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United Nations University Centre for Policy Research

**What Works in UN Resident Coordinator-led Conflict Prevention: Lessons from the Field**

June 2018



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## Bolivia 2000-09

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*This case study is part of a broader research project, carried out by the UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) with the support of the UK Mission to the United Nations, on the role of UN Resident Coordinators in Conflict Prevention. The project aimed to extract lessons from case studies of Resident Coordinator-supported preventive action in nine countries (Bolivia 2000-09; Colombia 2012-16; Guinea 2009-15; Guyana 2003-15; Kenya 2008-17; Kyrgyzstan 2010-17; Malawi, 2011-17; Nepal 2007-15; and Tunisia 2011-17). All case studies, and the resulting policy paper synthesizing lessons and findings can be accessed at [cpr.unu.edu](http://cpr.unu.edu).*

## Introduction

Bolivia in the 2000s experienced several political convulsions and milestones: from having no less than six presidents in the span of the first five years of that decade (2000-05); to the election of the country's first indigenous president, Evo Morales, in 2005; to a constitutional crisis that threatened an outbreak of violence in 2008. Headlines in September 2008 warned of a nation on the brink of civil war,<sup>1</sup> and, as the former President of Bolivia's National Electoral Court, Jose Luis Exeni, recalled: "2008 was the year when we Bolivians lived in danger of being divided into two Bolivias."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, at crucial junctures along the way, national actors managed to swerve away from these escalatory dynamics, averting the risk of violent conflict. Most notably, the government and opposition parties negotiated an agreement in 2008 allowing for a new constitution that would "re-found" the state, a watershed achievement for conflict prevention amidst exceptionally high levels of political polarisation. The United Nations, primarily through the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Resident Coordinators (RCs), provided crucial support to national actors at these junctures.

This case study demonstrates the role of UNDP's Country Office in Bolivia, and particularly its Human Development Report (HDR) team and Project of Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios (PAPEP), in advising senior policymakers on pathways toward de-escalation at key moments. It also looks in-depth at the role of the RC and PAPEP in supporting the national actors in reaching an agreement in the 2008 dialogue. It ends with lessons learned from the Bolivian experience which may be transferable for RC and UNCT-led prevention in other crisis contexts.

### 1. Conflict and Causal Analysis

Bolivia is among the poorest and most unequal nations in South America.<sup>3</sup> With around 60% of the population identifying as part of an indigenous group,<sup>4</sup> it has the highest proportion of indigenous people of any country in the region. Bolivia's main dividing line runs between the western highlands, host to La Paz, the seat of political power; and the eastern lowlands, home to the "Media Luna" (half-moon) departments of Santa Cruz, Beni, Tarija and Pando, where most of Bolivia's wealth is concentrated.<sup>5</sup> An ethnic faultline overlays this divide, with indigenous populations mostly concentrated in the highlands and white and mestizo Bolivians mostly living in the Media Luna lowlands.<sup>6</sup> Inequality, social exclusion and the weakness of state institutions have given rise to a very high level of political and social conflict throughout the country's modern history.<sup>7</sup>

In the 20th century, Bolivia witnessed several military coups, recurrent indigenous, *campesino* and workers' uprisings and protests, and jerky transitions in and out of civilian rule. Grievances among mostly indigenous *cocaleros* intensified throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as aggressive

and US-financed coca eradication campaigns "outpaced the income-generating capacity of alternative development."<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, neoliberal reforms, including "shock therapy," alleviated hyperinflation but were blamed for exacerbating poverty and inequality.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s, the International Monetary Fund conditioned a loan on Bolivia's commitment to privatise public enterprises, including national oil refineries and the local water agency in Cochabamba; the World Bank supported privatisation and discouraged water subsidies. Rising water prices sparked protests in Cochabamba, marking the start of what became known as the "Cochabamba Water War."<sup>10</sup>

The Water War set off a convulsive five-year period during which Bolivia had no less than six presidents. Then-President Hugo Banzer Suárez, dying of cancer, was replaced by his Vice-President, Quiroga in 2001. Next, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada won the 2002 elections, enjoying a brief second shot at the presidency (having previously served in the early 1990s), until protests against his neoliberal policies, namely with respect to gas privatisation (the "Gas War"), forced him out. Carlos Mesa, Lozada's Vice-President, assumed power in 2003, only to also be forced out less than two years later when rising fuel prices sparked anti-government protests. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodríguez, who was among those constitutionally in line to assume the presidency from a Vice-President, took over as caretaker president in mid-2005. Finally, in December 2005, indigenous, *campesino* and urban middle-class voters helped make Evo Morales – a prominent *cocalero* activist and protest leader – the country's first indigenous president.<sup>11</sup>

Morales's election marked a major shift in Bolivia's political history, moving it away from *democracia pactada* – "a closed, prearranged democratic system" – among the establishment parties, and toward a political system "more dependent on a zero-sum game of political positioning."<sup>12</sup> Two longstanding political demands surfaced, bringing into sharp focus the faultlines in the country: first, calls for a new constitution that would "re-found" the state, mainly by indigenous, left-wing and other groups in the West that blamed the country's existing economic model for persistent inequality;<sup>13</sup> and second, demands for greater departmental (regional) autonomy, promoted mainly by groups linked to the private sector and center and right-wing political forces in the Media Luna.<sup>14</sup> Disputes over hydrocarbon management and revenue sharing intensified the polarisation, as one of Morales's first acts as President was to nationalise the sector.<sup>15</sup>

In mid-2006, Bolivia held elections for a Constituent Assembly (CA),<sup>16</sup> in which Morales's Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) won a simple majority but fell short of the two-thirds required to pass a new constitution.<sup>17</sup> Soon thereafter, the CA was established in Sucre, Bolivia's constitutional capital (while La Paz hosts the executive and legislature). Yet, disagreements over the substance and procedural rules of the CA polarised parties, as the MAS argued that the rule requiring a two-thirds majority to pass the new constitution only applied to

the final constitutional text, and not for commission reports.<sup>18</sup> The opposition (and most legal analysts) disagreed.<sup>19</sup>

The streets also reflected the political polarisation, as civic movements in opposition regions, which had grown more radical than the opposition parties, initiated strikes, blockades, and sometimes violent demonstrations.<sup>20</sup> Further, Chuquisaca civic leaders, supported by parts of the opposition, revived a historical demand to confer full capital city status to Sucre (shifting it from La Paz), which paralyzed the CA and led to violent clashes between protestors and police.<sup>21</sup> Street pressures frustrated efforts by the government and opposition parties to reach agreements over the CA, autonomy demands, and government policies.<sup>22</sup>

Amidst rising polarisation and to escape disruptions caused by unrest in Sucre, the ruling party relocated the CA to the outskirts of the city at La Glorieta High School for a final plenary session in November 2007. Only MAS representatives attended this session, where they approved a general version of the Constitution and authorised the transfer of the CA to Oruro to iron out the details. In Oruro, in the absence of most opposition representatives, the MAS delegates approved the full constitutional text in December. The opposition argued that the sessions in La Glorieta and Oruro violated agreed procedures and were thus illegitimate. With the crisis yet unresolved, the CA, "as a space for dialogue and agreement, had failed."<sup>23</sup>

In early and mid-2008, various attempts at dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition faltered. Meanwhile, the Media Luna departments began organising and winning unofficial autonomy referenda,<sup>24</sup> which Bolivia's National Electoral Court (and the Morales government) declared illegal.<sup>25</sup> The Court later demonstrated its independence by also declaring that a referendum on the Oruro constitution would require Congressional approval (as opposed to being organised by Presidential decree).<sup>26</sup> Adding to the electoral complexity and political tensions, a "recall referendum" was held in August 2008, approving the mandates of the President and Media Luna prefects, but revoking those of opposition prefects in La Paz and Cochabamba.<sup>27</sup>

Violence soon broke out in opposition regions, including clashes between pro-autonomy demonstrators and police.<sup>28</sup> On 11 September 2008, Bolivia witnessed its most lethal incident of political violence in years as clashes between government and opposition supporters left several pro-Morales indigenous protestors dead.<sup>29</sup> The Pando massacre shocked Bolivians and prompted the government and opposition to immediately agree to a formal dialogue.<sup>30</sup>

The first phase of the dialogue began on 12 September, just one day after Pando, and lasted for four days.<sup>31</sup> This phase focused on preparing a consensus agenda and broad-ranging consultations aimed at mollifying the increasingly radical civic movements aligned with autonomists and eastern businesses.<sup>32</sup> The second phase of the dialogue took place

between 18 September-5 October 2008 in Cochabamba, involving the President, Vice-President, political parties and opposition prefects and with the participation of international observers, including the UN. Although this phase failed to reach an agreement, progress was made toward harmonising the draft constitution with the autonomy demands and conditions were put in place to continue the dialogue in Congress.<sup>33</sup> In Congress, the opposition agreed, in exchange for government concessions,<sup>34</sup> to support legislation for a referendum on the new constitution.<sup>35</sup> This referendum was held in January 2009, and 61% of voters approved the document, marking a historic de-escalation of this cycle of Bolivia's political crisis.<sup>36</sup>

## 2. RC Prevention Role

### UNDP's role in Bolivia: from the late 1990s to the election of Morales

Historically, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has been the main prevention actor within the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Bolivia. As such, this case study will focus on its role, relations with the government and other national actors, and its reputation in the country.

