



Institutional framework for the participation of civil society organizations in sustainable development


La institucionalidad para la participación de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil en el desarrollo sustentable

 <https://doi.org/10.21803/adgnosis.11.11.563>

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How to cite this article:

Cárdenas, S. and Cuevas, V. (2022). Institutional framework for the participation of civil society organizations in sustainable development. *ADGNOSIS Magazine*, 11(11), p. 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.21803/adgnosis.11.11.563>

Abstract

The promotion for the fulfillment of sustainable development at a global level was driven by the main interstate organization during the second half of the 20th century, although some attempts at institutionalization had been observed previously, these did not generate a transcendental impact. During the 1970s, the first efforts were coordinated between interstate programs and sovereign states, and it was not until the end of the Cold War that the change in the international panorama and the new global paradigm allowed other non-state actors such as Civil Society Organizations to become involved in meeting the goals and objectives set to achieve sustainable development. However, the participation of civil society depends on the will of governments, which can be volatile and is conditioned to the change of local political scenarios, so it is essential the formality of institutional mechanisms that permanently recognize the participation of organized civil society to influence local and global development policies.

Keywords: Sustainable development; Civil Society Organizations; Institutional mechanisms.

Resumen

La promoción para el cumplimiento del desarrollo sustentable a nivel global fue impulsada por el principal organismo interestatal durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX, si bien anteriormente habían sido observados algunos intentos de institucionalidad estos no generaron un impacto trascendental. Durante la década de los años setenta los primeros esfuerzos estuvieron coordinados entre programas interestatales y Estados soberanos y no es sino hasta el fin de la Guerra Fría que el cambio en el panorama internacional y el nuevo paradigma global permitió a otros actores no estatales como las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil el involucramiento para cumplir las metas y objetivos dispuestos para alcanzar el desarrollo sustentable. Sin embargo, la participación de la sociedad civil depende de la voluntad de los gobiernos, la cual puede ser volátil y está condicionada al cambio de los escenarios políticos locales, por lo cual es imprescindible la formalidad de mecanismos institucionales que reconozcan de manera permanente la participación de la sociedad civil organizada para incidir en las políticas locales y globales del desarrollo.

Palabras Clave: Desarrollo sustentable; Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil; Mecanismos institucionales.

Introduction

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been and are a fundamental part of the promotion and execution of sustainable development, not only at the local but also at the global level. This chapter shows how organized civil society can have a positive impact, through institutional mechanisms, on the work of citizens' interests by means of the different social objectives established in their constitutive figure. These social objects range from health care, education, disability, to environmental care or gender equality. In addition to institutional mechanisms, there are also informal mechanisms, but these may face, above all, informality and the possibility of disappearing over time; however, civic mobilization has been a fundamental part of generating a transcendental impact. Previously, the conceptualization of CSOs will be established, as well as their historical context in the field of sustainable development and subsequently the mechanisms through which they can generate incidence, such is the case of federal attention to sustainable development or their participation in the external panorama to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030). It is important to note that in this chapter the term Civil Society Organizations will be used as a synonym for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); the latter has fallen into disuse given the antagonism to the State that the term itself reflects, however, for purposes of historical context they can be used in a similar way.

Although human development has been an axis permanently sought by society, this is not the case with sustainable development, which, like CSOs, emerged in the second half of the last century, with a boom in the 1990s. With regard to civil society, it is evident that the concept may change over time, since it is not an interpretation of a permanent phenomenon; that is, the concept or the idea of the term religion will probably maintain its meaning without mutating for at least an indefinite period of time; however, in the case of society, the definitions provided by even the most enlightened authors depend on the elements involved. Civil society is dynamic and changing, and the elements of culture, identity, history, time and the science from which it is studied, are of an appropriate nature to generate a definition adequate to the temporal circumstances.

Conceptualization of civil society

Conditioned by its changing attribution, the idea of civil society prior to November 1989 was reflected as the image of an actor antagonistic to the State, and given that the State was the only actor in the management of public policies, civil society was alien to the official participation of sustainable development, a concept that had only been socialized in the international environmental sphere for five years. After this turning point, civil society is transformed into an actor that is immersed in a plane of interaction with the State (Cohen and Arato, 2000), an interaction that had not appeared on the international or local scene, except in some cases of humanitarian aid, and that after the fall of the Berlin Wall caused a dispersion and little consensus as far as a single concept of civil society is concerned. The degree of insertion in the international

The democratic openness of each state would be determined by the democratic openness of each state.

