptions.

Despite their role as mere observers, the selection of international observers may have been a topic of discussion prior to the dialogue negotiation. It was reported that the Government perceived certain delegations as more reliable while the opposition trusted more others. Hence the group of observers included different organizations and delegations in an attempt to balance trust. This later helped this group to effectively fulfill its task.

The role of observers, at least officially, was to serve as silent witnesses: only listening and being present. In practice, the international presence did much more than that. It provided the necessary confidence for stakeholders to sit down and talk at a time of high distrust and uncertainty about the outcome of the process.

International observers also exerted moral pressure on and supported stakeholders in reaching agreement and avoiding the breakdown of dialogue. This was particularly important for moderate stakeholders -who needed support against the radical sectors, even if solely moral in nature- in reaching an agreement. Some of these international organizations also mediated and sought to facilitate an agreement in the early days of dialogue in Cochabamba.⁵

As part of this dialogue process, the limited role initially assigned to observers changed when the prefects withdrew from the negotiations, leaving only their technical teams behind.⁶

The government then proposed that observers witness the signing of a document containing partial agreements, with the participation of official prefecture representatives only. The observers decided not to participate in this event, which ultimately did not occur due to the absence of some of the participants in the dialogue. Observers also urged the opposition to put aside radical positions and continue the negotiation.

We got to Cochabamba thinking that it was about opening dialogue and its organization and that we would be back on the same day. But the situation forced us to stay there for several days, there was no alternative.

*Armando Ortuño
Director PAPEP Bolivia
Interview*

The government did not want international observers and facilitators. But, in the end, they became facilitators and witnesses.

*Rubén Costas
Prefect of Santa Cruz
Interview*

The scenario of political polarization required a very careful support not limited to witnessing the dialogue process; new roles arose, as for example dialogue managers. These dialogue managers established a series of steps, actions, negotiations with both the ruling party and the opposition to administrate the political moments, to regulate procedures, bring the parties and citizens closer, to seek alternatives that would unlock some issues that had polarized the dialogue. The role they assumed in supporting the process was crucial.

*Carlos Romero
Minister of Autonomy
Interview*

Also, the international presence was somehow a guarantee that once settled, the agreement would be respected ... Our presence granted more confidence to participants.

*Kenneth Bell
European Union Ambassador
Interview*

We are grateful for the strong public recognition expressed by political actors and the President for our role as facilitators.

*Nigel Baker
United Kingdom Ambassador
Interview*

A commission later called “underground” or “parallel” established by PODEMOS Senators Carlos Böhrh and Roberto Ruiz, former MAS Assemblyman Carlos Romero, and President of the Chamber of Deputies, Edmundo Novillo, had already held periodical meetings. All were convinced that rapprochement between the two groups was necessary to reach an agreement that would pacify the country.⁹

*Raúl Peñaranda
Journalist*

The dialogue in Cochabamba concluded without reaching a final agreement. However, this first stage was crucial in dismantling the atmosphere of civil unrest that had prevailed in September 2008 and proved strategic in prompting dialogue in Congress, where international presence was also requested.

In this new stage in Congress, observers continued to play a supporting role, including some mediation and information facilitation tasks at specific moments, which helped to encourage stakeholders and provide confidence that agreements would be respected.

The international presence was valued both by the politicians and the population. Several politicians recognized the commitment of observers who participated in the process in Congress. They were present day and night as they were required to witness any possible agreement. Also, most of the population considered their presence useful for dialogue.⁷

Track one and track two negotiations

Both formal or “track one” negotiations and parallel “track two” negotiations, including informal conversations and meetings with political, social and private sector stakeholders, were instrumental in reaching the agreement.

“Track two” negotiations acted as a conveyor belt between the government and the opposition. It fueled major negotiations and represented an important opportunity to smooth out differences and identify plausible ways to solve the conflict and measure its social feasibility. One example of these actions was the so-called «underground or parallel» table, composed of Senators, former Assemblypersons and parliamentarians, who had met since 2007 in an attempt to find solutions to the conflict.

Despite its name, the table was not really secret or underground, since the parties knew of its existence. Rather, it was a mechanism used at different times, depending on the situation, to reconcile positions and agree on amendments to the draft constitution between political operators from both sides, involving different actors and purposes at various times.

The pre-agreement between the Prefect of Tarija, Mario Cossio, considered at that time by many politicians as the most open to dialogue among opposition prefects, and the Government was another example of “track two” diplomacy that managed to bring these stakeholders together for talks in Cochabamba.