#### *High-quality HDRs*

UNDP has historically been perceived as a credible, informed actor in the country. The late 1990s and early 2000s were a "golden era" for UNDP, during which it produced several exemplary Human Development Reports (HDRs) and enjoyed particularly strong relationships with senior policymakers, as well as with the Church, the Ombudsperson, civil society, and syndicates.<sup>37</sup> The HDR team was then headed by Fernando Calderón, a prominent Bolivian public intellectual with strong political, social and economic networks across Latin America. Calderón "understood and spoke the language of politics and had a personal entry to people across the political spectrum," and as such helped ensure the HDRs would enjoy a high profile in Bolivia. He also advised the RC/UNDP Resident Representative at the time, Carlos Felipe Martínez on the country's political dynamics.<sup>38</sup> Martínez, for his part, was considered a politically-minded RC who saw UNDP's analytical capacities as a prevention tool to be leveraged.<sup>39</sup>

The HDR team served as an "in-house think tank"<sup>40</sup> for the UN, and their many award-winning reports helped shape the national debate about the politics of development. The 2000 HDR, for instance, received a UNDP award for excellence in participation and policy impact.<sup>41</sup> According to an evaluation, the report's most notable qualities included that: it was "written from the perspective of a participant in Bolivia's development process, rather than from the perspective of an omniscient and detached observer" (no doubt the HDR's largely Bolivian expert staff had much to do with this); it was analytical, explaining the significance of, rather than merely reporting, facts; it defined human development and clearly laid out how it could be achieved; and, most importantly, it

addressed head-on the most polarising aspects of Bolivia's development (such as the effects of globalisation on inequality) without alienating key interlocutors.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, rather than damaging UNDP's relationships in government and civil society, the HDR's willingness to tackle, with high quality analysis, such controversial issues became a source of prestige for the Country Office.<sup>43</sup>

#### *Using political scenarios*

Beyond influencing the public debate through its reports, UNDP in the late 1990s and early 2000s played a secondary role, in collaboration with other actors such as the Church, the Ombudsperson and civil society, in accompanying national dialogue processes.<sup>44</sup> In early 2001, the HDR team developed prospective political scenarios for the Church, which was then playing a leading role in these dialogues.<sup>45</sup> The team then adapted this scenario-building approach to feed into the 2002 HDR, which argued – just ahead of an exceptionally convulsive period in Bolivian politics – that the country's development process was at a critical juncture, and pointed to high levels of political polarisation and social conflict as symptoms of structural crises.<sup>46</sup> To develop the scenarios, the team drew on the debates and inputs of key national figures, including the main presidential candidates, generating a highly participatory process and ensuring policy impact.<sup>47</sup> The resulting HDR won a UNDP award for excellence in participatory and inclusive processes,<sup>48</sup> and became a key reference point for UNDP's prevention work over the next decade.<sup>49</sup> The team shared the scenarios produced for the 2002 HDR with the government and key opposition figures, including supporters of then-first time presidential candidate Evo Morales.<sup>50</sup>

This experience with the 2002 HDR demonstrated how prospective scenario building could be a powerful tool for understanding policy processes in Bolivia and capturing the attention of senior policymakers from across the political spectrum. The team thus continued to prepare political scenarios, drawing on survey data, focus group meetings, interviews with policymakers and other sources. Shortly after the 2002 HDR, RC Martínez secured US\$30,000 in seed funding to create a project within the HDR team devoted to prospective political analysis, called the Project of Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios (PAPEP).<sup>51</sup>

In 2002, during Sánchez de Lozada's tumultuous second term as president, the PAPEP team generated an analytical scenario warning of a serious political crisis that would likely end his presidency unless he undertook a dramatic shift in policies. Then-UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown<sup>52</sup> asked Calderón to present this scenario directly to the President – and even travelled to Bolivia to attend the meeting himself by way of offering political backing.<sup>53</sup> Calderón cited this backing from Malloch Brown as key to enabling him to go to the President, present his team's dire forecast, and tell him that if he did not urgently address flashpoints – such as coca politics and tax reform – his government was headed for collapse.<sup>54</sup>

PAPEP also identified two key challenges for the President: first, the need to strengthen democracy by actively including social movements in political processes; and second, the need to set Bolivia on the path to becoming a regional hub for natural gas and thereby advance development.<sup>55</sup> (Sánchez de Lozada balked at the analysis. In the end, as described above, he was ousted in 2003 and replaced by Mesa.)

Calderón and a member of his team, Armando Ortuño (later head of PAPEP Bolivia), also presented the scenarios to then-Vice President Carlos Mesa, showing he was likely to become the country's next president.<sup>56</sup>

Calderón recalled another story that demonstrated both how in demand PAPEP was and the insights of its prospective analysis:

*"The authorities of the multinational energy companies operating in Bolivia also invited us to present our scenarios. One of my conclusions was that there would be a political crisis and the government didn't have resources, and if we didn't raise taxes by 18% for the energy sector, there would be an economic collapse with political repercussions. The head of one of the companies pulled me aside and said, look, I don't know about the other companies, but if ours has to pay one dollar more in taxes, we will leave this country. The next year Evo Morales came to power, and he nationalised the hydrocarbon sector and he raised taxes on the sector to 80% - they paid and they didn't leave."*

Of course, confronting the most powerful political and economic actors in the country with scenarios, some of them unfavourable to their positions, put UNDP, which is in the country at the behest of the government, in a difficult spot. Even though these scenarios were always presented non-publicly and from the standpoint of a neutral technical professional analysis rather than in advocacy mode, "it is very difficult to tell the Emperor he has no clothes," recalled Calderón. Yet, Calderón explained, the benefit of giving leaders a clear sense of their options, and the consequences of their choices among those options, outweighed the risks such delicate conversations might pose to UNDP's position in the country. "It's a game, and sometimes you lose and sometimes you win," he said. "But the institution has to enter the game. Otherwise, what is the UN for?"<sup>57</sup>

#### *Creation of PAPEP*

In 2003, in collaboration with two prominent Uruguayan political scientists – Diego Achard and Luis Eduardo Gonzalez – PAPEP began developing its first methodological toolkit for developing prospective analysis.<sup>58</sup> In addition to public opinion surveys, PAPEP conducted focus groups, in-depth interviews with social, political and economic elites, and Delphi surveys (closed ended questionnaires sent to elites on potential political developments).<sup>59</sup> Designed as a prevention tool for RCs, PAPEP focused on: developing short- and medium-term political scenarios; facilitating high-

level discussions on key policy issues; and working with and strengthening prospective political analysis capacities of key national institutions.<sup>60</sup> It produced written outputs – such as analytical reports, institutional roadmaps, and assessments of public policies and development projects – and offered political advice to key policymakers.<sup>61</sup>

Soon after its creation in Bolivia, Malloch Brown and Elena Martínez, then Director of UNDP's Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean, supported Calderón and his team in expanding PAPEP into a regional program. When (Carlos Felipe) Martínez was appointed RC in Argentina, Calderón went with him to set up another PAPEP there; the team also formally established PAPEP in Honduras, where Achard and Gonzalez had already been supporting UNDP's conflict prevention role.<sup>62</sup> Thus, PAPEP became a regional program of UNDP. Antonio Aranibar stayed in Bolivia, and became the head of the PAPEP Bolivia (and later the head of the regional PAPEP). As part of the regional program, Calderón established a high-level PAPEP advisory committee comprising Latin American policymakers representing the highest levels of government, and renowned academics.<sup>63</sup> The input of the advisory network provided key material for PAPEP scenarios and helped generate policymaker buy-in at senior levels. Further, members of the network at times gathered to discuss PAPEP scenarios and collaborate on regional comparative studies.<sup>64</sup>

PAPEP and the HDR team became “the two think tanks”<sup>65</sup> of UNDP in Bolivia, with the former quickly becoming a go-to source for high-quality prospective analysis to assist national authorities' decision-making, while the latter remained a respected source of analysis on Bolivia's political and economic development. They benefited from academically strong, interdisciplinary and cohesive teams, led largely by national staff who had worked with Calderón on HDRs before the creation of PAPEP.<sup>66</sup>

#### *Mesa's resignation and the rise of Morales*

In November 2003, at the request of President Mesa, the Secretary-General sent an envoy to Bolivia: Jose Antonio Ocampo, then head of the UN's Department for Social and Economic Affairs (DESA).<sup>67</sup> Ocampo began traveling frequently to Bolivia to facilitate dialogue among the political parties, and between the government and social movements.<sup>68</sup> He proved adept at creating entry points, developing a close relationship with the Mesa administration and later with some figures in the Morales one (discussed below). While in Bolivia, Ocampo leveraged UNDP's data and analytical capacities to develop advice and facilitate political talks, thereby demonstrating how Special Envoys can draw on UNCT capacities for prevention.<sup>69</sup>

After Mesa resigned amidst crippling protests, the military invited the Coordinators of the HDR (George Gray Molina) and of PAPEP (Aranibar) to share their survey data and political analysis. Molina and Aranibar, both Bolivian staffers, advised the military against assuming power temporarily (warning that would be seen as a coup) and provided strong

evidence that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodríguez, represented the best option to succeed Mesa for the consolidation of democracy. This recommendation was based both on: PAPEP flash survey data that showed the public preferred Rodríguez over the other two candidates who would be constitutionally in line to succeed Mesa; and on a comprehensive stakeholder mapping that showed none of the country's major political, economic or social actors strongly opposed Rodríguez. Swayed by the data, the military did not assume power and shortly thereafter endorsed Rodríguez, who became President in June 2005 with the mandate to hold elections within one year.

