

CAF

Report

Annual Forum

2020

New dynamics in
urban planning and
international
cooperation in the
context of COVID-19





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Chiapas, México | October 27th – 29th

By convening these leaders in thought and action, CAF pursues its overall vocation of advocating for alternative narratives engaging in fair, global cosmopolitanism. In doing so, it seeks to strengthen institutional dynamics in a way that provides for active citizenship and a new social contract. CAF encourages independent platforms of cooperation, research, innovation and advisory that give shape to a progressive agenda offering alternative solutions to the challenges of today. Issues that demand priority include rising neo-fascism and xenophobia, increasing inequalities, technology's social impacts and the planet's environmental limits.

Presentation

The Common Action Forum (CAF) is a transnational, non-profit organization established in 2015 in Madrid, Spain. Functioning as a global network, it gathers a diverse range of prominent and emerging intellectuals, academics, politicians, journalists and activists.

Since its 2015 foundation, CAF has organized an Annual Forum, and in 2019 it launched a program of two annual events, allowing for differing formats and audiences to further achieve CAF's initiatives. The subject of this report, the Annual Forum, has been taking place for six years and convenes experts in an exchange open to the public. The second yearly event, the closed session OCTAGON, is an organizational meeting of CAF collaborators that expands upon the Forum's theme, provides fodder for and propels the CAF mission.

The past six Annual Forums have tackled timely issues. The inaugural Forum held in 2015 in Madrid on December 5th and 6th 2015, entitled "Steps of Progress in Times of Crisis," addressed the impact of global transformations and crises that year. The following Forum in Madrid, from November 5th to 6th 2016, debated "The Rise of Global Fear: Why is the World Becoming Less Tolerant and More Radical?," proposing alternative solutions and narratives to rising nationalisms and discourses of fear. The third from November 3rd to 5th 2017 in Madrid, spoke to "The Limits to Inequality: seeking a sustainable society," in particular noting the new forms of control, accumulation, solidarity and freedom resulting from globalization and an information society. In Johannesburg, South Africa on November 10th and 11th 2018, the Forum conversation continued, discussing "Global Racial Polarization and the Rise of Right-wing Politics." CAF's Forum was hosted in Mexico for the first time on October 14th, 2019, collaborating with Mexico City's Joint Tourism Promotion Fund and Foundation FRAM to present, "A New Path to Development," reconceptualizing traditional approaches to this field.

While the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented a large in-person event for the 2020 Forum in Mexico, the Government of the State of Chiapas and the Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH) gracefully hosted an online conference to continue CAF's global dialogue, overcoming the

circumstances. Over the course of October 27 to 29, "New dynamics in urban planning and international cooperation in the context of COVID-19" were approached from specific and diverse perspectives and areas of expertise, in order to provide room for reflection as well as concrete ways forward in the midst of the pandemic's multiple crises.

The tripartite conference began with an opening session on its inaugural day, followed by its first day of two roundtable discussions under the theme of "Governance and Public Policy for Wellbeing" including the sessions "Local governments and the global challenge of public policy for wellbeing" and "Public health and inclusive policies: wellbeing for and by communities." The second day, on the topic of "International Cooperation and Global Risk," included the two roundtables "Responses to global risks" "International cooperation and digital integration." The final day, focusing on "Urban planning and resilience," consisted of two sessions on "The post-pandemic city: open policies, public space and resilience" and "The rural, the urban and their interdependence." Following the sessions, CAF President Wadah Khanfar offered closing remarks on "Experiences of urban management and international cooperation for welfare."

What follows is an account of these various elements of the conference, with insight from individual contributors as well as takeaways from the overall exchange. Taken together, this event, despite and perhaps even thanks to extraordinary circumstances, offered a dynamic space and fertile ground for imagination, critique and problem-solving directed towards not only an immediate crisis, but also CAF's ultimate goal of building a sustainable future.

Introduction

Over the previous months, today's world seems to have suffered irrevocable consequences and complications, but brief consideration of the recent past reminds us that before SARS-CoV-2 emerged, geopolitical upheaval, economic conflict and social tension were sweeping the globe.

Increasing numbers of activists for the defense and protection of the environment have been warning about an escalating climate crisis. Meanwhile, citizens became all the more conscious of the risks presented by technological development, especially those posed to human rights. These phenomena occurred before the "new normal." Perceptibly or not, the system was gradually naturalizing inequality and injustice, including the accelerated deterioration of the planet.

The rapid and catastrophic expansion of the COVID-19 disease arrived without warning, not only overwhelming many health systems, but also highlighting the multitude of flaws in international coordination and various levels of government. The pandemic has exposed how social gears and management mechanisms truly function. Perhaps most interestingly, however, it has offered a clean slate that could become a space for creativity and solidarity, thanks to the situation's exceptional nature.

In this sense, we have witnessed not only the consolidation of expansive, speculative monopolies, but also state and regional economic policy changes: brave measures by administrations that have been able to see past short-term solutions, and above all, widespread citizen initiatives throughout the world that demand a new social contract. This contract, equipped with more rights, would adapt to a new digital and technological framework, rethinking the state model, with public policies capable of prioritizing true collective needs. The year of 2020 has necessitated a close

critique and revision of our wellness systems and strategies, from the physical to the conceptual. In that sense, it becomes a unique opportunity to continue towards the new path to development explored in the previous year's Forum. This exchange highlights the transformative lessons of 2020, a year that demanded cooperation and dialogue between the local and the global in the most essential and simultaneously promising ways.

Inaugural session

The conference began with a brief virtual presentation video from the State of Chiapas. Rodolfo Pastor of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, along with Mexican National Art and Literature Award winner Carmen Vázquez Hernández and Diana Damián Palencia of the Formation and Capacity organization of Chiapas, then prefaced the event.

Carlos Natarén, Rector of UNACH, invited the Governor of the State of Chiapas, Rutilio Escandón Cadenas, to provide a welcome and some reflection. In particular, the Governor noted how resourcefully taking advantage of the technological platform allowed not only for simple communication as simple exchange, but also offered the opportunity to strengthen ties.

The event then proceeded to an exchange between Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Mexico's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Rafael Heiber, Co-Founder and CEO of Common Action Forum, who both convened at the Secretary of Foreign Affairs in Mexico City to speak to the significance of the topics in debate.