The negotiations began on September 12, just one day after the Pando massacre, and lasted four days. It was an extremely complex and difficult process, because it involved multiple discussions with various stakeholders to satisfy CONALDE, which then brought together the civic movements. It also involved the preparation and negotiation of at least four documents to define a consensus agenda and convince prefects on the inevitable need to sit down and negotiate in Cochabamba.⁸

During the final period of the negotiation, arrangements reached with friends, family, local stakeholders and politicians close to the civic leaders were remarkable in softening positions and in contributing to the agreement enacted in the act convening the Constitutional Referendum.

Carlos Hugo Molina [reknown intellectual from Santa Cruz] and others probably worked in building a potential agreement. Jorge Quiroga also made a few calls to all the people to promote a more flexible position... even Rubén’s brother, Pepe Costas, was contacted to convince him to talk to his brother.¹⁰

*Roberto Ruiz
Former Senator, PODEMOS*

The political dimension

Recovering political power and a divided opposition

Of note are the two types of discrepancies that appeared as the negotiations progressed: discrepancies between the opposition parties and regional movements, and within the opposition ranks. This allowed moderate politicians to take the lead and distance themselves from radical positions that limited the possibility of achieving a political agreement.

The rift between the opposition political forces in the Congress and regional stakeholders and movements resulted in part from the first group’s rejection of the second group’s belligerent and confrontational positions, which prevented the political negotiations that politicians were accustomed to.

It was also decisive that traditional parties became aware that in subordinating themselves to regional movements,

In the process, they realized that this path was leading to failure. In addition, the country was losing its basic political tools at the national level. The logic of the strategy was to regain political power, to become spokespeople for the government and put an end to their subordinate role to the regions.¹¹

*Fernando Prado
Political scientist*

they were losing prominence and centrality in the political arena. They realized that this would lead to their disappearance, even when they shared ideological and class similarities.

In this sense, the divide appeared in part because of the logic of “regaining political power,” which had been lost as a result of the crisis of the centrist political parties, who were unable to channel the regional demands.

Similarly, the opposition experienced severe tensions, divisions and a lack of coordination, particularly in the last stage of negotiations in Congress. The main opposition party, PODEMOS, was split between the “moderate wing” of senators Roberto Ruiz and Carlos Böhr, and eventually joined by its leader Jorge Quiroga, and “hardline” leaders of Santa Cruz. The latter, which was pressured by regional stakeholders, hindered the agreement with the government up until the end of the process.

The opposition parties took the final vote en bloc, except PODEMOS, which opted to allow its members to vote freely, many of whom abstained or voted against the agreement when voting in the Congress plenary.

However, what was important was that even though it was uncertain whether an agreement would eventually be reached, all parties decided to continue the dialogue process. Admittedly, this decision represented a commitment to the unity and peace of the people of Bolivia, beyond partisan political interests.

The decision by a majority of main opposition party representatives to support the results of the Congress negotiations finally provided the opportunity to conclude the political negotiation and reach an agreement.

Political will and determination of the Government and the opposition

It seems obvious that even with all of the above conditions met, the agreement would not have been possible without the will and firm political determination to seek a solution to the conflict, both from the Government and the opposition, or at least part of it.

And both had to make major concessions in the final moments of the negotiation. On the one hand, although official spokesmen had expressed that changes would not be made to the draft under any circumstances, the Government agreed to significant adjustments approved in Oruro. On the other hand, the opposition agreed to negotiate on the basis of a constitutional text that had been considered illegitimate and illegal.

Similarly, in order to reach an agreement, the Government and opposition agreed to changes on key issues such as land tenure mechanisms, natural resource management, patterns of selection/election of Legislative and Judicial officers, and autonomy issues, among others.

Definitely, the agreement would not have been possible without the will of the Bolivian political class.

... The clear political determination shown by Evo Morales, Alvaro García Linera, and at the last moment, Carlos Romero as Minister of Autonomy, in the heart of governmental power, paved the way for the final agreement. Also a group emerged from the opposition that finally adds Tuto Quiroga, who decided to support the solution. ...

*Carlos Böhrt
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview*

1 The Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy (fBDM), supported by several European NGOs, has set as its mission: the promotion of democratic dialogue, support for the efforts of political parties in their relationship with civil society and the strengthening of the political system, institutions and democratic values.

2 Two books were published by the fBMD and the Friederich Ebert Stiftung Foundation between April and August 2008. See: Böhr, Carlos; Carlos Alarcón & Carlos Romero. *Hacia una Constitución Democrática, viable y plural. Tres miradas.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, 2008. And Böhr, Carlos, Silvia Chávez Reyes and Andrés Torrez Villa Gómez. *Puentes para una Diálogo Democrático. Proyectos de Constitución y Estatutos: compatibilidades y diferencias.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, August 2008.