Just days after Rodríguez was sworn in, Ocampo and Calderón provided him with a PAPEP-produced political roadmap, based on the premise that his presidency represented a unique window of opportunity to resolve the political crisis through a democratic process.<sup>70</sup> The roadmap urged Rodríguez not to limit his mandate to the organisation of a presidential election, but also to engage in political negotiations to facilitate congressional elections and the first-ever elections of prefects, in an effort to unblock Bolivia's political jam.<sup>71</sup> President Rodríguez successfully implemented this agenda, leading to the late 2005 elections that brought Morales to power and marked a new era in Bolivian politics.

The election of Evo Morales in 2005 brought a newcomer who disrupted Bolivia's whole political system, introducing new faces in government and diluting the UN's networks. The Morales government, which championed anti-imperialist rhetoric, was more sceptical than prior administrations of multilateral advice. Meanwhile, new hydrocarbons taxes (which came with the nationalisation of the sector) overnight made the Bolivian government significantly less dependent on international aid.<sup>72</sup> Ocampo continued his work during the early years of Morales's presidency, including by advising the government on economic issues, developing strong relationships with the ministers of planning and of hydrocarbons.<sup>73</sup> However, the UN lost this entry point with the Morales administration after Ocampo left, as the new Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in 2007 did not appoint a new Special Envoy.<sup>74</sup> Instead, the Secretary-General sent Jan Egeland, his Special Adviser, on mission to Bolivia to assess the government's needs and develop recommendations.<sup>75</sup> The Morales administration, however, was no longer keen on this kind of UN support.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to the new cast of government characters, new opposition powers emerged, including the Media Luna prefects and regional civic movements who gained newfound political weight over traditional political parties.<sup>77</sup>

In the aftermath of the historic shifts propelled by Morales' victory, RC leadership was largely missing. Then-RC Antonio Molpeceres left La Paz prematurely in 2007, and a merry-go-round of ad interim RCs ensued, causing confusion, lack of continuity and leadership, eroding the UN's profile in the country and staff morale.<sup>78</sup> However, new funds from UNDP's now-defunct Bureau for Crisis Prevention (BCPR) in 2007

helped establish a robust UNDP Democratic Governance Team focused on conflict prevention. The Team, which became the new institutional home of PAPEP, helped reinvigorate UNDP's prevention role.<sup>79</sup> This positioned UNDP to begin supporting the Constituent Assembly, which had been installed in 2006, and to produce two high-quality HDRs in 2007 (on state reform) and 2008 (on natural resources).<sup>80</sup>

### Resources for prevention

By 2006, PAPEP was receiving financial support from UNDP's BCPR, its Regional Bureau for Latin America, and the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund.<sup>81</sup> RCs, who also serve as UNDP Resident Representatives, participated in efforts to raise additional funds for PAPEP and broader UNCT programming, though with mixed results. In 2008, a then-ad interim RC contracted a consultant to undertake donor outreach, with the approach of visiting aid agencies to gather information about their funding priorities and develop a concept note accordingly.<sup>82</sup> The resulting proposal was "Frankenstein-ish," combining disjointed pieces contributed by different agencies, and failed to raise funds. When RC Yoriko Yasukawa arrived in Bolivia in 2008, she turned this on its head: instead of asking the donors what they could fund, she tasked PAPEP with putting together a concept note around building a culture of peace in Bolivia, using in-country realities rather than donor priorities as a starting point. The UNCT was invited to contribute to this vision, but only within the framework of the concept note, resulting in a more coherent proposal. Through this approach, the UNCT secured around US\$4 million of support from the Spanish development agency, AECID, channelled through the Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDG Fund) for the thematic window of *Conflict prevention and consolidation of peace*.<sup>83</sup> These funds sustained some PAPEP activities from 2009-12.<sup>84</sup> During these years, PAPEP operated with an average annual budget of only USD 700,000 – very small by think tank industry standards,<sup>85</sup> and evidence that the Project punched above its weight. (See below for details on declines in PAPEP's funding after 2012, which led the Project to wind down in 2015.)

### Comparative strengths of the UN

The remainder of this case study will focus on the RC and UNDP's support to national actors in the lead-up to and during the 2008 constitutional dialogue. However it is first important to take stock of how the HDR and PAPEP teams' work since the late 1990s had helped consolidate three comparative advantages for the UN, which the UN was then able to build on in 2008.

**First, networks:** Although UNDP had weaker ties to the MASistas than to prior governments, it remained relatively well-connected to key state institutions and political and social actors that later became protagonists in the 2008 dialogue. Several of these actors were or had worked with UNDP on prior projects; this ensured UN access to these actors at critical moments.<sup>86</sup> For instance, the Vice-President, Alvaro Garcia

Linera, a sociologist by training, had been frequently invited during his university professor days to discuss prospective political scenarios.<sup>87</sup> The President of the National Electoral Court, José Luis Exeni, was formerly the principal researcher of the HDR, and a personal friend of the head of the regional PAPEP (Aranibar). Similarly, the MAS Minister of the Presidency, Juan Ramon Quintana, had also interacted with the HDR, which made access to him easier for the RC and others.<sup>88</sup>

Further, UNDP for two years had been providing technical and financial support to the Constituent Assembly, and the HDR team was at the time working on a Report partly focused on the Assembly. The contacts and knowledge of the CA that UNDP had developed through this work proved important further down the line when constitutional issues grew to be at the heart of the political crisis. Finally, UNDP had managed to maintain relationships with both the government and the opposition despite the high levels of political polarisation.<sup>89</sup> For instance, it maintained a liaison officer in the Office of the Prefect of Santa Cruz, which helped build relationships for the UN in the Media Luna departments.<sup>90</sup>

### **Second, capacity for primary data gathering and political analysis:**

PAPEP was a data-rich unit, with every PAPEP study involving extensive primary data gathering.<sup>91</sup> It was primary data, and particularly public opinion surveys – which, naturally, always interest politicians – that gave PAPEP an analytical edge and created high-level demand for its work. As George Gray Molina argued: "[UNDP] had data that journalists and even politicians didn't have... we were able to see microtrends that journalists couldn't see... we would present it to both the government and the opposition, every player... There is nothing like that in Latin America that can do the 360-prospective analysis today."<sup>92</sup>

### **Third, informational credibility and the UN's soft power:**

UNDP's track record of well-regarded HDRs and PAPEP analysis helped build informational credibility for the UN. This, combined with the UN's "soft power" – that is, the perception of the UN as a relatively impartial actor operating on the basis of UN values – which enabled UNDP to use its data effectively and strategically to advocate for prevention.<sup>93</sup>

### PAPEP scenario-building and theory of change

In the lead-up to the 2008 crisis, PAPEP identified and presented to national interlocutors three possible scenarios:

1. Political dialogue between the government and opposition aimed at finding a consensus solution. This was the most desirable scenario but appeared unlikely due to high levels of distrust and polarisation between the parties.
2. Partial political deal limited to the opposing sides agreeing on the basic rules for carrying out the constitutional and departmental autonomy referenda. This scenario could break the deadlock, but

would likely only ease tensions in the short-term.