Keane (1998) and Pérez-Díaz (1994) agree that, until before the fall of the Berlin Wall, civil society and the State were opposing actors. After that moment, differentiated patterns can be identified in which both actors continue to behave antagonistically at different poles of action, and at the same time situations arise in which a unification of efforts to achieve a single objective begins, such as the boom in the promotion of sustainable development promoted to a large extent by specialized international organizations, as well as by multilateral forums. A highly relevant and conditioning factor of the change generated by the nineties in the behavior of civil society is the Internet, seen as a communicative tool to learn more about the irresponsible use of natural resources and at the same time as an instrument that allowed the publication of information that until then could have been reserved, as well as access to global calls in which the organized civil society in Mexico had had little or no participation due to the control by the Federal Public Administration in public policies.

In the same vein, Nicolás Grimaldi (1999) described the term civil society as enigmatic and wrote a whole work dedicated to this conceptual peculiarity in *Observaciones de un ciudadano sobre el carácter enigmático de la sociedad civil*, precisely because of the multiplicity of perspectives that the concept began to reflect in the 1990s. The boom of interest in this topic provoked "the attention of multiple disciplines: sociologists, philosophers, politicians, economists, etc." (Gómez, 2015, p.24), however, it persists in an intellectual debate on defining a position of the origins and development of the concept of civil society. This debate would yield three ideas on which there is a consensus among the main authors on the subject, in summary, these ideas are: "a proliferation of meaning around the idea of civil society, the subject has become fashionable and enjoys cultural resonance and finally that it has something to do with the fall of the Berlin Wall" (Gómez, 2015, p.30 and 31).

The historical conceptual reflection was carried out with the purpose of understanding the elements that build the modern concept of civil society and its influence in the framework of sustainable development, however, one of the realities referred to in this chapter is the fact of the multiplicity of meanings of the expression and defining the position that is taken to study its concept is important, since this will depend on understanding the corresponding use of the normative frameworks, which are also addressed in this chapter. It is appropriate to define an approach to analyze the development of this actor, the object of study of the research. Therefore, the concept of civil society best suited to the current context, considered ahead of its time, and which still seems to be the most ad hoc by Mexican authors is that of Larry Diamond (1997), who participated in the Mexican journal *Metapolítica* with the 2004 update of *Rethinking civil society*, in which he conceived civil society as:

The space of organized social life that is voluntarily self-generated, (highly) independent, autonomous from the state, and limited by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from society in general, in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange information,

achieve common objectives, make demands on the state and accept official state responsibilities (p.186).

It is pertinent to expose that previously the relations of States to propose sustainable development strategies were strictly conformed by relations between official actors and not by civil society, however, currently under a system of global governance the power of civil society is at its maximum capacity to argue, propose, denounce and experiment (Forman & Segaar, 2016) to generate an impact on the subject of development. Observing the information presented, the participation of organized society is at its highest expression, inclusive to define its behavior is complicated since it influences issues so varied from one another, and is present in multilateral scenarios such as the fulfillment of the SDGs, seeking mainly its recognition, as well as that of the principles they represent.

The organization of society has evolved from the simplest to the most complex; associative actions have been observed from the origins of man based on traditions of community, to the association of people for different reasons such as dislike of loneliness or, on the contrary, life in society for convenience. Whatever the reason, the analysis of the present research is focused on the current participation of organized civil society, and the use of normative frameworks to influence the issue of development.

The beginning of advocacy by civil society organizations in Mexico

During most of the last century, the influence exerted by organized civil society on sustainable development was very little or almost nonexistent due to the scarce interest in this topic by Mexican society, caused by the low degree of information on the behavior of policies in the care of resources and the environment. Mexico has been seen as a presidentialist country and added to the concentration of power in a party that operated in a centralized manner (Loeza, 2013), caused the guidelines to be dictated by the executive without taking into account the opinion of society to formulate and design this public policy in the country.