3 The extraordinary work of rapprochement of positions and mediation conducted by Guido Riveros (fBDM), the Ambassador of the United Kingdom and the UNDP Resident Representative Yoriko Yasukawa, to promote dialogue was referred to in several interviews.

4 Since 2007, the OAS has conducted several rapprochements and dialogue efforts with stakeholders by sending high-level missions.

5 Several respondents noted the significant efforts of UNASUR representative Juan Gabriel Valdez, and the OAS delegate, Dante Caputo in bringing the positions of government and opposition prefects closer in the first week of the Cochabamba dialogue.

6 The Cochabamba dialogue was suspended after a citizen of Yacuiba was arrested in Tarija.

7 Special Report for UNDP, MORI Equipos Consultores Asociados, October 2008. The survey included the cities of Santa Cruz, La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Tarija, Oruro, Potosí, Sucre, Trinidad and Cobija.

8 For details on the steps and actors involved, see: Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 165-176.

9 Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 162.

10 Interview with Senator Roberto Ruiz by Raúl Peñaranda. Ver: Peñaranda, Raúl. "Crónica del Proceso Constituyente." *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: memorias del acuerdo constitucional.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, March 2009, p. 170.

11 Prado, Fernando, "Conflicto y pacto político 2006-2008: Una Visión desde Santa Cruz". *Del Conflicto al Diálogo: Una Mirada hacia el Futuro.* FES-ILDIS and fBDM. La Paz, November 2009, p. 172.

V. The contribution of UNDP Bolivia

Surveys conducted by the United Nations clearly showed that Bolivians wanted political agreements, political stability and a much quieter environment... they contributed to the pressure needed to reach an agreement.

*Nigel Baker
Ambassador of the United Kingdom
Interview*

Throughout 2008, a number of conflict prevention and management efforts were developed to strengthen the country's deteriorated governance. UNDP helped to overcome this crisis by supporting the efforts of national actors with strategic information, fostering dialogue with various political and social stakeholders, and providing strategic advice and management, international observation of national dialogue and moral pressure.

This contribution was important throughout the year and particularly relevant in the last quarter, when the Government and the opposition finally sat down to talks in Cochabamba and in the Congress, which led to a political agreement and to end the crisis.

Strategic information and communications

Surveys

Between May and September 2008, the United Nations, through PAPEP, regularly commissioned opinion polls in 10 cities on issues related to the current situation, governance and public policy. These surveys were used to guide the UN's work in conflict prevention and were sometimes distributed to key actors in the international community and the Government. The results of these surveys consistently reflected the increasing demand and public support for dialogue and the rejection of violence as a means to defend positions or proposals.

At the moment of greatest tension and when political actors were in need of support to reach agreements, the decision

was made to publish some of these results in the media. In August, 83% of the population believed that changes in the country should not be achieved through violence or confrontation. All regions in the country shared that view¹. Similarly, in the September 2008 survey, almost all respondents supported the dialogue process. The publication of these results, in which 92% of respondents demanded that dialogue continue, were particularly important since the dialogue remained stagnant in Congress at the time.

The survey was the vehicle that would allow citizens' voices to be heard by political actors and make them clearly aware that Bolivians rejected violence and demanded dialogue.

The publication of this information was also important in confirming that it was not about what the UN thought should be done, in compliance with its overall mandate, but what the vast majority of Bolivians wanted for their country.

Building prospective scenarios and political analysis

As soon as early 2008, PAPEP had identified three possible crisis scenarios that suggested that supporting a process of change that would allow Bolivia to move forward in a peaceful and democratic way would be the biggest challenge for the United Nations that year. Scenario 1, the most desirable, would include dialogue and integration of the two competing constitutional reform agendas in the political arena. Scenario 2 presented a procedural solution through regular elections, referenda and dialogue that would enable a peaceful solution to the constitutional controversy. Scenario 3, the most dangerous alternative for the country's stability and governance, polarized agendas and accelerated conflict. Forecasting these scenarios allowed for the establishment of steps to support the peacemaking efforts of various sectors of the Bolivian society and guided the actions of UNDP and the UN System at a time when most actors were highly uncertain.

PAPEP's monthly reports on the political situation were also useful to the UNDP office, as well as to other UN agencies

...There was the pressure of public opinion which demanded dialogue, and the dissemination of [the surveys] to the mainstream media contributed to the push for a solution that included dialogue.