3. No political dialogue. This would lead to greater polarisation and increase risks to Bolivia's stability.<sup>94</sup>

PAPEP's theory of change – i.e. that only a meaningful political dialogue could make the difference between a consensus solution or greater polarisation – drove the UN's interventions over the coming period. Along with a 2007 mission to Bolivia of the Framework Team (an interagency forum at UN headquarters in New York to discuss and develop UN-wide prevention strategies in conflict-prone countries), PAPEP began identifying key actions that would help move the country toward the best possible scenario and avert the worst.<sup>95</sup> They urged the parties to sit down and talk, presenting to them PAPEP polling data that showed the majority of Bolivians wanted a dialogue,<sup>96</sup> and creating informal spaces for dialogue to build confidence among the parties. These efforts complemented work by the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy (fBDM) in 2007, which supported informal dialogues that enabled senior MAS and opposition leaders to jointly identify points of contention and develop early technical proposals – proposals that later proved crucial in saving time and providing substance to the negotiations in Congress.<sup>97</sup>

### Support to the National Electoral Court

One of the most important actions PAPEP decided on was to further strengthen the institutional capacities of the National Electoral Court, which it had identified as a “catalyst institution”<sup>98</sup> for conflict prevention that “could not fail,”<sup>99</sup> due to its role in managing the electoral processes that had become central to resolving the conflict.<sup>100</sup> PAPEP had worked with the Court on previous occasions and benefited from a close personal relationship between Aranibar (the Bolivian head of the national PAPEP at the time) and the President of the Court, Exeni. PAPEP presented Exeni with strategic advice, prospective political analysis, legal and technical assistance, and more.<sup>101</sup> This relationship was in large part demand-driven, with Exeni at times convening PAPEP experts to ask for analysis on specific policy questions, including sensitive topics deemed better handled by the UN.<sup>102</sup> PAPEP advised Exeni during crucial periods of the crisis, including around the time that the Court took the decisive step of rejecting the constitutional referendum in early 2008.<sup>103</sup> An evaluation found that the existence of a strong catalyst institution – the Court – as a national counterpart for PAPEP was a key factor in determining the relatively high impact the Project had in Bolivia.<sup>104</sup>

### The September 2008 dialogue

After the Pando massacre on 11 September 2008, the government and opposition agreed to hold an urgent dialogue in Cochabamba with international observers to avert the risk of similar violent incidents occurring elsewhere.

Initially, the government was hesitant to accept international involvement,<sup>105</sup> being somewhat wary of multilaterals deemed too close to Washington, such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the UN. However, just months earlier in Brasilia, Morales had helped found the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which was dominated by government allies such as Brazilian President Lula da Silva and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and offered an alternative to the D.C.-based OAS. Gastón Aín Bilbao, who formerly coordinated UNDP's Democratic Dialogue Regional Project for Latin America, has argued that the UNASUR option made international observation more palatable to the Morales government.<sup>106</sup> With the government consenting to international involvement, the opposition was in turn able to insist on the involvement of actors it deemed most trustworthy – namely, the OAS, UN and European Ambassadors.<sup>107</sup> In all, around 20 observers participated, including UNASUR, OAS, the UN, the European Troika (EU, UK, France), and the Methodist and Evangelist churches.

As the dialogue began immediately after Pando, there was no time to wait for UN headquarters to dispatch a senior mediator.<sup>108</sup> Thus, RC Yasukawa, who had just arrived in Bolivia a few months before, decided to attend herself, accompanied by the new Coordinator of PAPEP, Armando Ortuño, a Bolivian staffer, as her political advisor. UNASUR and OAS dispatched veteran diplomats – Juan Gabriel Valdés, former Foreign Minister of Chile, and Dante Caputo, former Foreign Minister of Argentina. Valdés and Caputo were “the main protagonists”<sup>109</sup> among the international observers, at times stepping into semi-mediation roles.<sup>110</sup> (Both Valdés and Caputo had in fact collaborated with PAPEP on projects before.<sup>111</sup>) The European Troika was represented by the three countries' respective ambassadors in Bolivia.

The dialogue was impromptu and chaotic, involving “multiple actors and very little formal political culture.”<sup>112</sup> It kicked off with a round of insults that shocked many of the international observers. Although the creation of technical commissions added some structure to the debate, many procedural issues and roles of international observers were left largely unclear. Amidst much improvisation, the role of the UN – and that of other international observers – was never defined, but rather evolved along with the dialogue.<sup>113</sup> Although at the start, the UN played mostly the role of a silent observer or witness, it gradually took on a more vocal role, especially as the dialogue moved to Congress and the national actors saw the need for more substantial international support.<sup>114</sup>

### RC's approach and role in the dialogue

RC Yasukawa arrived just months before the 2008 dialogue started, marking an end to a long and frustrating period of ad interim RCs. She arrived in La Paz amidst a complex political crisis, with rising polarisation and new political actors emerging on both the government and opposition sides. Her background, with UNICEF, had taken her to

other conflict-prone states in Latin America, including Ecuador and Mexico, but she did not have formal training in mediation or conflict resolution. Further, she had no prevention capacities to draw on within the RC Office, which consisted of only a coordination officer and an assistant. For instance, there was no Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) in Bolivia that she could draw on for political advice.

RC Yasukawa overcame these limitations by drawing on UNDP<sup>115</sup> as part of her own team, and empowering national staff within it, turning to them to guide her through the country's politics. She drew on UNDP's existing networks to meet early on with government figures (e.g., MAS Minister Quintana) and the opposition (e.g., Santa Cruz Prefect Ruben Costas) to convey the UN's wish for peace and dialogue. Further, as described above, she benefited from the political advice of Ortuño, who, though a national UNDP staffer, assumed the role of de facto PDA. Indeed, the national UNDP team was so strong that the Bolivia desk officer at DPA and the RC felt that an international PDA was not necessary in Bolivia.<sup>116</sup>

Once at the dialogue, the RC and Ortuño adopted a "less is more" approach, focusing their efforts on **building confidence among the national parties to the dialogue, specifically by exerting moral pressure on the parties to avoid breakdowns and attain an agreement.**<sup>117</sup> Rather than providing input on the substance of the talks or imposing a structure on the dialogue, they accepted and worked within the rhythms and (dis)order set by national actors. They prioritised their role in this way for at least three reasons: first, at least during the Cochabamba phase, the government was not comfortable with a more vocal UN role; second, they understood that classic mediation mechanisms would likely

fail in this less formalised environment in which, as Ortuño put it, the national actors "work within the chaos;"<sup>118</sup> and third, chiming in on the substance of the talks risked making the UN appear partial to the arguments of one side or another.<sup>119</sup> As a UNDP report noted: "Although perhaps less proactive compared to traditional mediation, the [UN's] actions [in the dialogue] were complex in that they required both commitment and caution, a correct understanding of the real advocacy possibilities and limits, respect for the rhythms and logic of national actors, and above all, a sense of realism and modesty in all interventions."<sup>120</sup>

The continual accompaniment of the observers – through very late nights and difficult junctures – offered the parties moral support to continue the effort.<sup>121</sup> The UN also proactively sought to keep the parties at the table. For instance, when the dialogue threatened to break down due to the withdrawal of opposition prefects,<sup>122</sup> the RC and some other observers met with them, heard out their grievances, and then conveyed these complaints to the Vice-President, which helped pave the way for their return to the dialogue.<sup>123</sup>

In what was perhaps the most important UN intervention in pressuring the parties to remain committed to the talks, the RC decided **to publish, via press releases prepared by PAPEP and the UN's Information Centre (UNIC) in La Paz, PAPEP polls that showed that the vast majority of Bolivians wanted the political actors to continue the dialogue, even if it meant sacrificing key aspects of their own proposals.**<sup>124</sup> Poll results were published at two strategic moments to add momentum to the dialogue: first, before the dialogue was announced, in order to convey to the parties that the Bolivian people were demanding they sit down and talk; and then

### The role of national staff in prevention

There is a tendency within the UN to assume that national staff cannot be "neutral" about their own country, and thus cannot play effective politically-oriented roles. This case study has demonstrated, to the contrary, that national staff can play a crucial role in prevention – and that entry points, original analysis, and adherence to UN values, including impartiality,<sup>125</sup> can be more important than real or perceived "neutrality" for such work. For instance, the stories described above about Calderón's influence in Bolivia, Aranibar and Molina's meeting with the military, and Aranibar's close relationship with the President of the National Electoral Court, show how national actors can uniquely combine UN impartiality and values with their knowledge of and contacts in their own country to influence policy in favour of prevention. At times, Bolivian staffers seemed able to cross over into becoming actors in national political processes, while also benefiting from wearing UN blue to protect their autonomy.