Subsequently, the political and economic opening of the eighties and especially the nineties brought other non-state actors such as the business community and Civil Society Organizations to become involved in the decision-making process of the multilateral agenda, Despite the fact that in that decade there was still no well-defined organizational scheme at the global level to achieve sustainable development goals, this issue gained strength at the same time that Civil Society Organizations managed to position themselves as an actor interested in international policy, human development and sustainability, through calls made by specialized agencies. This involvement exercise has a short trajectory, since "it is only in recent years that non-governmental actors have increased their presence and interest in participating in the process of formulating policies that impact all citizens" (Schiavon and Velázquez, 2010, p.5). In Mexico, the above scenario was boosted for both sectors with the alternation of the hegemonic political party in the country, particularly in the six-year term of Vicente Fox, two of the

institutional instruments for civil organizations were proclaimed and consolidation took place in the 2012 federal six-year term as CSOs were extensively involved in influencing the design of the SDGs.

In short, Civil Society Organizations did not show a particular interest in getting involved in development issues due to the lack of formal mechanisms that would allow their insertion; however, their interest has proliferated and at present they are seeking to participate in a wide range of issues. In order to highlight the achievements and reach obtained by Mexican Civil Society Organizations, it is necessary to understand that one of the reasons for this to happen is the interrelation between the national scenario and the international context (Soto, 2018), as well as the effects of globalization that inspired more than one social movement. Another reason that justifies the growing interest of Civil Society Organizations in issues that had been dealt with exclusively by the State, is the formality in the spaces for participation, although in a very vague way the normative frameworks began to support the activities of Mexican civil society. De la Vega and Enriquez (2014) mention that it was in the early nineties "when a group of organizations began to promote a legal framework that would recognize and encourage the integral development of the social sector, based on new schemes of relationship between the government and the citizenry" (p.3).

In Mexico, Civil Society Organizations were able to build a new participatory identity through different events: social movements with little organization such as that of Tlatelolco in 1968, social movements that achieved repercussions based on organization outside the government such as the aid obtained by organizations from other countries after the 1985 earthquake, the observation of electoral processes and the non-conformity brought to the public opinion of the possibly fraudulent results of 1988 (Lehoucq, 2007), to the formal protest position towards the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by a coalition of organizations, and the indigenous uprising that declared war on the Mexican State in the state of Chiapas are some examples of such events.

One of the most relevant cases is the Cooperation of Parties 16 (COP16) held in Cancun in November and December 2010, the contribution of Civil Society Organizations was more profitable and substantive, since several organizations acted as observers and played a notable role in the negotiations between different countries and intergovernmental organizations with Mexico. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change contemplates the participation of civil society observer organizations in its fourth and seventh articles. In this way, "the capacity of observers to dialogue with other actors involved in the negotiation process is recognized, as well as their influence on the issues analyzed by the Conference of the Parties" (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2012, p.9). In order to achieve the above, a great effort was required, since the experience of the previous year in Copenhagen 2009 was rather one of disagreement and caused distrust towards the United Nations Conventions on Climate Change (Díaz, 2013). Faced with the challenge posed by COP16, Civil Society Organizations demonstrated their growing capacity to generate agreements, promote agendas and influence negotiations through proposals built jointly.

Despite the fact that two weeks before the start of the COP16 forum, Civil Society Organizations had no concrete information regarding the activities in which they could participate, it was possible to achieve one of the most cooperative experiences as a result of the commitment acquired by the Federal Public Administration towards the organized civil society interested in sustainable development, in the words of Miguel Díaz Reynoso (2013), then director of the Directorate of Liaison with Civil Society Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unlike what happened at COP15 in Copenhagen, national and international public opinion did not disqualify the performance of the Mexican government and its attention to Civil Society Organizations.

The processes to achieve a more active participation in issues restricted to civil society, as well as to generate public opinion related to the major national problems of resource and environmental care, have to do with local and global events simultaneously, which generates a first relationship between the international cooperation agenda and civil society (Alejo, 2022). In Mexico, the above occurred in an environment of political uncertainty, the alternation of political parties brought with it a boost to the relationship between these actors. "The alternation government was interested in promoting the institutionalization of dialogue with Mexican civil society organizations in international affairs" (Icaza, 2006, p.497). It was then when the government initiated the promotion by the Federal Public Administration (APF) of Civil Society Organizations to get involved in issues of the international agenda and sustainable development; particularly the consequences of this supposed promotion allow configuring the core of this chapter, since it is at that moment when two federal instruments promoted the official participation of CSOs as well as the opening to attend international cooperation forums.