*Carlos Romero,
Ministry of Autonomy
Interview*

... We published the results of the polls ... we made the effort to spread the word to create a public opinion environment that was conducive to dialogue... monthly opinion polls helped to form a clear idea about what the Bolivians thought regarding the situation and what they wanted. Through these surveys, we could consistently confirm that Bolivian citizens wanted the relevant actors to sit down, negotiate and talk.

*Yoriko Yasukawa
UN Resident Coordinator in Bolivia
Interview*

Precisely on the days of the conflict and negotiations, the United Nations made a number of surveys public. The surveys showed a progression in which seven and then eight out of ten Bolivians demanded political actors of both the governing party and the opposition to sit down and negotiate, even if they had to sacrifice key aspects of their own proposals.

Carlos Böhr
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview

This campaign helped to give a friendly and not just political image of the organization, which allowed us to connect with people.

Yoriko Yasukawa
UN Resident Coordinator in Bolivia
Interview

At that time there were meetings with prefects, ministers, senators from both the governing and opposition parties, with the Church, the Ombudsman and many other civil organizations.

Christian Jetté
Governance Practice Leader,
UNDP Bolivia
Interview

and stakeholders (such as the CNE). These reports were based on interviews, review of secondary data and opinion polls².

The production and analysis of such strategic information contributed to a quick and timely response by the United Nations, as required by the context. It also contributed to strengthening its advocacy capacity in the public sphere.

The “Convivir, Sembrar Paz” Campai

The launch of a communication and citizen culture campaign called *Convivir, Sembrar Paz* [“Coexisting, Sowing Peace”] during the conflict also helped to pacify the country. The campaign called for peace and dialogue and was promoted by all UN agency directors and primarily supported by several Bolivian civil society organizations and the Ombudsman’s Office.

Thanks to a simple, clear and consistent message, the campaign managed to build a meaningful discourse in addressing the existing concerns of many people. The message was also transmitted and repeatedly reinforced to the actors during the various situations that threatened social peace.

Dialogue with diverse social and political actors

The range of relationships built by UNDP with a range of political and social actors over the years proved to be one of its significant contributions, especially when opportunities for dialogue were disappearing in the country as a result of political polarization and distrust. In many cases, these actors were or had been direct counterparts of UNDP programs and projects. This enabled the maintenance of and, in some cases, ensured access to these actors particularly at critical moments. It also created an advocacy capacity so that the United Nations could promote dialogue and peace, as established by its global mandate.

Strategic management and advice

Through governance programs and projects, UNDP provided technical advice in relevant areas of conflict prevention. It also supported various spaces for dialogue that facilitated meetings and discourse between political and social actors, helping to maintain communication and exchange of diverse ideas and views.

However, the most valuable contribution was probably the support provided to the National Electoral Court (CNE), which played a key role in 2008. This institution had to manage and/or establish viable key electoral processes in that period, including the autonomic referenda in May-June 2008, which were rejected; the complex recall referendum of August 2008; and the call for the referendum to approve the new Constitution, which was finally achieved in January 2009.

Throughout this period, the UN provided the CNE with information, technical advice and, occasionally, contact with certain political and social actors. Despite encountering controversial issues, the CNE finally managed to preserve the electoral framework at a time when many institutions were weakened. It also maintained a balanced position in the face of difficult decisions based on principles of legality, and was able to manage electoral processes that proved crucial to the transparent resolution of the conflict.

Eventually, the CNE reestablished citizen confidence in the electoral bodies and the social commitment to democratic and institutional tracks.

The international observation³

Both political actors and the general population have agreed on the usefulness and the contribution of international observers, including the United Nations, to the dialogue and agreement.

Their presence helped to sustain the dialogue in Cochabamba and in Congress and encouraged actors to dialogue, making it difficult for talks to break down despite

The risk was obvious. If we closed the institutional exits, voting and democratic opportunities, we could be, and it is no exaggeration, at risk of a confrontation that could lead to civil war in Bolivia... That was the size and scale of the challenge we were facing, with an additional aggravating factor: the electoral institution, the CNE, was very fragile and was undergoing an internal crisis.

*José Luis Exeni
Former CNE President
Interview*

At this point, relations of distrust prevailed in the country. The opposition distrusted the Government, the Government distrusted the regions. There was distrust of the CNE itself. Decisions required the support of stakeholders such as the Catholic Church, the political opposition, regional and social actors. Thanks to the range of its relationships and work performed in Bolivia, UNDP helped us several times in prompting dialogue with some stakeholders.

*José Luis Exeni
Former CNE President
Interview*

tensions. At times, the observers went beyond the strict role of ‘oversight’ to promote further dialogue, although it was not their intention at any time to participate in the discussion on the draft Constitution.