The role of Armando Ortuño as the RC's political advisor in the 2008 dialogue offers further insight into how national staff can advance UN prevention efforts. As Gastón Aín Bilbao put it, Ortuño was the epitome of an "insider mediator," a Bolivian national who "knew the tricks and triggers and could decide on a line of intervention."<sup>126</sup> He had prior senior experience in government (for instance, as Vice-Minister of Planning) and maintained close ties to many senior government actors. In addition to working effectively on prevention with external actors, Ortuño was a key prevention resource for the UN internally. For instance, he periodically presented national context analyses to the UNCT – these fluid updates were more central to the RC's approach than the UN's standard tool of a Common Country Assessment (CCA), a bulkier process and document.<sup>127</sup>

It is of course rare to find, whether among international or national staff, individuals with the analytical capacities, country expertise and contacts to match those of the Bolivian UNDP staffers mentioned in this report. And all of these individuals have since undertaken high-level prevention-oriented work in countries outside of Bolivia.<sup>128</sup> Each context will require an RC to assess the right person for the job – in some cases that will be a national, and in others it may be an international. But it is important for RCs to consider national staff as a potential prevention resource, rather than assuming only internationals can play such a role.

again during a near-breaking point in the dialogue itself, when PAPEP polls showed that over 90% of Bolivians wanted the dialogue to continue.<sup>129</sup> The publication of the polls also helped show the vast majority of Bolivians supporting dialogue that they were not alone in their beliefs and convictions.<sup>130</sup> As the RC recalled: "Sometimes in these very loud and shrill conflicts, the voices of ordinary people get lost... so to say look you're forgetting what your own people want, they don't want this conflict. The political actors were saying we can't even touch one comma, and the people were saying no I'm completely willing to discuss it."<sup>131</sup> The poll results received significant media coverage, helping to position the UN as a public voice on the conflict.<sup>132</sup> As described below, national actors cited these polls as helpful in sustaining the dialogue.

The RC and Ortuño **also provided analysis to other observers.** For instance, because the UN was the only international actor at the dialogue with an in-house analysis unit (PAPEP),<sup>133</sup> other observers frequently looked to it (and specifically to Ortuño) for its reading of the political context.<sup>134</sup> The UK Ambassador at the time, Nigel Baker, explained that Ortuño helped the observers "operate on the basis of objective analysis at a time when a lot of subjective analysis was going on and when it was very easy to be accused by the government or the opposition of being on one side or another... People will look to the UN for this kind of objective information, especially in heated political situations."<sup>135</sup> In addition, due to the UN's contacts with local media and communications capacities, the UN at times issued public statements on behalf of the international observers.<sup>136</sup>

The RC's political instincts also **helped her coordinate the actions of the observers at critical moments to the benefit of the dialogue.** For instance, when the opposition prefects withdrew, the government asked the international observers to serve as witnesses to the signing of partial agreements (thereby conferring international legitimacy to them). The RC and some other observers felt it would be ill-advised to witness the signing of an agreement only in the presence of MASistas, as such a move would damage their impartiality. She thus worked with other observers to coordinate a common position among them against witnessing the signing.<sup>137</sup>

Further, the RC **coordinated action within the UN itself,** by working closely with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) to generate Secretary-General statements in support of continued dialogue at key moments.<sup>138</sup> As Carlos Vergara, at the time DPA's desk officer for Bolivia, said: "We tried to find the opportunity whenever the SG had to make a statement echoing what she was saying locally, so it was synchronised messaging that reinforced the notion that the RC is not only speaking on her own behalf but also has the backing of NY."<sup>139</sup>

Finally, a key aspect of the RC's approach to the dialogue and prevention more broadly in Bolivia was **a communications strategy in support of peace.**<sup>140</sup> As she recalled:

*"For me, one of the first steps was to get people [in the*

*UNCT] used to the idea that we were a public voice, and because we didn't have an RC before there was nobody to do that. With many RCs, I think there's a perspective that if we do get involved in political issues we try to do it under the radar, and in private dialogue with the actors, that it's not our place to say things publicly."<sup>141</sup>*

Under her leadership, the UNCT collectively launched a public communications campaign in support of peace and dialogue called *Convivir, Sembrar Paz* (Coexist, Sow Peace), which was led by UNIC, the HDR team, and PAPEP, and organised in partnership with other UNCT members, the Ombudsperson's Office, and a Bolivian non-profit organisation specialised in conflict transformation (UNIR).<sup>142</sup> It was run on a shoe-string budget, initially with modest funds cobbled together from the RC Office, the World Bank and some UNCT members, and in a second phase with more substantial resources from the global MDG Fund.<sup>143</sup> The UN's strong relationships with national institutions and local media helped ensure that, despite its limited budget, the campaign reached a wide audience. A poll conducted just months after the campaign's launch showed that a quarter of Bolivians recognised the campaign.<sup>144</sup>

#### **UN's contribution to prevention**

Although the 2008 dialogue did not resolve Bolivia's challenges with inequality, social and economic exclusion, and ethnic and regional divides, nor the country's manifold and resulting social conflicts, it did avert the immediate risks of violence and division, and marked a new chapter in Bolivian politics under Morales. As Ortuño remarked:

*"I am almost convinced that Bolivia is not Venezuela in large measure because of the 2008 accord. The opposite of what happened with Chavez took place; Morales won the political election but had to make concessions to the autonomistas of Santa Cruz. This moderation made for a much stronger government and made possible a unity that exists today. The regional [autonomy] issue has basically disappeared from the political discourse of the country, and this wouldn't have been possible without the 2008 accords. In a way, the Bolivian revolution was pactada (pacted), and this was very good for the country."<sup>145</sup>*

The most important factor that accounted for the success of the 2008 dialogue was the political will on the part of the negotiating parties to make key concessions, including the government's willingness to make adjustments to the draft constitution, and the opposition's willingness to negotiate on the basis of the Oruro document, which it had considered illegitimate.<sup>146</sup> As RC Yasukawa remarked, in the absence of that political will, no external pressure or advice could have made an agreement happen.<sup>147</sup>

Because this will existed, the UN and other observers managed to contribute to the process, adding value primarily by exerting moral pressure on the parties to remain committed

to talks through to the end.<sup>148</sup> Fortunately, because UNIC in La Paz conducted interviews with key national actors right after the dialogue ended, and provided the author with those transcripts, one can hear from national actors themselves how they assessed the UN's contribution.

Carlos Romero, who led the dialogue on the government side, acknowledged that "nobody wanted to break [the dialogue] before the presence of the representatives of the international community. [Their presence] helped enormously to consolidate the dialogue space, especially with the department prefects."<sup>149</sup> Similarly, when asked in what moment he felt relief amidst the desperation of the moment and could see the light at the end of the tunnel, opposition Prefect Ruben Costas answered: "In the extraordinarily successful decision of the international community to sit down [at the dialogue]."<sup>150</sup> Costas also crediting the UN and the European Troika with obligating the government to sit down with the opposition in a dialogue.<sup>151</sup>

Several observers highlighted the RC's approach of exerting moral pressure as impactful. Opposition Senator Roger Pinto said in 2009 that when at some point the dialogue threatened to derail, Yasukawa urged the parties to "make an effort for the country for which all of you are here." "These words," Pinto said, "were words of reflection for all of us. We had advanced so much, swam so much, to die on the beach. I think the presence of these people was what motivated an agreement that resulted in the Constitution... and although [the issues] are not fully solved, at least [the prospect of] a confrontation is much more distant."<sup>152</sup>

The positive impact of the RC's decision to publish poll results on the negotiations was also confirmed by multiple national actors. For instance, when asked whether the polls had impacted the negotiations, Carlos Romero answered: "Of course yes, because... there was the pressure of public opinion, and the majority's feelings about the dialogue were translated and spread through mainstream media. This consolidated the state of public opinion and in some way also helped add pressure for a way out [of the crisis] through dialogue."<sup>153</sup> Opposition deputy Alejandro Colanzi concurred: "I must recognise the function of the UN, which in these days precisely publicised a poll about the theme of the unity of the country... I think this was one of the various determinants in the search for dialogue and consensus."<sup>154</sup>

National actors also highlighted the informal spaces for dialogue that UNDP and others (namely the Bolivian Foundation for Multiparty Democracy, fBDM) had organised in the lead-up to the 2008 dialogue. Romero later referred to these dialogues as having been "very useful" because they allowed us to at least identify the points of conflict. "At some point, I said, [developing] an inventory of the points of conflict is in and of itself an advance. And this could not be done solely by debating within one of the parties – it had to be done with the other party."<sup>155</sup>

As for PAPEP, an independent evaluation concluded:

*"It would be safe to assume that without PAPEP the outcome of the constitutional crisis of Bolivia and the possibilities for a dialogue would not have been the same. It does not imply that PAPEP was the sole responsible [sic] for the success of the dialogue; however, PAPEP was a major enabler of the processes through the quality and legitimacy of the analysis it offered all involved parties for the solution of the conflict... PAPEP was also particularly instrumental in the advocacy with national actors to ensure political ownership and commitment of the decisions made by actors."<sup>156</sup>*

According to the evaluation, PAPEP's "almost decisive" impact in Bolivia was attributed to: "the well-positioned UNDP Country Office and the decisive role of the Resident Coordinator, the existence of a strong national institution-catalyst [the National Electoral Court], long history of PAPEP's presence in Bolivia and strong political connections and networks of the Team."<sup>157</sup>

Finally, and most importantly, an October 2008 survey showed that two-thirds of Bolivians felt that UN support in its capacity as observer and witness to the dialogue was significant.<sup>158</sup> Further, polls conducted about a month after the dialogue in urban areas showed that about half of Bolivians were satisfied with the results of the dialogue and the changes to the Constitution – though important departmental differences existed, with populations in opposition strongholds Tarija and Santa Cruz being less satisfied than those in the mostly pro-MAS departments of La Paz and El Alto.<sup>159</sup>