Social organizations, citizens and companies demand effectiveness in State policies and seek to harmonize international agreements with local laws, in order to build a fair and inclusive international community (Pría, 2008). The partnership that arises between the State and Civil Society Organizations allows for a better relationship of contribution in the external decision-making process by creating spaces to influence sustainable development and as actors that promote the fulfillment of the SDGs. In Mexico, different moments, calls and spaces can be found in which the involvement of CSOs was more substantial, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes, through its regulatory frameworks, the promotion of the participation of Civil Society Organizations as a means of collaboration in the design of development policies. This interest on the part of Civil Society Organizations to collaborate in the formulation of sustainable development policies makes it necessary to reconsider the traditional means of social participation and, therefore, to open channels for a more active stance.

Sustainable development and its link with civil society organizations. Historical and practical text.

Sustainable development is a term that, although it was coined at the end of the last century,

The paradox of sustainable development transcends in that it is a necessity to remedy the consequences caused by human development itself, since from the Enlightenment to the industrial revolution, man has consolidated the position that the consequences of human development itself are not only a consequence of human development, but also a consequence of the need to develop the environment in a more sustainable way. The paradox of sustainable development transcends in that it is a necessity to remedy the consequences caused by human development itself, since from the Enlightenment to the industrial revolution, man consolidated the position that resources and goods would create economic wealth, causing economic development and at the same time facilitating the variables that impact human development, without considering the environmental disasters that would result from the unmeasured use of own or colonial resources.

On the other hand, although the concept of sustainable development has been booming in recent decades, it can be found that since ancient times there was concern about different elements that constitute sustainable development today, such as the depletion of agricultural resources or continuous access to water. During the industrial revolution, coupled with demographic growth, the depletion of resources brought with it the beginning of the awakening of awareness with the responsible use of resources, however, it was not enough to structure projects, since the powers of that time lacked the will to generate plans related to the care of the planet, on the contrary, the situation lies in the expansionism with the objective precisely of obtaining resources. One of the first scenarios to develop alternatives for environmental care was the International Union for the Protection of Nature, today known as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, this organization was founded in 1948, it is important to point out that it is not a specialized organism of the UN. A year later, the UN held the United Nations Scientific Conference on Resource Conservation and Utilization; however, given the global scenario, no civil society organization participated in it.

It was not until the second half of the 20th century that a more general concern for the over-consumption of natural resources and the consequences this would have on future generations could be identified. As a result of considering the emergence of a possible ecological crisis, structured non-governmental organizations began to appear with social objectives aimed at promoting the care of the planet's natural resources, such as the World Wildlife Fund in 1961 with antecedents dating back to 1948 or Friends of the Earth in 1969; however, global and local institutional structures were not fully interested in generating formal mechanisms to link organized civil society and state governments.

It was in the 1960s and 1970s that the concept of sustainable development began to be coined and receive attention; however, the term was initially associated only with environmental care and the current known as ecologism emerged. During these decades, different circumstances can be identified that are recognized as pioneering actions for the care of the environment and the adequate use of resources, one of which was the United Nations Conference on the Environment in 1972 in Stockholm, which was the first motivation to develop more spaces that could be recognized as formal. The Conference declared 26 principles, among which the following stand out:

As in the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Use of Resources, no civil society or non-governmental organization participated in the 1972 Stockholm Summit, which is congruent because, as has been mentioned, sustainable development (at that time limited to the concept of environment and ecology) was in its infancy and few organizations had decided to address the issue. One of them, a pioneer in environmental care, was the non-state organization Greenpeace, which was born in 1971 motivated by the concern about nuclear tests ordered by the United States government; seven years later, different states contributed economic and administrative resources for the creation of Greenpeace International. With respect to interstate spaces and as a result of the evaluation made at the Stockholm Summit, also in 1972 the United Nations Organization proposed the creation of the first formal and permanent program within its structure related to the subject, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), whose objective is the management of environmental care and more recently the fulfillment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, UNEP does not function as a specialized agency of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), but as a fund under the responsibility of the General Assembly.