"The city is a space where interdependence between our actions, our tastes, our work, our consumption, our emotions—where the whole network of relationships that defines us as social beings—crystallizes."
Rafael Heiber

"The pandemic and its aftermath require us to cooperate more so than the current generation has ever witnessed. In this century to date and at the close of the previous one, no other crisis, economic or otherwise, has obliged our generation to cooperate as

an international community. Hopefully we are able to maintain the momentum of common action."
Marcelo Ebrard

Opening remarks

Speaking in particular to Chiapas as an apt setting for the discussion, the conference participants pointed to how today's complex challenges required adaption, with a universal perspective based in concrete example. In particular, Chiapas with its specific resources, and networks ranging from indigenous communities to frontiers of world transit, is reflective of the larger, diverse Mexican and global societal fabrics. With advantages, however, challenges come to the fore, including those relating to Chiapas' heavily traversed border, and of course, the health crisis and its effects. In the case of Chiapas, the community has been forced to remain resilient, as its tourism potential has been threatened by the current situation. Remaining connected to the global when confronting the particular becomes an important strategy, not solely in geography or infrastructure, but in sharing of ideas and burden.

In light of this, Secretary Ebrard provided some reflections in anticipation of the interconnected conference themes: the city and the pandemic. He noted that the city serves as a primordial space of coexistence, and in the current context, we will approach mega-cities throughout the world that will reshape the model. In order to meet this challenge, recovering a sense of community becomes essential, from neighborhoods to entire nations. Coexistence and community are demanded in order to face the COVID-19 crisis, and today's generations have exercised enormous efforts in this regard. Current manifestations of cooperation, both among the international community and at the local level, have been noteworthy. In the latter case, they have proven that cities can truly reflect spaces of community. Such spaces must also embody a combination of ideas and compromise that can usher in effective pathways to change. In this sense, a viable avenue for change would include providing the United Nations with

further power, so that it could operate as a global governance structure, rather than solely serve as representative. As of now, the UN is the principal instrument of cooperation humanity has, facilitating very necessary collective action.

Rafael Heiber, as CEO of Common Action Forum, concluded in this vein, pointing to how Chiapas provides a symbolic place in addition to a physical example: it offers lessons from Latin American history as an alternative model to present systems of utilitarianism. Ultimately, it serves as a reminder of how the city is a space where interdependence between action, work, consumption, emotion and further dimensions crystalize an entire network of relationships that define us as social beings.



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Part A

Governance and public policy for wellbeing

The crisis has been marked by various efforts of trial and error in the political and social ambit, in a situation that is both as uncertain as it is unprecedented. At the same time, there have been effective responses and great demonstrations of transversal solidarity: from collaboration between states, to the donation of medical materials, to spontaneous collective action in local networks, whose citizens organized to ensure care for the community.

This virus has not only impacted the most vulnerable populations, but has also led to exceptional and extensive consequences throughout the planet. The health of every community is linked to the health of all, and constructing the future requires continued consciousness that crises now entail a global reach. Moreover, an active citizenry, capable of self-organizing in responding to a crisis of this magnitude overwhelming the state, increasingly demands more efficient welfare policies from flexible governing actors connected to real needs.

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1st session

Local governments and the global challenge of public policy for wellbeing

The current situation demands that we share experience among cities and regions that have dealt with the unexpected impact of the pandemic. Along with health systems and workers, community institutions have remained at the forefront, directly addressing citizens' needs. The experiences of these local, municipal systems are vital in understanding the mechanisms and phenomena that this crisis has brought about, as well as possible exacerbating factors. This sheds light on how to overcome the crisis, as well as on how to avoid its reoccurrence.

Takeaways

Superseding commodification of humanity and nature

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of several symptoms that plague society and the space it inhabits. There is a detachment from the suffering of humanity and nature, exacerbated by a mounting, pervading culture of consumerism that benefits exclusive interests, and which only threatens to worsen. Corporate or elite interests have managed to manipulate and appropriate improving technologies for their own ends, and the action they are taking is barely noticed. Commodification of people and the planet encompasses everything from learning, to drinking and eating; essentially, it is now involved in all aspects of living. The shared experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, from the isolation of the disease to its spotlight on the vulnerable, allows us to take a step back and witness the otherwise unperceived advances of the elite at the expense and detriment of our fellow humans and planetary home.

Leveraging community solidarity in effectively responding to real needs

Measures and ways of managing the pandemic response are illustrative of local level potential in achieving grounded, sensitive solidarity. Local communities can offer a more targeted and immediate response to global problems. In this discussion, the actions of Ecuador community "watchmen" offer an example; in this case, neighborhood or rural community leaders pooled together in reporting detected cases or providing sustenance to isolated groups in order to combat pandemic effects. Women's groups worked with local governance to provide monitoring and assistance in the face of increased domestic violence, and food supply shortage was mitigated via sourcing from local farms. Inspired by real and widespread human need, organized effort can be effectively mobilized to meet the needs of many for collective benefit. Horizontal problem-solving can lead to concrete solutions.

"When we talk about the *glocal*, I think we are referring to examples like this: taking a look at what is happening in the world, at how humanity is confronting the pandemic, but reacting through local communities—pooling action that allows us to respond more quickly"

Paola Pabón

"The COVID-19 pandemic can serve as an opportunity to accomplish things that were very difficult to achieve before, like pursuing zero-emission, non-pollutive public transport, or promoting the bicycle use and pedestrianizing our cities."

Vidal Llerenas

"I am profoundly concerned about our capacity to dismiss the harshness of what is happening. We are capable of forgetting the COVID-19 pandemic just as we forgot the fires in Australia or California. One of our tasks is to ensure that such pain does not end up being unproductive."

JC Monedero

"We have to defend the caring state against the defensive state [...] we must strengthen regions and local governments via the principle of subsidiarity. The optimal solution to people's problems is found among the people and where they live."

M. Eugenia Palop

Transportation and networks: new consequences, methods and opportunities

While the adaptation of various sectors of society in confronting the pandemic's effects has been lauded in many cases, there are also consequences resulting from these new methods. For instance, the reaction to decreased mobility, with new strategies of communication or "transport," including telecommuting and online education, presents complications. Despite liberal democratic ideals or promises, care work still falls largely on the shoulders of women, especially in present examples of new telework and online arrangements. When quickly pivoting to new models, such considerations need to be noted and accounted for, to avoid further entrenchment in old forms of discrimination.