### After the dialogue

RC Yasukawa's role in the 2008 dialogue afforded her political capital and a strong media profile, both of which she put to use to advocate for peace in subsequent years. She openly pointed out problems that needed to be corrected, including on sensitive political issues, with senior government officials; coordinated messages to the government with local ambassadors to reinforce key points; and issued public statements expressing concern about government actions deemed repressive or undemocratic.<sup>160</sup> She also became a vocal UN advocate for human rights and peace, with some perceiving her as having been stronger and more outspoken on human rights than even OHCHR in Bolivia.<sup>161</sup> Further, when the political front calmed down, the RC attempted to shift the focus of the UN's work toward urgent social and development needs, in recognition that these issues "were themselves expressions of inequality and injustices that fed into political conflict."<sup>162</sup>

The Morales government did not object to RC statements pointing out problems in the country or even in its specific approach; to the contrary, the government continued to meet with her regularly and requested UN support for certain dialogue processes.<sup>163</sup> As Ortuño recalled: "By the time she was halfway through her term she had become an important

person in Bolivian politics, she was listened to by national actors. It would have been difficult to imagine Yoriko's subsequent work without those weeks of the dialogue."<sup>164</sup>

However, after RC Yasukawa left Bolivia, it became clear that the RC's prevention role would depend very much on the style, personality and vocation of the RC her or himself.<sup>165</sup> The new RC, who was seen as partial and lacking knowledge of governance issues, was asked to leave by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after just a year and a half.

As for UNDP, after the dialogue and with the support of the MDG Fund, it worked with legislators to draft framework laws related to the implementation of the agreement.<sup>166</sup> Further, UNDP undertook projects aimed at generating spaces for informal dialogue and strengthening political parties, the conflict resolution capacity of the Ombudsperson, and the National Electoral Court. Meanwhile, the regional PAPEP grew to work in many Latin American countries, and between 2010-12 PAPEP participated in workshops to introduce its methodology to RCs/RRs in other regions, including the Middle East during the Arab Spring.<sup>167</sup> An evaluation found that PAPEP had been exceptionally impactful in Bolivia, but also that it had contributed to prevention and strengthened UNDP elsewhere in the region, namely in Paraguay and El Salvador.<sup>168</sup>

However, the conditions that made PAPEP so successful in Bolivia – including the especially capable national UNDP team, the tight-knit networks among that team and key national actors, the existence of strong counterpart institutions (e.g., the National Electoral Court), and the proactive role of the RC in leveraging PAPEP as a prevention tool – were not always replicable elsewhere.<sup>169</sup> For instance, according to the evaluation, though PAPEP produced solid political analysis in Honduras in the lead-up to a 2009 coup, it was not able to influence political decision-making to avert a political crisis. This relative lack of impact was often attributed to “the reserved and cautious position of the RC in Honduras,”<sup>170</sup> and UNDP's excessive preoccupation with being perceived as “neutral,” which inhibited preventive action.<sup>171</sup>

### PAPEP winds down

Despite PAPEP's remarkable successes in Bolivia, three factors led to its unofficial demise in 2015:<sup>172</sup> shifts in UNDP's funding model; weaker political backing in headquarters; and a “turn to the left” in Latin American politics that emphasised sovereignty and non-intervention.

First, around 2012, the new UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, began a substantial restructuring of the organisation, which included abolishing BCPR, one of PAPEP's most important sources of funding. UNDP's general financial problems led to increased reliance within the Programme on a service delivery funding model, in which projects that generate cost recovery take priority. This was felt particularly acutely in Latin America, where a strong emphasis within UNDP on resource

mobilisation, particularly through the model of cost-sharing with governments, was perceived as having eclipsed other priorities. In some middle-income Latin American countries, this approach made UNDP increasingly reliant on government contracts – particularly their sizeable overheads – for revenue. Such a funding model can complicate efforts to do effective prevention work, which often requires a degree of autonomy from the government. Projects like PAPEP cannot be sustained with such a service-delivery model, as they require core funds that reflect UN impartiality (as opposed to government-linked funds), and they do not generate cost recovery.

Second, the shifts at headquarters were not only financial but also political – the new UNDP administration after 2009, by many accounts, was more risk-averse with respect to political engagements that could complicate development programming. As demonstrated by the stories above, projects like PAPEP require strong political backing from headquarters to have maximum impact on the ground.

Third and finally, as Gastón Aín Bilbao has argued, the regional configuration in Latin America shifted by 2010 in ways that shrunk the space for PAPEP-like initiatives.<sup>173</sup> The rise of left-leaning leaders in the preceding years in many Latin American countries marked newfound opposition to the Washington Consensus of the 1990s and greater sensitivity with respect to the role of the international community in domestic politics.<sup>174</sup> According to Bilbao: “No matter how well conceived PAPEP was, or how talented its staff was, a series of new barriers and hurdles arose for a project of that nature to exert influence and contribute to political agendas.”<sup>175</sup>

All three of these factors contributed to the winding down of PAPEP, which no longer exists as an active regional program, but transferred its knowledge to the still-active Democratic Dialogue Regional Project.<sup>176</sup>

## 3. Lessons

**Political will on the part of national parties to reach a negotiated solution and baseline consent to a UN role are preconditions for productive UN preventive action:** The Bolivian experience shows that the UN's ability to meaningfully contribute to prevention depends, first and foremost, on the existence of sufficient political will of the national parties. That is, the key parties to the conflict – those capable of “vetoing” any deal and returning the country to escalatory dynamics – must largely prefer a non-violent solution over violence and be willing to make key concessions to attain that preference. The UN cannot generate this political will; it can only build on it if it already exists. Beyond being committed to at least give dialogue a chance, national actors must also consent to a UN role if the organisation is to have any space to work. Where the UN is perceived by one side as being too close to another, positioning the UN's role with those of others (for instance, in the Bolivian case, UNASUR) can help build consent.<sup>177</sup>

**RCs must be politically attuned to openings for prevention:**

To play effective prevention roles, RCs must have strong political instincts and see the promotion of UN values, including with respect to peace and human rights, as an integral part of their roles. RC Yasukawa demonstrated both when she quickly agreed to the request for UN support at the 2008 dialogue, and exerted moral pressure at various points on the parties to remain committed to the dialogue. For instance, her decision to publish poll results showing most Bolivians supported the dialogue at strategic junctures was a clear example of political smarts. Further, simply reminding the parties of the greater good proved important – RCs can and should deploy the ‘moral voice’ of the UN to such prevention ends.<sup>178</sup> Politically-attuned RCs are also key for sustaining a UNCT’s prevention capacities: Bolivia shows that PAPEP-like initiatives will perform best where there exists such an RC or other UN official who understands and leverages the initiative as a prevention tool (consider, for instance, the relative lack of PAPEP’s impact in Honduras in the lead up to the 2009 coup, which was blamed on the cautious approach of the RC there).<sup>179</sup> RCs who are afraid of or uninterested in politics, or who see conflict prevention and the defence/promotion of human rights as being outside their mandates, will miss such openings and are unlikely to understand the value of the UNCT’s prevention capacities. The detrimental impact of the absence of strong RC leadership was starkly demonstrated in Bolivia in the lead-up to the 2008 dialogue, when for 13 months a merry-go-round of ad interim RCs damaged the UN’s profile as a prevention actor and staff morale at a critical moment.

**RCs and UNCTs should develop “anticipatory relationships” that allow effective preventive action when political openings arise:** RCs and UNCTs can dramatically enhance their preventive potential by establishing, cultivating and maintaining relationships with political, economic and social leaders who are likely to emerge as relevant actors in future situations of political turmoil or crisis and might offer the UN with entry points or leverage for a preventive role. (This should be done not only with respect to conflict prevention per se, but also to build broad consensus and sustained collective efforts around shared development objectives.) In Bolivia, UNDP managed to do this at the highest levels of government, thanks to the HDR and PAPEP teams’ longstanding and personal relationships with key national actors. Fernando Calderón, in particular, built high-level networks of experts and Latin American leaders for PAPEP to draw on. These networks enriched UNDP’s political analysis, ensured that analysis reached key audiences, and created entry points for critical prevention efforts.

**HDRs can build the UN’s credibility as a prevention actor:** In Bolivia, UNDP’s high-quality HDRs dating back to the late 1990s lent the Country Office significant informational and analytical credibility on issues related to political conflict and development – credibility that future RCs were able to cash in on. Among the factors accounting for the HDR’s success were: the high quality and strong contacts of the team’s national staff, which enabled the Reports to be written

from the perspective of a participant in rather than a distant observer of Bolivia’s development; the Reports’ emphasis on analytical over descriptive text; and the team’s willingness to tackle, with solid analysis, contentious issues head-on, which bolstered the Country Office’s credibility.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, Bolivia shows that HDRs can tackle politically sensitive issues without endangering the UN’s position if they ground such points in credible analysis. Finally, it pays off to focus HDRs on issues that are likely to emerge at the heart of future political crises – as UNDP in Bolivia discovered, when, as it built contacts and knowledge for an HDR focused on the Constituent Assembly, constitutional issues became central to prevention (see above: anticipatory relationships).