It is from this moment on that different specialists in the subject, as well as people interested in environmental care and its consequences, began to mobilize and formally establish themselves as CSOs, under the legality of each of their sovereignties. Although 1972 marks the beginning of the era of concern for the care of the planet, the results did not have a significant advance, however, at the same time the first global organizations of environmental civil society were created. Due to the interest that was emanating in the creation of NGOs, the Environmental Liaison Center was created in 1975, which is a network that promotes the flow of communication, information and actions among organizations for the protection of the environment at a global level. An example of action on local agendas is the Natural Resources Defense Council, founded in the early 1970s in the United States by experts in the field, but outside state representation. During the 1970s and 1980s, inter-state organizations, particularly the UN, continued to hold summits to discuss the consequences of the irresponsible exploitation of resources, such as the summit held in Serbia in 1975, which resulted in the Belgrade Charter, the First International Conference on Environmental Education, from which the Tbilisi Declaration emerged, and years later the International Congress on Environmental Education and Training held in Moscow.

Since NGOs are linked to the democratic progress of nations, as well as to the respect for civil rights, the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the nineties is key, which is characterized by the triumph of the neoliberal model, which although it has been directly or indirectly propelling the environmental impact, it also brought about a paradigm shift in relation to CSOs. The concept of sustainability became concrete in 1983 with the creation of the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission, which defined the term sustainability as an individual way of life that in a particular way gives rise to the term sustainable development, which was defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UN, 1987, p.29). Although, once the concept was defined, society

The civil society began to show a growing interest in it, but this was not the case for formal proposals to promote sustainable development by governments, especially those in which the democratic system was unstable.

During the 1990s, one of the summits that historically has to be identified as a watershed for the promotion of Sustainable Development and the active beginning of CSO participation in the subject, was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or also known as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, in which more than 2,400 CSO representatives participated. At the summit, the CSOs held alternate forums and permanent lobbying for the formulation of Agenda 21, which was seen as a consensus by different actors. It is worth mentioning that during that time, non-state actors, particularly civil organizations, were not considered to be predominant actors in the international system. However, this did not happen in all the forums related to the subject, as in the case of the Kyoto Protocol, where the debate was channeled only by States because its success depended only on the political will to reach agreements.

Civil Society Organizations maintained their activism in order to generate an impact for the fulfillment of sustainable development, despite the lack of formal mechanisms, they were finding a growth in their protagonism in the sustainable agenda and getting closer and closer to a multilateralism in which they were taken into account. The next effort by the UN for the fulfillment of sustainable development was the Millennium Declaration in which the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formalized with a deadline of 2015 to be met, according to information published by the UN, the organizations were antagonistic during the process for the materialization of reaching an agreement to establish the 8 MDGs, however, in the progress report for the fulfillment of the MDGs in 2013, the NGOs were mentioned as actors that can contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, NGOs were mentioned as actors that can provide direct services, provide resources, build capacity for duty bearers, monitor progress and encourage governments to keep their commitments in relation, in short, the climate of participation changed during the following years of the Millennium Declaration, being more favorable to consider Civil Society Organizations in the design of proposals.

In 2012, the Rio+20 Summit aimed at observing the fulfillment of the MDGs, as well as the beginning to promote the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals, unlike other multilateral forums, in this space civil organizations were present in an important way, and were allowed to participate with a voice in different meetings and propose strategies for the establishment of the SDGs. During this time and until the formal proposal of the SDGs in 2015, the organizations played a transcendental role, as they were largely responsible for providing information and concerns of society in general. From reports, surveys, interviews to expert research, civil organizations were involved in the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals and, unlike in previous years, they were no longer seen as an antagonistic actor, but rather as an integral part of the process.

to the agenda for the promotion of the SDGs. It is important to recognize that Civil Society Organizations can play a cooperative role with the States, however, it is necessary the existence of formal mechanisms and channels for the adequate manifestation of proposals, in the case of Mexico there are different tools to materialize this participation, however, there have been circumstances that do not allow the integral cooperation of the organizations. The following is an analysis of some of the main tools for CSO participation in the design of sustainable development policies in the country.