It is also possible that the presence of observers brought some sense of security and quelled fears of the social protests, which took place across from the Congress in Plaza Murillo during the last days of the dialogue. Similar efforts were undertaken during the dialogue in Cochabamba, where international delegations took successful steps to stop the march of social movements towards the city of Santa Cruz and requested that regional leaders of Santa Cruz adopt a moderate stand that was respectful of the situation. The objective of the international observation was to reduce the chances that the dispute seeks solutions outside of the institutional framework.

An October 2008 survey revealed that most of the Bolivian population considered international observer presence in the process of dialogue to be useful, and two thirds felt that the UN support for national dialogue in its role of observer and witness to the negotiations was significant.⁴

Furthermore, the presence of observers/facilitators from various international and national organizations –OAS, UN, UNASUR, the European Union and the Catholic and Evangelical Churches– strengthened its advocacy.

However, it should be noted that the dynamics of the dialogue process were essentially subject to the rhythms and patterns of the Bolivian political actors. It can be stated that the success of international observers was largely due to their ability to adapt to the changing situation, assume a secondary role but remain relevant in certain phases, and provide astute support throughout the negotiating process.

Contrary to other experiences in which they lead or determine the pace of the technical and political aspects of processes, international organizations played a sui generis role in the dialogues and negotiations conducted between September and October 2008: support, moral influence and trust-building. Although perhaps less proactive compared to traditional mediation, these actions were complex in that they required both commitment and caution, a correct

The participation of embassies and international organizations was crucial, especially the performance of Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, UNDP and United Nations representative, who accompanied us in the discussions and difficult negotiations from Cochabamba to Congress.

Carlos Böhr
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview

understanding of real advocacy possibilities and limits, respect for the rhythms and logic of national actors, and above all, a sense of realism and modesty in all interventions.

The permanent support of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and UNDP Regional Bureau was remarkable. Both followed the developments closely and maintained fluid communication with the local team⁵. Such coordination was reflected in the Secretary General statements on the situation in Bolivia throughout the entire process -primarily calling for dialogue, encouraging actors to persevere, and supporting the role of the UN as an observer along with other international organizations. These public interventions significantly strengthened the credibility of the efforts of the organization's local operators⁶.

During the process, everytime dialogue was disrupted, the UN would say "let's make an effort for this country, all of us here." I think these were words for reflection for everybody.

*Roger Pinto
Former Senator, PODEMOS
Interview*

The blue flag of the United Nations

Despite questions about its impartiality and effectiveness in conflict prevention and management, the United Nations continues to enjoy moral authority and prestige at the global level because it represents all countries in the world as well as the universal values and principles of peace, human rights and democratic practice. Bolivia also recognized its fairness and its capacity for management and dialogue in environments of conflict and crisis.

The 2008 Bolivian experience shows that these values can guide relevant UN efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts. However, for this to be possible, the country office must be clear about its obligation to translate, by any means, these universal values and principles into appropriate practices for national political actors, by fostering feasible and appropriate advocacy and communication efforts. This requires the strong political determination of the head of the local UN office and consideration of the risks this may entail.

Although capacity for political analysis and advocacy instruments (networks of actors, communication campaigns, surveys, etc.) are important, their effectiveness depends on the clarity and consistency of guidelines arising from decisions made by the head of the local office.

"During his meeting with President Evo Morales [...] the Secretary General welcomed the Government's efforts to seek dialogue with opponents in the search for a peaceful and consensual solution to the problems facing the country. [...] The Secretary General considers positive the diplomatic efforts made by UNASUR, the OAS, the EU and the Catholic Church, who, along with the UN, are witnessing the dialogue process in Bolivia"

Statement of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, September 26, 2008

I have learned that there are things that seem obvious if uttered by anyone, but if they are said by the United Nations or the international community they are heard. Hence the importance of publishing information to generate impact. It is a moral force.

*Yoriko Yasukawa
UN Resident Coordinator in
Bolivia
Interview*

The perception of UN “fairness” and, therefore, the sense of trust installed in most actors, is another key element to understanding the important role of United Nations representation at these events, something which was much less observable in the case of other international observers.

In short, it is essential to reflect on the need, the possibilities and limitations involved in promoting peace, dialogue, and human rights in a particular national context. The instruments for this task will depend on the answer to the question: What is the UN’s willingness and can it be an important player in achieving peace, human rights and social coexistence? Currently, this decision seems to depend largely on the discretion of the local office, as the guidelines on the role of these offices in such conflict situations are ambiguous.