**Conflict analysis gives the UN a role:** If RCs and UNCTs want to play a prevention role, they need to have something to say. Original, high-quality conflict analysis based on primary sources, combined with the UN’s “soft power” as an impartial actor with universal values, gives RCs and UNCTs added value. Survey and other primary data help create entry points as national actors are more likely to call upon the UN – and hear out its advice – when it has something original to say. This lesson was demonstrated over and over again in Bolivia – from the scenarios giving Calderón a solid basis from which to alert Presidents Sánchez de Lozada and Mesa to the risks of impending political crises, to the military consulting – and taking into account in its decision-making on presidential succession after Mesa’s resignation – survey data and analysis presented to them by Aranibar and Molina, to the observers drawing on Ortuño’s reading of the political context in the 2008 dialogue. Dedicated resources and expert staff capacities are required for the UN to be able to undertake such analysis.

**Good analysis isn’t enough; how you use it matters just as much:** To have policy relevance and impact, PAPEP-like initiatives must do more than just produce data and analysis; the UN must put that information to use to effect policy change in support of prevention. It can do so by, inter alia: briefing high-level policymakers on prospective scenarios and the projected consequences of their choices (i.e., an early warning tool); strengthening national “catalyst institutions” that will be key to prevention; and strategically publishing at critical moments survey data showing pro-peace public opinion to pressure policymakers to commit to non-violent solutions. Further, on the basis of solid conflict analysis, the UN can design informal spaces for dialogue that allow national actors to jointly identify contentious issues and encourage the early development of compromise proposals – important foundations for future, formal dialogues.<sup>181</sup>

**National staff can be a game-changing prevention asset to RCs:** While, as this project’s other case studies demonstrate, international PDAs can play a crucial role in supporting RC prevention roles, Bolivia demonstrates that national staff can also step into such a role – often with unique comparative advantages. The right national staff can bring in-depth knowledge of a country and strong networks with political,

economic and social leaders. Further, they do not require the resources needed for an international PDA, which, given the costs entailed, might not be available to all RCs who need dedicated prevention staff. While there may be concerns about whether national staff can be “neutral” about politics in their own country, this case study has demonstrated that entry points, original analysis, and adherence to UN values, including *impartiality*, can be more important for prevention than real or perceived “neutrality.” (Further, PAPEP’s experience in Honduras demonstrates that an excessive preoccupation with being perceived as neutral can in fact inhibit preventive action.) Finally, the PAPEP scenario-building methodology itself is designed to mitigate problems of objectivity. As Aranibar put it, “it is not about what you would like to happen in your country, but rather about the actual possibilities.”<sup>182</sup>

**Prevention requires backing from headquarters:** The UN, which is in a country at the behest of the government, depends on the support and cooperation of national authorities to get anything done. Yet, sometimes effective preventive action requires UN actors to speak truth to power and warn governments about projected crises and the consequences of their decisions. Backing from senior leadership in headquarters is crucial to enabling UN staff on the ground to walk this tightrope. Mark Malloch Brown’s support for PAPEP playing an outsized political role in Bolivia was key to enabling Calderón and others to have difficult, honest conversations with national actors about impending crises. The Bolivian experience also demonstrates that PAPEP-like initiatives require dedicated funds that reflect UN values and impartiality. In Bolivia, BCPR was an important source of such funds for PAPEP. While such funds do not have to come exclusively from headquarters (in Bolivia, the MDG Fund also proved important), they likely will need to come from sources independent from the host government. A service-delivery model is unlikely to sustain PAPEP-like initiatives, which do not generate cost recovery.

**An RC’s institutional link to UNDP can be a vital lifeline:** Particularly in countries where RC Offices are very small and resource constraints do not permit even a PDA, the capacities, expertise and networks of UNDP are likely to constitute an RC’s most important prevention assets. In the case of Bolivia, RC relied to a significant extent on UNDP, and especially PAPEP, prevention capacities - even benefiting from the head of PAPEP acting as her political advisor. Had she been unable to do this, her prevention role likely would have been more limited.<sup>183</sup>

**RCs can observe high-level political dialogues:** Sometimes, RCs might be better placed than Special Envoys or SRSGs to react quickly to requests for support from political dialogue processes – assuming an RC is in place with the necessary political acumen. In the case of Bolivia, because the request for support came on extremely short notice, the RC was best placed to react in real-time. In contexts where the UN is not being called upon to mediate or structure a process, RCs can

be most useful by focusing their efforts on exerting moral pressure on the parties to stay at the table. Within such an approach, RCs can draw on UNCT capacities to help inform the actions of other observers, build confidence among the national parties, and arrange for Secretary-General statements in support of the dialogue to reinforce the role of UN actors on the ground at critical junctures (this requires close coordination with DPA<sup>184</sup>).

**Record good prevention practice – and draw on the perspectives of national actors:** The Bolivian case demonstrated the value of recording good practice in terms of the UN’s prevention activities. After the 2008 dialogue, UNDP’s Democratic Dialogue Regional Project undertook a detailed report on the experience, which has proven a key resource for those interested in the UN’s prevention role in Bolivia (including for this case study).<sup>185</sup> (This project aimed, *inter alia*, to collect and analyse lessons learned from conflict prevention experiences in the region.<sup>186</sup>) Further, UNIC in La Paz conducted interviews with key national actors immediately after the dialogue, asking them in what ways the UN’s role in the dialogue was helpful. UNIC held on to these interview transcripts and provided them to this author. Being able to draw on insights from national actors themselves, who were speaking immediately after the dialogue, on the UN’s role is a crucial resource for lessons-learning. Such interview transcripts can help move the UN away from relying on its own sources and staff recollections regarding the UN’s role in a situation, which for obvious reasons are less reliable. In the future, RCs and UNCTs may wish to consider conducting such interviews with national actors right after major prevention experiences as standard practice.

**Use communications as a prevention tool:** Too often, the UN views communications a public relations task to promote its own work. As RC Yasukawa has argued: “the purpose of communications is to advance our mission, not to market ourselves.”<sup>187</sup> Bolivia demonstrates that preventive communications will work best where RCs have something original to say, drawing on the UN’s primary data (such as polls) and unique insights, and where the UN maintains strong relationships with local media and national institutions that can help amplify the message, compensating for limited communications campaign budgets.

## Endnotes

Cover Image: UN Photo/ Amanda Voisard. 21 September 2016. President of Bolivia Addresses General Assembly.