At the same time, improved societal arrangements and opportunities have also emerged. For example, Mexico City launched a new bicycling system, with lanes, rental facilities and parking lots, to reduce contagion; ultimately, these types of responses are also crucial for future sustainability. Providing public food canteens as temporary relief could also simultaneously support local businesses, again aiding in equal distribution of wealth. In building these new local networks, transportation or otherwise, long-term vision in the face of short-term struggle offers progress toward global well-being.

New institutionalism: embracing the "radical" in protecting the commons

Another revelation from the COVID-19 crisis includes the reflection on who institutions serve, and how to bridge divides. Such fault lines are concretely visible at the local level. While solidarity has been pervasive, the divides between neighborhoods within cities have become more conspicuous: access to public health, among many other services, can often be split between wealthier versus disenfranchised sections. As the local level can thus become a space to more acutely sense these inequalities, it befalls upon local communities and leadership to work for their rectification.

The principle of subsidiarity as a basis for governance realizes this. Putting public policies and social services first, based on what is actually felt and experienced on a lived daily basis, can then serve as a model for a caregiving, rather than defensive, state. Citizenship engagement and participation, with transparent and open debate as characteristic of our political communities, is fundamental in justly managing and sharing the commons.



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2nd session

Public health and inclusive policies: wellbeing for and by communities

In light of the pandemic, public actors and civil society have sought public health policy implementation that works from an inclusive and versatile foundation, addressing the needs of citizens; moreover, these measures should also be understood by citizens. Overcoming the disconnect and gap between legislation and increasingly diverse, autonomous and varying communities is important for confronting future pandemics. With a view to the larger picture, it is also key in formulating truly transformative visions for the common welfare.

Takeaways

The social determinants of health: a broader perspective on wellbeing

Socioeconomic determinants of health have gained increasing attention in both knowledge production and public policy, as the social and economic conditions in which people live are linked closely with their health. The pandemic has been particularly revealing in this sense. While informal economies garner criticism for several reasons, the crisis brought into sharp focus how the majority of the world's workforce suffers precarious conditions as informal workers. During the pandemic, they have been especially vulnerable, given their lack of options to discontinue work in order to follow public health measures or maintain safe distancing practices.

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As social factors like this lie at the root of worldwide health inequalities, public health knowledge on this front must be translated to action and policy. Individual and community health can be improved by policies that address and reduce social disadvantages, with an eye to how these health disparities are especially prominent along lines of education, race, sex, sexual orientation and where one lives. Policy should strive for social conditions that target the good health of the entirety of a population.

The gender dimension in approaching health and policy (in)equality

A wealth of evidence as to health disparities along the gender dimension, linked to wider inequalities, demonstrates the impact of public health policies on certain groups in a community. Gender, which includes the social constructed roles, behaviors, activities and characteristics that societies assign to individuals based on their sex assigned at birth, can influence health outcomes. Historic and underrepresentation of women and LGBTQI+ individuals, for example, as well as powerlessness and lack of control in some societies, can result in different or worse exposure and illness among women and girls and LGBTQI+ individuals.

As briefly mentioned, women still conduct the majority of care work globally, and their roles in educating and caring during pandemic school and work suspension were amplified. This results in exacerbated physical toll as well as impacts mental health. The social effects of the pandemic have also exacerbated violence against women and LGBTQI+ individuals, and some communities have organized support to these groups. At the same time, there is still a long way to go in redirecting policy efforts and funds to rectify health inequalities beyond the extent of the pandemic.

"It is time to discuss a universal basic wage or income for workers that form part of the greater economy, of the informal economy, of the care economy, recognizing their contribution to the creation of common wealth."

Juan Graboís

"The pandemic has enabled the naturalization of different forms of violence, including state violence and state terror, femicides and violence against women, as well as against LGTBQ+ individuals."

Gabriela Rivadeinera

"Health is not the absence of illness or the presence of illnesses, symptoms, etc. Health is quality of life. Health is quality of life, it is the capacity of people to be able to fulfill all those social satisfactions that allow them to live in dignity and to live in conditions of fulfillment and happiness."

Esperanza Martínez

"Two billion people in the world—62% of the world's workers—are informal workers. They have been the most vulnerable throughout the pandemic because they cannot afford to stop working, and because they have no insurance or protections."

Benjamín Temkin

Building a policy framework for inclusion

Health should include quality of life and living with dignity, and access to health care as a protected public good forms part of this. Again, as health is fundamentally interlinked with social and economic conditions, reformulation of social and economic policy targets the root causes of health inequalities. Universal basic income, for example, is a policy proposal that could close gaps in access to public health services, as it offers a path to widespread inclusion.

Public health experts need to be involved in larger fiscal or social services policy reform in order to comprehensively understand if and how policy affects the health of different communities. Reaching out to communities at the grassroots and engaging them with participatory governance can help ensure that resources are distributed justly. Reducing social inequalities in health in order to meet basic human needs is essential, and real needs can be best ascertained at this local level.

Part B

International cooperation and global risks

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a veritable x-ray into today's society, so often termed the "information and communication society" or "global village." While the globalized nature of the world had been clear up to a certain point, the pandemic has especially evidenced our interdependence. Collectively threatened by global warming or increasing inequality, the crisis proved an accelerated threat, as in a matter of weeks it changed quotidian life.

The crisis continues to provide many learning points in understanding the interconnected nature of the world, or about how to mobilize existing institutions to avoid other significantly pressing risks. In particular, questions emerge about what role technical development should play in meeting the urgent need for innovation and efficient management of human and planetary health, without jeopardizing fundamental human rights.

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3rd session

Responses to global risks

The health crisis has revealed that the necessary mechanisms in providing immediate and coordinated responses are not as developed as they should be. Diplomacy and international cooperation operate in a space in which the public interest confronts the private interests of multiple actors. The question of environmental threat has become the principal source of international instability. It is clear that it is necessary to rethink multilateral cooperation, in order to anticipate tomorrow's challenges.