1 The surveys were developed by Mori Equipos Consultores Asociados. This study evaluated Bolivian public opinion on key political and situational issues in the country. The study’s target included all people over 18 years old, men and women of all socioeconomic levels living in the cities of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Tarija, Oruro, Potosí, Sucre, Cobija, La Paz, Trinidad and El Alto. The sample included 2310 interviews, with a margin of error of +/-2.03% and a confidence level of 95%. The basis for these surveys consisted of 2144 interviews.

2 To some extent, these scenarios and analyses oriented the various actions deployed throughout the year so as to maintain some consistency, although in general the interventions had to respond to unforeseen events, which sometimes required a certain degree of improvisation.

3 For further information on international observation, refer to Chapter III “Dialogue and agreement: enabling conditions”, page 31.

4 Special Report for UNDP, Mori Equipos Consultores Asociados, Octubre 2008. The survey included the cities of Santa Cruz, La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, Tarija, Oruro, Potosí, Sucre, Trinidad and Cobija.

5 UN local managers and operators particularly emphasized the importance of establishing fluid communication and an ongoing exchange of information (sometimes on a daily basis) with the DPA officer in charge of Bolivia throughout the entire process, as well as his significant support for the work that was being carried out in Cochabamba and in Congress.

6 Throughout 2008, the Secretary General spoke out five times on the Bolivian situation: on May 8, to support OAS mediation efforts on the eve of the autonomy referenda; on August 8, demanding a peaceful environment during the recall referendum; on September 12, urging “all parties to exercise moderation” and emphasizing that “the UN was prepared to offer assistance to the Bolivian people who want to engage in dialogue”; on September 26, in a statement after a meeting with President Morales calling for “a peaceful solution” and stressing the “efforts of UNASUR, OAS, EU and the Catholic Church who, along with the UN, are witnessing the process of dialogue in Bolivia”; and finally, on October 20, congratulating the Bolivian people and the peace agreements. These messages were the result of ongoing exchange between the DPA and the local UN office in Bolivia.

VI. Lessons learned by the United Nations in support of dialogue and peacebuilding

On the role of the United Nations

- The UN system's relevant contribution in Bolivia included the observation of National Dialogue and actions to promote a climate of peace, as recognized by political actors and the population.
- If the United Nations is to play a significant role in preventing and managing conflicts at the local level, it is crucial that, beyond its capacity and technical tools, the country office has the political determination to translate the organization's principles and universal values of peace, human rights and democracy into practice.
- An important part of this work consists of articulating messages and emphasizing these principles and values, and inspiring national actors, both in the public sphere through the media as through private dialogues with political leaders and actors. The leaders, the media and society as a whole consider this to be the natural role of the United Nations in certain contexts. As mentioned by one National Dialogue participant, this role consists of reminding the national actors of "the greater good."
- Trust, credibility and perception of "impartiality" are key assets for preventing and managing conflicts. Therefore, they have to be built and strengthened steadily over time in the various UN-sponsored formal and informal spaces for interaction.

On dialogue and conflict management processes

- The effectiveness of conflict management is linked to the ability to act promptly and creatively at critical moments.
- The context and the specific dynamics of crises determine the role of UN and international actors in conflict prevention and peace building.
- National actors determine whether dialogue is needed and how to proceed. They also determine whether, how and when an agreement is reached.
- The conflict management and resolution experience in Bolivia in 2008 demonstrates the crucial importance of supporting, preserving and using institutional spaces for processing conflicts in times of high tension and political polarization. The solution to the conflict was achieved within the framework of existing institutions, particularly those of the National Electoral Court, which preserved its independence and ability to organize transparent elections; the National Congress, that became the arena for the final negotiations; and political parties, which, despite their weakness, were instrumental in reaching the agreements. The institutional nature of the process contributed to decision-making and guaranteed compliance, in addition to supporting the democratic legitimacy of the process in the eyes of the population.
- In the case of Bolivia, the international community did not assume the traditional role of “mediator” since national actors defined the rhythm, procedures and content of dialogue and agreements. International representations and organizations contributed to the success of the process through cautious but committed support of the dialogue process by their mere presence, helping to create conditions of trust and transparency, facilitating communication and information channels, and at some critical moments, exerting some “moral” pressure to advance dialogue and consolidate peace.
- United Nations coordination and its joint work with other members of the international community (OAS, European Union, and UNASUR) was crucial in mutually

strengthening their roles/mandates, exchanging support, perceptions and information in complex times, and multiplying efforts to promote dialogue with different national actors in function of the established trust and relationships. Although the United Nations can play an important role in conflict situations and dialogue, it must be achieved in conjunction with other members of the international community.