Institutional mechanisms for the participation of civil society organizations in sustainable development policies.

In Mexico there are different tools through which citizens can participate in issues of public interest and contribute to local and global sustainable development through formalized associations. Given the importance that Civil Society Organizations have acquired and how essential it is to follow up in order to comply with the SDGs, today their right to participate is recognized and they have regulatory frameworks that reflect their rights and obligations, frameworks that are deployed by the Federal Public Administration, as well as different institutional platforms and definitely the international cooperation scenarios that allow the participation of CSOs in their forums. The regulatory framework is understood as the "set of laws, regulations, policies, norms, operating rules, provisions and requirements, procedures and practices of the public administration with respect to Civil Society Organizations and their activities" (Tapia and Robles, 2006, p.22).

The progress of civil organizations in Mexico has taken place over more than two decades and they have achieved an important insertion in sustainable development and social responsibility issues, during which time they have sought recognition in the legal and institutional sphere, with precise achievements such as the adoption of laws and agreements that represent their interests (Becerra and Pineda, 2014). Some of the cases qualified as achievements are the approval of the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations, and the Agreement establishing the Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in Foreign Policy issues, the latter allowing them to assert themselves in the global scenario, as well as to make use of international instruments that Mexico has ratified. In the current context, Civil Society Organizations need to comply with the social purpose dictated by their own statutes and seek through regulatory frameworks to generate political advocacy (De la Vega and Montes, 2016). Political advocacy can be understood as:

The deliberate and systematic process that contemplates the realization of a set of political actions by organized citizens, aimed at influencing those who make policy decisions, through the elaboration of proposals that offer solutions to social or community problems, with the purpose of achieving changes in the public sphere that benefit broad sectors of the population or more specific sectors (Manual of Political Indecency, 2003, p.12).

Advocacy through the use of policy frameworks is a means by which women's organizations can

Civil Society Organizations can get involved in political processes to assert their interests in sustainable development and legitimize their participation as well as their own existence. Hence the importance of well-functioning procedures to legitimize Civil Society Organizations as participants in the scenarios that promote local and international sustainable development. The legitimization process of civil organizations in Mexico is understood as "the right earned over the years to act in fields of social or citizen interest, to participate in the fundamental decisions that affect different sectors of the population" (Becerra et al., 2014, p. 23). Civil Society Organizations have been known for two decades as instances of public interest, which seek to act under the law by complying with one of the social objects stipulated in the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations and which also seek to influence public policies corresponding to their interests.

As stated, the insertion of Civil Society Organizations can be through regulatory frameworks or through informal mechanisms, the latter, although they have been means to generate spaces, have been seen as antagonistic measures to the state link. It is appropriate to institutionalize the issue so that the opinions and efforts are not just intentions and can be consolidated in a legal framework that is appropriate for the organizations and for the welfare of citizens. The legal framework acts as a guarantee of the ways in which the relationship in the promotion of sustainable development of Civil Society Organizations with the Federal Public Administration will take place and the way in which governmental agencies will promote their activities (Vázquez, 2011). The steps taken and achievements to generate this institutionalization are not minor, Civil Society Organizations have sought communication channels to position themselves in the topics of debate on development, with this they can be incorporated or participate in the law proposals that restore the participation of civil society in all spheres of citizenship.

One of the areas that has had the greatest progress in terms of social impact is the incorporation of organizations in the issue of sustainable development. In order to generate participation by Civil Society Organizations in different areas of citizen interest, it is essential to have a favorable environment, a strategic factor to continue and strengthen their role (Becerra and Pineda, 2014). Although most of the Civil Society Organizations participating in the national consultations "consider that the political environment in general is not facilitating" (Becerra and Pineda, 2014, p.15), successful scenarios have been achieved, either through the promotion of regulatory frameworks, a core element in this chapter, as well as spaces for participation and monitoring, such as at the meeting of the Global Partnership for Development Cooperation, held in 2014 in Mexico, where a Monitoring Framework to Evaluate Progress towards an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations was integrated. These normative instruments are remarkable because they contemplate in their content the participation of Civil Society Organizations and promote such participation as an element for the democratic consolidation of Mexico. According to the Open Society Institute (2004), since the middle of the last century there have been key factors to consolidate a democracy, among them is the participation of a vigorous civic sector.