"The problem with international organizations addressing the environment, climate, and global issues like inequality, is that they have no power. The power exclusively lies in international financial

institutions, like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank."
Celso Amorim

"In Latin America, we have active volcanoes, high risks of floods, landslides, etc. However, the resources for research in risk prevention and adaptation to climate change are not here, but in the strong countries. We must invest in science and training in

Latin America, it cannot be postponed. This is where the problems are and this is where we have to train that human capital."
Silvia Ramos

Takeaways

Coopted international institutions are pitted against public goals

The state should be entrusted with pursuing the common good, in effect encouraging public goals of development and social welfare, instead of supporting the self-interested behavior of sectarian groups. International institutions designed in post-war Europe were meant to accomplish this. However, there is a clear neoliberal bent and liberal individualism underlying many international institutions' agendas, at odd with public commitments. This is particularly the case with international financial institutions, which attempt to exercise sovereignty over international civil society organizations that increasingly recognize and work for environmental justice and improving inequalities.

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In Latin America, these financial institutions privatized public health to the point that the region found itself unequipped to face a global pandemic in several ways. Apart from international power networks, agendas of individual states can be united in this self-interested creed of liberal individualism to cause international repercussions. The U.S. Trump and Brazilian Bolsonaro regimes offer examples of how individual state agendas conforming to such an ideology can cause destruction beyond the level of the state, to cause international impact.

Embracing global interdependence as a consciously organizing principle

At the same time, in facing escalating risk posed by aggravated, endemic problems like compromising the environment and systemic inequalities, the global interdependence revealed by the COVID-19 crisis should be embraced: taking advantage of the interconnectedness of modern society and its functioning can aid in overcoming not only the current crisis, but in redirecting how we confront less striking but nonetheless underlying and urgent issues. These issues, sooner or later, are challenges that the entire planet and its inhabitants will eventually have to face and experience. Coordinating efforts and pooling resources and ideas, with a vision for the inevitable and currently unsustainable future, rather than short-sighted, piecemeal solutions, allows for collective survival. This includes investing time and resources in the science and policy that can adapt and mitigate risk. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic can become a catalyst for improved multilateral cooperation.

"Although we live in a globalized world, we did not realize the extent of its interdependence until the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This interconnection has led to the necessary establishment of networks and

international cooperation in order to mitigate risks that have brought us to the point of no return, including global warming or growing inequality."

Alfonso Zegbe

"We must understand that health is fundamentally linked with the full realization of other rights, and seek a collective construction of public policy."

Carina Vance

"In recent years we have witnessed democratic backsliding in many states, and the emergence of nationalist factions in the United States, in Brazil, in India... and a pattern among many governments of fighting against cooperation and against science, when now, both are needed more than ever."

Álvaro De Vasconcelos

Education in order to mobilize demand for a public good-oriented society

As part of catalyzing action towards multilateral, international cooperation in pursuit of a global society oriented towards the public good, citizens of this global society should be informed about how this is possible and why it is a worthwhile endeavor. "Deregulation," "privatization" and "subsidiarization" have been advocated for as an antidote to past failures of a regulatory state that purportedly sought the public interest. However, finance, investment capital and commodification of every aspect of human life has not resulted in liberated individuals, but only further degradation of individual dignity and freedom.

Citizens should be illuminated as to how what little public institutional capacity is left has become largely unable to supervise or regulate powerful, extraterritorial interests providing profit for an elite few. Global interdependence, however, can become one grounded in solidarity and good governance, rather than in exclusive networks of power. Promoting an understanding of why international cooperation can benefit a power-interdependent world, by working towards communal mutual benefit, is key in order to create a system of participatory governance by and for communities that best understands and meets citizen needs.



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4th session

International cooperation and digital integration

Technology plays an increasing role in formulating innovative and efficient solutions for global health management. At the same time, it remains controversial, as it has been instrumentalized on several occasions by various regimes and power networks that control populations and individuals. One of the most pressing debates relates to the opportunity and risk evaluation of new technologies, as they facilitate networks and create synergies. Moreover, there is a need for technological regulation so as to ensure that crisis management does not take place at the cost of individual rights.

"Algorithms can incorporate racist or sexist biases and many other forms of discrimination that draw from the real world, but become amplified in the digital world. Technology can discriminate."

Gemma Galdón

Takeaways

Pursuing technology for progress, problem-solving and knowledge

New technologies, and in particular Big Data, have become more visible as threats encroaching on individual privacy and freedoms, thus breaching international human rights. These rights have been forfeited for the sake of profit and convenience, and their jeopardization cannot be overemphasized. As noted in the previous session, institutions are incapable of or unwilling to regulate these overextended power networks that escape supervision or accountability, and as a result, new technologies can be utilized in a way that degrades democratic society, individual freedoms and ultimately, the common good.

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Technology and its development, instead of profit-driven in a way that creates superficial and short-term products and tools, could be reoriented towards a public utility, designed to support long-term, sustainable and transparent activities and solutions. As part of this, citizen and public oversight is important in ensuring responsible technological processes and progress for development and knowledge sharing.

Education and the digital divide: how to reconfigure technology for collective knowledge

Technology and digitization have also led to asymmetries at the level of regions, countries, groups and individuals. For example, an asymmetrical relationship between the Global North and South has been repeatedly signaled, and unfortunately, artificial intelligence and other technologies can be directed towards furthering the advantaged of "developed" states and reinforcing old paradigms. Disadvantage becomes compounded, in that populations or individuals that already lacked resources can additionally lack access to new technologies or internet, as disadvantage becomes further ingrained.

The example of women and girls reemerges: an underinvestment in the technological literacy of women and girls, for instance, has translated to their underrepresentation. Their lack of access can also be embedded in the very same networks, structures and institutions that permit or facilitate gender inequalities. An additional example includes the repercussions that can take place within education: disadvantaged populations' lack of access to technologies further snowballs into a gap in digital skills, as well as in learning outcomes within a digital environment. In short, innovation and the new technologies of modern society can either be consciously leveraged for the public good, or it will default to yet another element driving inequalities.