- The action of the UN local office gains strength and credibility if accompanied by public statements from the Secretary General reaffirming the underlying values and goals in support of their efforts. This requires proper coordination and communication between DPA and the UNDP Regional Bureau and the operators of local offices involved in the processes. This was successfully achieved, and the experience demonstrates the valuable potential of this type of joint work.

On the capacity of United Nations local offices

- The United Nations local office must have clear and effective leadership in these situations, in order to articulate the capacities of local offices, bring coherence to the effort and act as a legitimate interlocutor with other stakeholders and actors.
- In times of confrontation and crisis, offices should send a simple, clear and consistent message that is based on the principles and values of the United Nations, one that addresses the concerns of the population.
- A sound understanding of the political context and an analysis of stakeholder interests, the political culture and the nature of the conflict are necessary for effective action in a complex context of political crisis.
- The production and dissemination of useful and quality information benefits the United Nations' position in the public arena and with other donors. It also contributes to its political advocacy efforts.
- In cases of open conflict, United Nations mandates are clear, but when it comes to prevention much

depends on the personality, creativity and common sense of the Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives and their staff. Given this uncertainty, in-house capacity for political analysis and prospective is highly valuable. This capacity should be permanent, appropriate to the context, decision-oriented, flexible and practical. The experience of PAPEP and the Democratic Governance Team in Bolivia provide a potential model.

- Articulated teamwork is essential in preventing and managing conflicts.
- Through their programs and projects, democratic governance teams contribute to establish and maintain relationships of trust that may prove crucial in times of polarization and crisis.
- Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives should have knowledge and working experience in conflictive and complex situations to be able to advocate in United Nations related causes. They should also benefit from the support and advice of national colleagues who have a firm understanding of the national context and can interpret the messages of national actors. The country team fully achieved this significant task in Bolivia.

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VIII. Annexes

Annex 1

List of interviewees in 2009

1. Alejandro Colanzi, former Congressman, Unidad Nacional
2. Antoine Grassin, Ambassador of France
3. Carlos Böhr, former Senator, PODEMOS
4. Carlos Romero, former Assemblyman, MAS, and Minister of Autonomy
5. Kenneth Bell, European Union Ambassador
6. Nigel Baker, Ambassador of the United Kingdom
7. Roger Pinto, former Head of PODEMOS
8. Rubén Costas, Prefect of Santa Cruz
9. Tito Hoz de Vila, former Senator, PODEMOS

List of interviewees in 2010

1. Antonio Aranibar, Regional PAPEP Coordinator
2. Armando Ortuño, UNDP Policy Advisor and Coordinator of PAPEP Bolivia
3. Carlos Böhr, former Senator, PODEMOS
4. Cielo Morales, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bolivia
5. Grover Yapura, former Director of La Razón newspaper
6. José Luis Exeni, former President of the National Electoral Court
7. Raúl Peñaranda, Director of Página 7 newspaper
8. Yoriko Yasukawa, UN Resident Coordinator in Bolivia
9. PAPEP and UNDP Governance Teams in Bolivia

Annex 2

Conflict and Dialogue Timeline

2006	
March	Unanimous approval of the Law for the Convocation of the Constituent Assembly and call for the referendum on autonomy. The ruling party, political parties of the opposition and civic leaders participate.
July 2	Election of constituents and approval of the referendum for autonomies in four states (Pando, Beni, Tarija and Santa Cruz).
August 6	The Constituent Assembly is installed in Sucre.
September-December	Period of growing polarization and confrontation between the Government and the opposition. In September, the first conflicts arise in the Constituent Assembly due to the lack of an agreement on how the reports to the commission should be approved, the formula for approval of the project articles and the final text of the Constitution. The ruling party pushes for approval by absolute majority instead of the 2/3 majority established by the Law of the Convocation. The opposition demands that the Law be respected. Strikes, blockades, demonstrations arise that polarize political positions for and against the government. It obscures and delays the constitutional process. New issues of conflict emerge, mainly over the land issue and the review of the INRA law. The conflict moves to the streets.
2007	
February 14	The Constituent Assembly approves the voting reform, deciding that the approval of the articles is by simple majority, but that the overall constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority or otherwise go to a referendum. An agreement determines that articles that do not reach the two-thirds majority after meetings in the Vice President's Office will go to referendum. Though approved by the majority, this agreement was not supported by representatives of the opposition regions of the civic bloc of the prefecture. The debate in the Constituent Assembly resumes.
July	Some commissions begin to deliver results. The Assembly is close to finishing its first year of operation without having been able to author the new Constitution project.
August	Assembly sessions resume. A congressional agreement approves the extension of the Constituent Assembly until December.
August 15	The Constituent Assembly is paralyzed because of the demand that Sucre be granted full capital status, supported by the civic committees of the Media Luna and opposed by La Paz and government organizations.
August -November	University vigils and civic leaders impede the sessions. There is crisis and tension in the country.
November 17	Agreement to resume the Constituent Assembly on the 21st of the month.
November 22	An "overview" of the constitutional text is approved in the Military School in the absence of representatives from the opposition. There are confrontations between protesters and police forces, looting and destruction.