The institutional framework in Mexico for civil society's impact on sustainable development

Institutionality implies a process of consolidation and although in Mexico this process of institutional consolidation has not been immediate, since, in most cases, more than the will of decision-makers, it has been the insistence of Civil Society Organizations through various effective channels, the cause of achieving a greater degree of institutionality in the regulatory frameworks related to civil participation. As a state example we can find the Organic Law of the Federal Public Administration (LOAPF) that establishes the attributions of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) in its article 32 bis in its section XI: To evaluate and rule on the manifestations of environmental impact of development projects presented by the public, social and private sectors; to resolve on the studies of environmental risk, as well as on the programs for the prevention of accidents with ecological incidence; and in section XVII: Promote the participation of society and the scientific community in the formulation, application and surveillance of environmental policy, and coordinate actions and investments with the social and private sectors for the protection and restoration of the environment. In the same law, but with respect to the Welfare Secretariat, Article 32, Section IV: To promote the activities of civil society organizations in the areas of welfare, the fight against poverty and human development.

Likewise, the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection in its fifth title, Article 158, reiterates the commitment of the Federal Government and SEMARNAT to enter into agreements and promote the participation of civil society in the planning, execution, evaluation and oversight of environmental and natural resources policy. One of the main Mexican regulatory frameworks whose provisions suggest in different ways the participation of civil society is the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations. "The most important instrument that gives orientation and political-legal support to the policies for the promotion of Civil Society activities is the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations" (Evangelista, 2014, p.421), which appeared in the Official Gazette of the Federation on February 9, 2004. It can be stated that the entry into force of this law closes a stage in the process of evolution of civil society in Mexico and begins a new stage that requires compliance with the obligations acquired by the government, as well as by civil society for participation in sustainable development.

The democratization process in Mexico, perceived as such due to the alternation of the party in power, allowed a change in the attitude towards the opening of civic participation. This positive attitude was an important element for the approval of the law initiative, however, the Federal Public Administration did not immediately assimilate this positive attitude, partly because the law faced the interaction of many government agencies that continued to resist, and even continue to do so, to accept Civil Society Organizations as interlocutors in public policies (Tapia and Robles, 2006). Opposed to this resistance, officials with a positive stance towards the participation of civil society in environmental issues were a determining factor in the approval of the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations.

The Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Carried out by Civil Society Organizations was an initiative proposed by organized civil society itself, given the lack of an appropriate legal framework for the progress of these organizations, the main objective of the proposal was to create an instrument that would recognize their capacities, efforts and at the same time promote the development activities carried out by Civil Society Organizations. The next objective was to achieve adequate regulations that could differentiate them from commercial companies and the purposes they carry out, since tax obligations were initially the same for both types of companies, without taking into account that Civil Society Organizations carry out non-commercial and non-profit activities, especially in an issue that was initially proving in the international scenario the insertion of CSOs in the sustainable agenda.

Conclusions

The formal recognition of this new participation was confirmed with the decree published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on March 2, 2005, which published the Agreement Establishing the Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in Foreign Policy Issues. Through this agreement, the Mexican government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made public the commitment to comply with the obligations stipulated in the ordinance, so that the organizations could participate and express their proposals on issues found in the global agenda. Among the commitments made by the Secretariat to civil society are to consult public opinion through various forums; to promote greater participation and commitment by society in the formulation of international policies; and to foster greater coordination between government and civil society.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs clearly showed that it recognizes the role that civil society actors can play in sustainable development, during the event of the Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations, Ambassador Patricia Espinosa pointed out that contemporary international relations cannot be thought of without the active participation of Civil Society Organizations, "States and international organizations are no longer the only interlocutors in multilateral discussions " (Espinosa, 2009, p.2). Indeed, in the current global contexts, social movements that want to influence environmental decisions and public policies, in the same way have great challenges ahead. According to Richard Falk (2018) we find ourselves at a time when States cannot face the challenge of globalization alone. In general terms, Civil Society Organizations have instruments that allow them to get involved in the design of policies related to sustainable development, however, it is necessary, as already mentioned, the state will to allow a correct insertion in environmental policy advocacy.

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