"Differences or structural inequalities are reproduced times of crisis, in the context of emergency. Rather than solving it, the digital is amplifying it."
Magdalena Claro

"The pandemic has made it clear that to date, Big Data has so focused more on commercial, frivolous issues than on promoting or generating development and information exchange. [...] We need to shift focus to community-based scientific

research, reorienting these numerous cost-benefit concepts towards social gain."
Gustavo Cabrera

International cooperation to remedy divides and asymmetrical systems

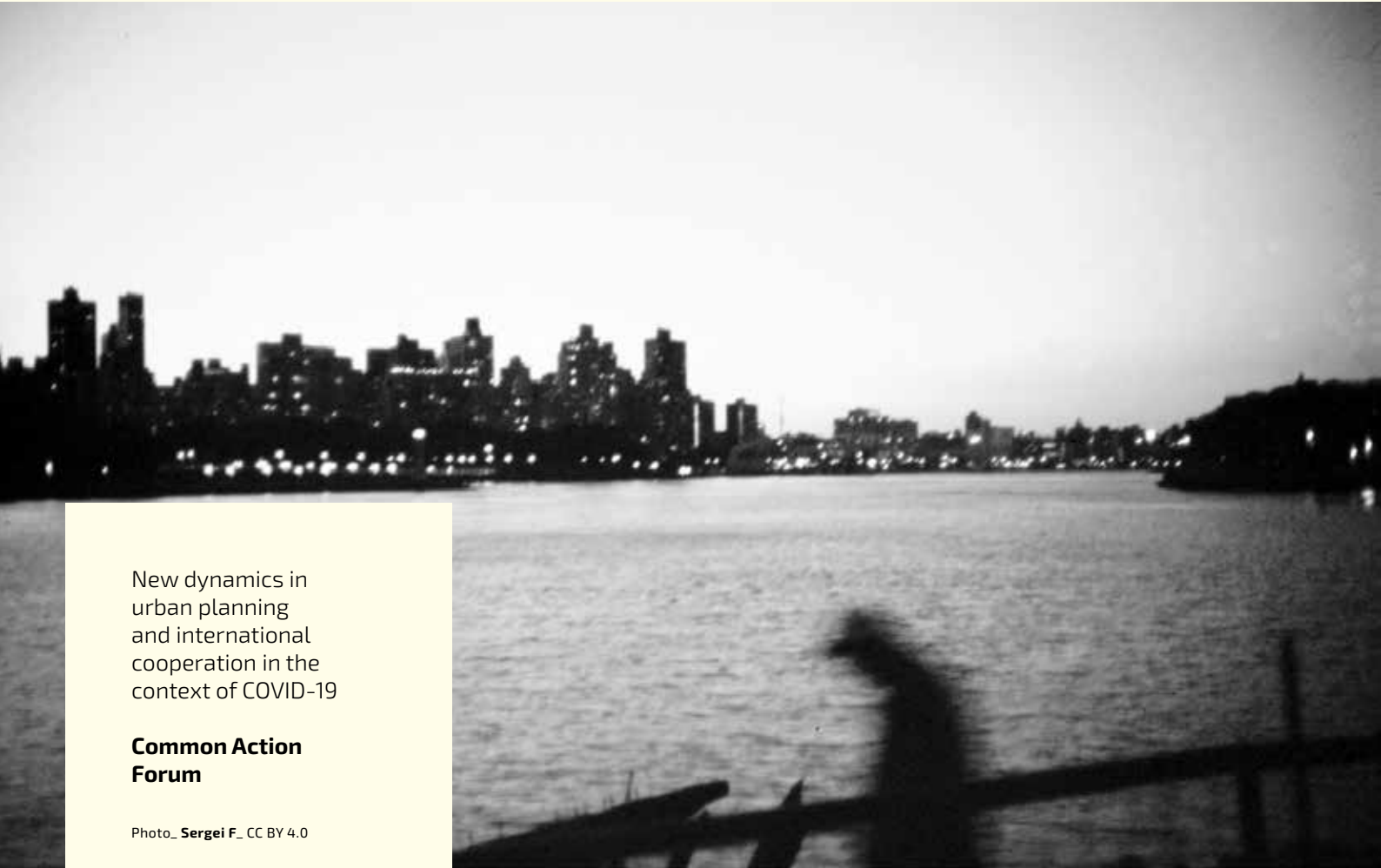
Austerity regimes and unbridled capitalism have contributed to regions and countries becoming drastically under-resourced, as well as stymied in any attempts to create technological or digital infrastructure. Apart from the fact that many international institutions and neoliberal power networks facilitated this situation, it is also important to bear in mind how low-income, disadvantaged populations and regions simultaneously affect the rest of interconnected global systems.

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world could have been better prepared for crisis if there had been long-term, structural measures in place that allowed for resource-sharing and digital health solutions so that an epidemic could be detected, prevented or diagnosed in a more streamlined, cooperative manner. Digital connectivity and technological advances allow for repairing fragmented health systems and providing continuity of care that can protect the right to health of all. On a broader scale, international cooperation in a digital age means not only sharing resources and sharing knowledge, but also acknowledging the diversity of ICT systems and capacities. This entails working at the local level to identify what is possible, bridging various levels of systems. International cooperation, in effect, cannot only take the form of top-down intervention, but must seek stability and streamlining that incorporates the realities of a diverse world.

Part C

Urban planning and resilience

Cities, in having become epicenters of the pandemic, inspire profound reflection as to our lifestyles. We have questioned, refuted and even revolutionized everything from demographic density to supply networks, quality of housing, transportation and public services, territory and urban space. As a result, the city represents a nerve center of pandemic management and confronting the new normal, promising paradigms of solidarity, habitability, sustainability, living, mobility and coexistence. In sum, the city encapsulates the multidimensionality of the crisis and represents a building block towards improving societal resilience and management.



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5th session

The post-pandemic city: open policies, public space and resilience

Contemplating the post-pandemic city entails analyzing policies with transformative potential to expand citizen participation, rebalancing the actors and networks that build and administer urban spaces. Management plans, precisely because they are being designed as the result of an emergency, must not only focus on the resilience and capacity of our citizens in order to overcome and rebuild; a long-term view to anticipating future crises and promoting overall social cohesion is key.

"There should be a reorganization of the provision of care tasks among families, markets, public services, formal and informal collaborative networks, the third sector or the non-profit sector... so that the extra workload does not always fall on women."

Inés S. De Madariaga

"We have to think about a common economy—an economy consisting of what is nearby, of small businesses and sustainable jobs—all of which can be organized at the municipal level."

Manuela D'avila

Takeaways

Fighting for the public space: advancing societies with re-municipalization

The local level has become the forefront for reclaiming public space and advocating for public services throughout the world. From smaller towns to large metropolises and capitals, citizens work against liberalization, privatization and austerity policies to have essential needs met for the greater benefit. Localizing services not only empowers a community's economy, but also allows for citizenship participation and public ownership that fosters more democratic, participatory governance. The proximity of local governance and services can better adapt to a community's specific needs. For example, a school's kitchen can also be used and operated on the weekends, outside of school hours, as a community space for those children that do not have access to food outside of school services. Reclaiming public health, of course, forms part of these efforts, which can also be directed towards improved and more sustainable energy and environmental policies and practices, as well as social services provision.