December	Approval of the presidential recall referendum mandate and prefects in the House of Representatives of the National Parliament.
December 11	Approval in Oruro of the State Political Constitution project in the absence of the majority of representatives from the opposition.
2008	
January-May	Various attempts at dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition to reform the chapter on autonomies and introduce changes to the rest of the constitutional text.
Late January	The National Electoral Court calls for lifting the referendums organized by autonomous departments and the government seeks to organize the ratification of the text adopted by the Constituent Assembly. The government abides by the order. Regions convoke de facto governmental autonomies, which exacerbates the conflict with the Government.
March 13	The President invites the Prefects to dialogue and search for a solution to the political, social and economic crisis. The meeting breaks down due to the aggression suffered by several opposition parliamentarians by social movement members on February 22.
April 28	The Media Luna prefects officially communicate that they will not participate in any further attempt at dialogue, ignoring the request of OAS representatives for them to accept dialogue and suspend the referendums.
May-June	Autonomy referendums in the departments of Beni (June 1), Pando, Tarija (June 22) and Santa Cruz (May 4) to approve their autonomy statutes in response to the Constitution approved in Oruro.
May 8	The PODEMOS bench in the Senate passes the National Recall Referendum – for the president and the prefects – which had been approved by the House of Representatives in January. This event is ultimately instrumental in converting the correlation of forces in the country into crisis within PODEMOS and weakens the Council for Democracy, CONALDE ¹ . In addition, it emphasized the split between the parliamentary opposition and the opposition prefects.
May 11	The Government calls for dialogue, the opposition rejects it upon finding itself at its highest level of legitimacy after the referendum on autonomy in Santa Cruz.
May 12	MNR and UN parties withdraw their representatives from the dialogue process, as PODEMOS had, leaving the government without partners, citing the government's refusal to open the possibility of reforming the State Political Constitution.
August 10	The recall referendum is carried out to confirm the mandate of the President with 67.7% of the vote and Media Luna prefects with percentages between 54% and 70%, revoking the mandate of the governors of La Paz and Cochabamba, both government opponents. CONALDE protests are radicalized. The results change the balance of power in the country. It weakens the opposition while demonstrating and reinforcing the popularity of the President, who is also increasing its electoral support.

August 11	The President invites the opposition prefects to dialogue and negotiate three central themes: the signing of a fiscal pact to settle the lawsuit to recover the IDH, the compatibility of departamental laws with the proposed State Political Constitution and appointment of agreed members to the Supreme Court and other state agencies. The dialogue breaks down, and three days later, CONALDE calls a work strike in the five opposition departments for August 20 to demand recovery of the IDH. Government offices are occupied and violence erupts.
August 27	The Government passes a supreme decree to call a referendum to approve the new State Political Constitution on December 7th.
September 1	The National Electoral Court (CNE) issues a statement stating that it would not administer the electoral process requested by the president if it was not called for by a Law of the Republic. The government abides by the decision of the CNE and contacts the opposition to resume dialogue in order to pass this law, as a two-thirds majority vote is needed, which it does not have in Congress. Violence erupts in the opposition regions at this time which includes roadblocks, attacks on governmental and non-governmental institutions, occupation and destruction of public institutions and clashes between autonomy protesters and police forces. Violence is out of control on September 9 in Santa Cruz and confrontations last for several hours, when the police and military forces confront the Santa Cruz Youth Union and the Local University Federation who attack several public institutions.
September 11	Massacre of peasants and violent events in El Porvenir, Pando, which shock the nation. The influence of regional actors weakens. The following day, a state of siege is declared in that department and a few days later, the prefect of Pando, Leopoldo Fernández, is arrested.
September 18	The dialogue between the Government and opposition with the participation of international observers begins in Cochabamba. Progress is made in reconciling the autonomous and constituent texts. There is no agreement, but the conditions for continuing the dialogue in Congress are established.
October 21	Congressional Agreement approving the text of the new State Political Constitution and constitutional law for the referendum. It unties the political knot that held the country in suspense for a year. The country is pacified.
January 25 , 2009	Approval of the State Political Constitution.

1 National Council for Democracy, body formed by prefectures, municipalities, civic committees, and universities of the departments that approved their autonomic processes.

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