Policy that builds and protects: the example of addressing informal and care work

In creating a new public space and re-building for resilience, accounting for the most vulnerable in our communities and societies allows for establishing stronger and more inclusive foundations than before. Again, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused both short and long-term social, economic and health impacts on those populations already in precarious circumstances. As referenced earlier, the case of care work is particularly grave: many of those providing care work in the informal economy work for low wages and in unprotected conditions, and during the pandemic, face increased exposure to the virus by nature of their jobs. When societies have overcome the pandemic crisis situation, these populations still require protection and access to the rights and services that they are due. At the community level, education and communication as to rights can be offered, as well as improved public regulation and reformulated, more inclusive policies that include equitable compensation and paid time off.

"The central states at this moment are too small to face global challenges and too big to deal with the everyday and the concrete. (...) The common is not the conventional public, it is not the bureaucratic public, it is not the

public or simply state, it is the public built with the community, built with citizen participation."
Gerardo Pisarello

"For almost half of the population living in overcrowded conditions in Latin America, public space serves as an extension of domestic space. In a one-room dwelling where four or five people live together, recreation and work is conducted, and most needs are met, outside rather than inside. In a house

without a refrigerator, for example, the neighborhood store functions as a pantry—it serves as an extension of the house."

Fernando Carrión

Reorganizing for resilience in the long-term, beyond the pandemic

Bearing the above in mind, formal and informal collaborative networks and civil society can work together alongside local public governance in order to create and protect public space. As many disadvantaged populations do not own or even live in a space with sufficient dignity, it is important that neighborhoods have access to public space for the wellbeing of all. In the pandemic, spaces were temporarily repurposed to provide hospitals and food banks, among other examples. There must be a view to longer-term repurposing of our resources, however. Protection of these resources, including energy and water, as well as the environment, can be reorganized at the local level for long-term sustainability. In the wake of the pandemic, citizen groups can continue to demand and actively seek policies mitigating environmental damage, maximizing the sharing and use of resources, and providing for the wellbeing of their neighborhoods and communities.

New dynamics in
urban planning
and international
cooperation
in the context of
COVID-19

**Common Action
Forum**

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6th session

The rural, the urban and their interdependence

The connections between country and city reflect our interdependence with the environment and lessons learned from the pandemic. Issues that have become more visible include food supply, the link between human mobility and levels of contamination in situations of confinement, as well as the need to reorganize space or revise the dynamics of consumption, energy networks, and the world of work and leisure. In the same way that global warming represents one of humanity's greatest challenges, the degradation of urban and regional space are also transversal challenges that require collaborative problem-solving.

Takeaways

In a globalized world, there is multiple interlinking between the urban and the rural

There are various ways in which urban and rural community are connected. One of the most obvious includes from the standpoint of economic systems, which are often the prioritized relationship in both public attention and policy measures. Indeed, the rural economy is often configured to meet the economic demands of the urban, and viewed as the endpoint of a production line. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated, where and how people live, commute, move and intermingle involves a great deal more of multi-layered interconnectivity on a daily basis with multi-level impacts, with no region working from a superior position. This complex diversity, however, can also fall prey to inequalities along lines of space, demography and economy. Extraterritorial economic, social, political and technological influences can affect the local labor market conditions that inform interlinked rural and urban economic configurations and quality of life.

Overcoming the current, multilevel patterns of consumption and waste with urban policy

The relationship between rural and urban has often been approached with the simplistic and inaccurate view that the rural is exclusively linked with farming, and marked by poverty or lagging economic growth. Confinement during the pandemic has helped to draw out a more complex picture, including food supply, but also looking to human mobility and dynamics of consumption. Lowering transportation and communication costs, technological advances and a growing understanding of what constitutes a sustainable lifestyle, has offered new patterns of decentralization that promise to mitigate consumption and waste that has escalated when following neoliberal models of economic structuring. As part of this, urban and regional spatial inequalities can be rectified, starting with the municipal mobilization that this Forum emphasizes.

"As long as our way of life is based in hegemonic thinking that allows for the privatization of knowledge, and the dominance of the individual over the collective [...] remains in force, we will remain extremely vulnerable to any pandemic in every sense." **Carlos Viteri**

"We must take advantage of the opportunity that the pandemic presents to progress: it gives us the chance to turn from cities back to the rural, and undertake an eco-social transition that can reformulate the economy." **Felipe Llamas**

"Rural environments not only feed urban environments, but also provide them with a multitude of environmental services. We must ensure that those who live in these rural environments are provided with opportunities and quality of life." **Patricia Acosta**

"The pandemic has demonstrated that it is not possible to have public health without planetary health. That is, if our environment remains unhealthy." **Leticia Merino**

Models for inclusive growth: incorporating environmental growth and population wellbeing

Ecuador, at the forefront of codifying the rights of nature, coins the Quechua people's phrase "sumak kawsay," to reference a life that centers on the community, maintains an ecological balance and remains culturally sensitive. Those indigenous to the Amazon, for example, live in small communities where one disruption or breach of their current balance disturbs the totality of living. Jeopardizing the environment, water supply, settlement patterns or symbolic territory can then disrupt the entirety of the ecosystem and these populations' way of life.

The ties between urban and rural should be strengthened to mutual benefit, rather than placing the metropolitan at the end of a production chain. Preserving the natural resources of the rural and improving education, labor market connections and conditions, leads to overall wellbeing that can benefit the greater majority of populations, irrespective of the territory or spaces they occupy. Preserving the natural world can be conducted in tandem with protecting the integrity of urban and rural spaces, and the wellbeing of their inhabitants.

In closing

Experiences of urban management and international cooperation for welfare

"Institutional trust, fueled by cooperation, can serve as the second vaccine in this crisis: a vaccine that ensures that health of our democracies."
Rafael Heiber

Contemplating urban management and the design and implementation of public policies for community well-being requires a panoramic view and holistic vision, which takes into account a whole range of factors that impact human life: from public health, urban planning and its interconnection with rural territories, the wellbeing and inclusion of communities, to factors such as employment, a fair wage, social protections, housing, free and quality education, a healthy environment, culture, food and food sovereignty.

The Forum investigated links between citizens and institutions, communicating the views of intellectuals, thinkers and activists as to the path towards social justice and societal wellbeing. Beyond simply consciously acknowledging and interiorizing lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, awareness must be catalyzed into action. There can no longer be individual and collective complacency in the face of international world order shortcomings, with institutions attempting to operate autonomously and exclusively of greater human and environmental interests. Ensuring dynamic relationships between local, state and federal governments, as well as with international organizations, is an essential strategy in achieving the wellbeing of global civil society.

Participants

Once more, from CAF we want to express our deepest gratitude to all our 2020 participants, who even in such a distressing year found time to join us in conversations that looked to a better future.



Juan Carlos Monedero
1st SESSION

Juan Carlos Monedero is a Spanish politician and professor. He holds a doctorate in Political Science and founded the political party Podemos, where he served as secretary of the Constituent Process and Program. He currently directs the 25M Institute for Democracy, the Department of Global Civil Society at the Complutense Institute for International Studies and the television program En la frontera. He has authored several books.



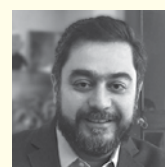
María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
1st SESSION

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop is Member of European Parliament and Vice Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). A jurist, university professor, researcher and specialist in human rights and gender studies, she has published various works on the philosophy of rights, the common good, ecology, republicanism and feminism. She is head of the list of candidates for Unidas Podemos Cambiar Europa. She holds a doctorate in Law.



Paola Pabón
1st SESSION

Paola Pabón is Prefect of Pichincha, Ecuador. She was Minister of Political Management between 2016 and 2017. She was also a National Assembly representative for two legislative sessions, and worked as manager of community development in the Prefecture of Pichincha, where she later became the first woman to govern the province. She is a lawyer with a Master in Public Policy.



Vidal Llerenas
1st SESSION

Vidal Llerenas Morales is Mayor of Azcapotzalco, Mexico City. He is a former local and federal representative, and also served as Deputy Secretary of Expenditures for the City of Mexico, as well as Director of the Social Comptroller for States and Cities of the Ministry of Public Administration. He is an economist and holds a doctorate in Public Administration and Management from New York University (NYU).



Benjamín Temkin

2nd SESSION

Benjamín Temkin is Research Professor at FLACSO Mexico and Coordinator of Energy and Environmental Policies and Management. His areas of specialty include political economics, political sociology and political psychology. He is also the Director of the online journal *Relasco*.



Esperanza Martínez

2nd SESSION

Esperanza Martínez is a Paraguayan doctor and politician. She is a specialist in public health and is currently a representative for the Concertación Frente Guasú party. She was Health and Social Wellbeing Minister of Paraguay from 2008 to 2012. She received her medical degree from the Nacional de Asunción University.



Gabriela Rivadeneira

2nd SESSION

Gabriela Rivadeneira is an Ecuadorian politician. She was President of the National Assembly of Ecuador from 2013 to 2017. She also served as Governor of Imbabura, provincial Vice Prefect, Deputy Mayor of Otavalo, Cantonal Councilwoman and National Representative. She holds a degree in Management of Local Sustainable Development.



Juan Grabois

2nd SESSION

Juan Grabois is a lawyer, Argentinian social activist, and founder of the Movement for Excluded Workers and the Confederation of Workers for Popular Economy. He was appointed by Pope Francis as advisor to the Papal Council on Justice and Peace, and coordinated the World Meeting of Popular Movements. He teaches at the University of Buenos Aires and has published various books.



Álvaro Vasconcelos

3rd SESSION

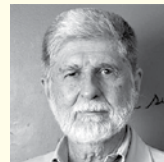
Álvaro Vasconcelos is a Portuguese professor and researcher. He directed the EU Institute for Security Studies (EU-ISS) from 2007 to 2012, and directed and co-founded the Institute for Strategic and International Studies of Lisbon (IEEI), which promotes initiatives like the Euro-Latin-American Forum and the Commission for Euro Mediterranean studies (EuroMeSCo).



Carina Vance Mafla

3rd SESSION

Carina Vance Mafla is an Ecuadorian politician and activist. She was Ecuador's Minister of Health from 2012 to 2015. In April of 2016 she was elected as Executive Director of the South American Institute for Health Governance (ISAGS) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). She holds a Master in Public Health from the University of California, Berkeley.



Celso Amorim

3rd SESSION

Celso Amorim was Minister of Defense (2011-2014) and Foreign Relations Minister (2003-2010) of Brazil. A career diplomat, he was also a member of the Group of Experts of the United Nations (UN) Security Council. In 2009, the journal *Foreign Policy* recognized him as the "Best Foreign Relations Minister."



Silvia Guadalupe Ramos

3rd SESSION

Silvia Guadalupe Ramos Hernández is a researcher and university instructor. She is Director of the Center for Research on Risk Management and Climate Change, and Coordinator of the degree in Earth Science at the University of Arts and Science, Chiapas (UNICACH). She holds a doctorate and is Coordinator of Volcanic Monitoring and Seismology of the State of Chiapas.



Gemma Galdón

4th SESSION

Gemma Galdón Clavell is an analyst and researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of Barcelona (UB). She is founding partner and Research Director of Eticas Research & Consulting. She holds a doctorate in Surveillance, Security and Urban Politics, with her areas of specialty including the social, legal and ethical impact of technology, privacy, and smart cities.



Gustavo Cabrera

4th SESSION

Gustavo Cabrera Rodríguez currently serves as General Director of Technical and Scientific Cooperation for Development at the Secretary for Foreign Relations, Mexico. He has worked as an independent consultant and has an extensive trajectory in the evaluation and implementation of public policies. He is an anthropologist with a degree in Cooperation for Development.



Magdalena Claro

4th SESSION

Magdalena Claro is Academic Director of the Observatory for Digital Education Practices, and Research Professor at the Pontifical University of Chile (UC). She is a member in diverse research projects on digital education, with areas of interest including: digital culture and inclusion, digital skills and opportunities and education.



Fernando Carrión

5th SESSION

Fernando Carrión Mena is an architect with a doctorate in Urban Regional Development. He founded the Organization for Latin American and Caribbean Historical Centers (OLACCHI), is the President of the Research Center CIUDAD and General Coordinator of the Latin American Cities Network. He was recognized by ESGLOBAL as one of the top 50 most influential intellectuals in Ibero-America. He is a researcher at FLACSO Ecuador, and teaches and consults at diverse institutions. He also served as representative of the Metropolitan District of Quito.



Manuela d'Ávila

5th SESSION

Manuela d'Ávila is a Brazilian politician and journalist, and author of various publications. She was a student leader who has since served as a Councilmember, Provincial and Federal Deputy, and in 2018 ran as candidate for Brazilian Vice President. She is currently running for Prefect of Porto Alegre.



Inés S. de Madariaga

5th SESSION

Inés Sánchez de Madariaga is Director of the UNESCO Chair of Gender in Science, Technology and Innovation at the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM). She has served as Advisor and Technical Director for several Spanish ministries, and has collaborated in national and international research groups. She is a professor and urban architect.



Gerardo Pisarello

5th SESSION

Gerardo Pisarello is a Spanish Argentinian politician, currently serving as First Secretary for Spain's Congress. He was Deputy Mayor of the City of Barcelona between 2015 and 2019, responsible for employment, economy, international relations and the digital city. He is also Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Barcelona and national representative for the Grupo Confederal Unidas Podemos –En Comú Podem– Galicia en Común. He holds a doctorate in Law.



Carlos Viteri

6th SESSION

Carlos Viteri Gualinga was Director of the Institute for Ecodevelopment of the Amazon Region, Ecuador. An anthropologist and activist for the rights of indigenous peoples, he was one of the initiators of the Plurinational State and the indigenous cosmovision of Sumak Kawsay. He has also served at the Interamerican Development Bank (BID) and Ecuador's National Assembly.



Felipe Llamas

6th SESSION

Felipe Llamas Sánchez is a Professor at the Social and Juridical Sciences Faculty of Carlos III University, Madrid. He has worked on the World Forums on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace I and II. A founding partner of PHARE Territorios Globales, he is an expert in participatory governance and international collaboration among local governments.



Leticia Merino

6th SESSION

Leticia Merino is anthropologist and professor at the Institute for Social Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Her area of expertise is environmental policy, specifically collective action and community management of forest and other natural resources.



Patricia Acosta

6th SESSION

Patricia Acosta Restrepo is an architect and Professor of Urban Planning and Studies at the University of Rosario (UR), Colombia. She has served as an urban planner for the Secretary of District Planning of Bogotá, and as consultant at the Interamerican Development Bank (BID) and World Bank, as well as Visiting Professor at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy of Massachusetts.



Rutilio Escandón

OPENING CEREMONY

Rutilio Escandón Cadenas is Constitutional Governor of the State of Chiapas for the 2018-2024 term period. Between 2013 and 2018, he served as presiding magistrate over the Superior Court of Justice and the Judicial Council of the State of Chiapas. He was a Federal Deputy in 2006 and Senator of the Republic from 2000 to 2006. He received his law degree from the Autonomous University of Baja California. He holds a Master and Doctorate from the National Autonomous University of Mexico.



Marcelo Ebrard

OPENING CEREMONY

Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón currently serves as Mexico's Secretary for Foreign Relations. He headed the Mexico City Government and was Secretary of Social Development and Public Security. In December of 2010, the World Mayors Project recognized him as World's Best Mayor. He studied International Relations at El Colegio de México.



Carmen Vázquez

OPENING CEREMONY

Carmen Vázquez Hernández is a Tzotzil artisan master and winner of the 2019 National Prize for Art and Literature. An expert in the traditional loom, she is a national example of achievement and for sharing the traditional skills and values of her community. She promotes labor integration of indigenous women and their empowerment.



Diana Damián Palencia

OPENING CEREMONY

Diana Damián Palencia holds a degree in Educational Psychology and an M.A. in Intercultural Education. She is Director of the Formación y Capacitación A.C., a project that works directly with indigenous women in matters of health, sexual and reproductive rights, education, development and management, adopting their communities' traditional worldview.

**Rodolfo Pastor**

OPENING CEREMONY

Rodolfo Pastor de María y Campos is a Honduran-Mexican political scientist, diplomat and politician. Former Minister of Political Affairs and Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Honduras in Washington, D.C.; he currently works as Information and Strategic Analysis Director in the Executive Directorate of Strategy and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) of Mexico.

**Delia María González**

CLOSING CEREMONY

Delia María González Flandez is Director-General of the System for Comprehensive Family Development of the State of Chiapas (Sistema DIF Chiapas), the state's government branch dedicated to drafting and evaluating welfare and social development policies. She is also former Director-General of Chiapas' Social Protection and Public Welfare Institute.

**Mario Delgado**

CLOSING CEREMONY

Mario Delgado currently serves as Federal Deputy and President of the Political Coordination Board of the Chamber of Deputies. He also served as Senator of the Republic from 2012 to 2018. From 2006 to 2010, he was Mexico City's Secretary of Finance, and from 2010 to 2012 Mexico City's Secretary of Education. He holds a degree in Economics from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México and a Master in Economics from the University of Essex, England.

**Wadah Khanfar**

CLOSING CEREMONY

Wadah Khanfar is the Co-Founder and Chairman of the Common Action Forum. Former Director-General of the Al Jazeera Network, he was named one of the "Young Global Leaders" in the 2008's World Economic Forum and was first in Foreign Policy's Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011.

**Carlos Natarén**

MODERATOR

Carlos Natarén is Dean of the National Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH) and professor, founder and Director of its Institute for Judicial Research. With studies in law with honorable mention, he holds a Master in Constitutional Law from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and is Doctor Cum Laude in Procedural Law from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM).

**Pedro Brieger**

MODERATOR

Pedro Brieger is an Argentinian academic and journalist with a specialization in international politics. He is Professor of Sociology of the Middle East at the University of Buenos Aires. He is a writer commentator and producer of various radio and television programs, has authored various books, and is Director of NODAL, a web portal for Latin American and Caribbean News.

**Alfonso Zegbe**

MODERATOR

Alfonso Zegbe currently heads the Strategy and Public Diplomacy Unit at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is an expert in Environmental Law and International Relations, and has worked on energy and environmental diplomatic agendas for Mexico City, Washington DC, Ottawa, Paris, Brussels and the OECD. Between 2017 and 2019 he was Mexican Ambassador to Iran as well as served as ambassador in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

**Rafael Heiber**

MODERATOR

Rafael Heiber is the Co-Founder and CEO of the Common Action Forum. Geographer and Climatologist with a MSc in Territorial Planning and a PhD in Sociology, his expertise includes the political links between technology, space and citizenship. He participates in academic activities and publishes in the international media.



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