- \*The author would like to thank the following individuals for agreeing to be interviewed, reviewing the draft, and/or providing relevant documents: Gastón Aín Bilbao, Armando Ortuño, Yoriko Yasukawa, Antonio Aranibar, Fernando Calderón, George Gray Molina, Santiago Daroca, Marc Andre Franché, Carlos Vergara, Nigel Baker, Robert Brockmann, Kenny Bell, Jordan Ryan, Marylene Smeets, Carlos Vergara, Laura Rutishauser, Emma Hutchinson, and others. The author bears sole responsibility for any mistakes or omissions in this report, and the views expressed in this report are not necessarily shared by the individuals listed above.
- 1 Panetta, Vicente L. "Bolivia al borde de la Guerra Civil: más de 30 muertos en Pando." Noticias24. 14 September 2008. [www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/17575/bolivia-al-borde-de-la-guerra-civil-mas-de-30-muertos-en-pando/](http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/17575/bolivia-al-borde-de-la-guerra-civil-mas-de-30-muertos-en-pando/).
  - 2 Aín Bilbao, Gastón. "Multilateralismo y Resolución de Conflictos en Sudamérica." Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain, PhD thesis. September 2012, p.166.
  - 3 "Human Development Report 2010- The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development." UNDP. New York, 2010, [hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/270/hdr\\_2010\\_en\\_complete\\_reprint.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/270/hdr_2010_en_complete_reprint.pdf). Accessed 9 March 2018.
  - 4 "Bolivia- National Census of Housing and Population 2001- IPUMS Subset." Central Microdata Catalog, The World Bank. [microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/449](http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/449).
  - 5 Segura, Renata and Catherine Bellamy. "Conflict Prevention in Bolivia and Ecuador: The Role of the International Community." Center on International Cooperation. February 2009, p.1.
  - 6 Ibid. p.1.
  - 7 "Del Conflicto al Acuerdo: Los Bolivianos Frente a la Crisis." UNDP. 2009, [www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/en/2056](http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/en/2056).
  - 8 See especially the Plan Dignidad (Dignity Plan) campaign of the late 1990s. Ledebur, Kathryn. "Coca and Conflict in the Chapare." WOLA Drug War Monitor. July 2002, p.2, [www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Drug%20Policy/past/ddhr\\_bolivia\\_brief.pdf](http://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Drug%20Policy/past/ddhr_bolivia_brief.pdf).
  - 9 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009, p.4. Shock therapy was pioneered by Jeffrey Sachs in Bolivia.
  - 10 Finnegan, William. "Leasing the Rain." The New Yorker. 8 April 2002, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/04/08/leasing-the-rain](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/04/08/leasing-the-rain).
  - 11 Molina, George Gray. "Bolivia's Long and Winding Road." Inter-American Dialogue Andean Working Paper. July 2008, pp.6-7.
  - 12 Molina, G G. 2008, p.7.
  - 13 "It was not how we imagined it: A story of dialogue, conflict and peace building in Bolivia." UNDP. 2011, p.1.
  - 14 Ibid. p.2.
  - 15 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009, p.4. Other key polarizing factors included: disputes over the new administration's central policy reforms, namely with respect to the the distribution of fiscal resources; and Bolivia's regional relationships, with the country under Morales starting to align itself with Venezuela or Ecuador on some political issues and with Chile, Brazil and Argentina on other issues of economic importance (e.g., gas negotiations). Molina, George Gray. 2008, p.7.
  - 16 The ballot had also asked voters whether they wanted greater autonomy for the departments were held; an overall majority rejected autonomy, but the Media Luna states voted in favor, bringing into stark view the east-west divide in the country.
  - 17 Molina, G G. 2008, p.7.: This rule was included in the 2006 law that convoked the CA. "It was not how we imagined." 2011, pp. 5.
  - 18 Ibid. p.7.
  - 19 Ibid. p.7.
  - 20 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.5.
  - 21 In November 2007, a violent clash between police and student protestors in favor of making Sucre the country's capital left two dead. Molina, G G. 2008, p.8.
  - 22 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.5.
  - 23 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, pp.5-8. (Citation applies to whole paragraph). See also: Molina, G G. 2008, p.7.
  - 24 "Bolivia: Rescuing the New Constitution and Democratic Stability." International Crisis Group, Latin America Briefing No.18, 19 June 2008, [old.crisisgroup.org/\\_/media/Files/latin-america/boliva/b18\\_bolivia\\_rescuing\\_the\\_new\\_constitution\\_and\\_democratic\\_stability.pdf](http://old.crisisgroup.org/_/media/Files/latin-america/boliva/b18_bolivia_rescuing_the_new_constitution_and_democratic_stability.pdf).
  - 25 "Bolivia: Constitutional Referendum 25 January 2009." European Union Election Observation Mission. Final Report. 2009, p.6, [eeas.europa.eu/archives/eueom/missions/2009/bolivia/pdf/eueom\\_bolivia\\_2009\\_final\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/eueom/missions/2009/bolivia/pdf/eueom_bolivia_2009_final_report_en.pdf).
  - 26 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009, p.5.; "Bolivia: Rescuing the New Constitution and Democratic Stability." 2008, p.4.
  - 27 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.42.
  - 28 Ibid. p.43.

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- 29 "Bolivia: Former Governor Sentenced for Orchestrating Massacre." Telesur. 11 March 2017, [www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Bolivia-Former-Governor-Sentenced-for-Orchestrating-Massacre-20170311-0001.html](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Bolivia-Former-Governor-Sentenced-for-Orchestrating-Massacre-20170311-0001.html).
- 30 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.43.
- 31 Ibid. p.25.
- 32 Anria, Santiago and Sara Niedzwiecki. "Social Movements and Social Policy: the Bolivian Renta Dignidad." *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Vol.51, No.3, pp. 308-327.; Webber, Jeffrey R. "From Rebellion to Reform in Bolivia: Class Struggle, indigenous Liberation, and the Politics of Evo Morales." Haymarket Books. 2011, p.133.
- 33 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.43.
- 34 The central concession was Morales's promise to seek only one more five-year term. Obviously, this part of the accord did not age well (Morales is still President at the time of writing). "Bolivia reforms 'deal reached.'" BBC News. 21 October 2008, [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7681413.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7681413.stm).
- 35 Crabtree, John. "Bolivia: new constitution, new definition." OpenDemocracy. 22 January 2009, [www.opendemocracy.net/article/bolivia-new-constitution-new-definition](http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/bolivia-new-constitution-new-definition).
- 36 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, pp.43.
- 37 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 38 Interview with Marc Andre Franché, December 2017.
- 39 For instance, Opposition Senator Tito Hoz de Vila praised Martínez's role, saying he would get involved in the issue of strengthening Bolivia's democracy and "did a great job." Interview with Tito Hoz de Vila conducted by Robert Brockmann. UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 40 Weeks, John and Oscar García. "Bolivia Country Report." in *Evaluation of UNDP's Role in the PRSP Process, Volume II: Country Reports*, UNDP Evaluation Office. September 2003, p.38, [www.soas.ac.uk/cdpr/publications/reports/file24346.pdf](http://www.soas.ac.uk/cdpr/publications/reports/file24346.pdf).
- 41 "Human Development Report Bolivia 2000." UNDP. March 2000, [hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-bolivia-2000](http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-bolivia-2000).
- 42 Weeks, J and García, O. 2003, p.38.
- 43 Weeks, J and García, O. 2003, p.46.
- 44 These included a National Dialogue in 2000, for which UNDP, drawing on its 2000 HDR's conclusions, advised on participatory process design and coordinated the support of international donors. An evaluation found that while this dialogue "would have occurred without UNDP's help, that help greatly facilitated its success as a vehicle of social inclusion." Ibid. p.35.
- 45 Interview with Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.
- 46 "Political Capabilities for Human Development 2002." UNDP. March 2002, [hdr.undp.org/en/content/political-capabilities-human-development-2002](http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/political-capabilities-human-development-2002).; And email exchange with Antonio Aranibar Arze. March 2018.
- 47 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre. May 2012, [erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/5415](http://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/5415).
- 48 "Political Capabilities for Human Development 2002." 2002.
- 49 Interview with Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.
- 50 Interview with Fernando Calderón, March 2018. The HDR team conducted interviews with and/or presented scenarios to various opposition leaders, including leaders of the Water War, syndicates and the Mallku (leader of the Aymara). Email exchange with Fernando Calderón, March 2018.
- 51 Interview with Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018. Around this time, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean also created the Democratic Dialogue regional project aimed at providing technical support and facilitation services to multi-stakeholder dialogue processes in the region. Email exchange with Gastón Aín Bilbao, March 2017.
- 52 In a prior capacity, Mark Malloch Brown had advised the presidential campaign of President Sánchez de Lozada. Sánchez de Lozada, who now lives in the U.S., was recently found guilty by a U.S. jury of being responsible for civilian deaths during the 2003 protests that led to his demise. Bolivia has repeatedly demanded his extradition to face charges there. "U.S. jury finds ex-Bolivia leader responsible for civilian deaths." Ramos, Danny. "U.S. jury finds ex-Bolivia leader responsible for civilian deaths." Reuters. 4 April 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-bolivia-trial/u-s-jury-finds-ex-bolivia-leader-responsible-for-civilian-deaths-idUSKCN1HA2W4>.
- 53 Interview with Fernando Calderón, March 2018.
- 54 Interviews with Fernando Calderón, March 2018, and Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.
- 55 "Notes for a short term political and economic agenda in Bolivia". PAPEP Confidential Policy Paper for the Bolivian Presidency, June 2002.
- 56 Interview with Fernando Calderón, March 2018.
- 57 Ibid. (Citation applies to whole paragraph and prior block quote.)
- 58 Interview with Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.

- 59 Delphi surveys are closed-ended surveys that can be quickly carried out via email correspondence with senior officials (PAPEP surveys often asked how likely the respondent considered a particular event was to happen). Though the survey sample is too small to be statistically significant, Delphi surveys proved "qualitatively important because they allow for identifying consensus among leaders of opinion on the likeliness or not of possible future developments." "The PAPEP Experience: Strengthening Political Capacities for Development." UNDP- PAPEP. October 2011, p.23.
- 60 PAPEP had two overarching objectives: first, to strengthen strategic actors' abilities to confront governance challenges and make decisions that contribute to prevention; and second, to strengthen RC/RR's capacities for prospective political analysis to support conflict-sensitive planning and programming. "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.16.
- 61 Ibid. p.28.
- 62 Interviews with Fernando Calderón, March 2018, and Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.
- 63 For instance, the network included: Juan Gabriel Valdés (former Chilean Foreign Minister); Marco Aurelio Garcia, advisor to then-Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva; Ana María Romero de Campero, President of the Senate and Human Rights Ombudswoman of Bolivia; and Carlos Alvarez, a former Vice-President of Argentina. Ex-President of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso also contributed to various PAPEP initiatives. See: "Una Brújula para la Democracia." PAPEP. March 2008, [www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/es/2084/235](http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/es/2084/235).
- 64 See: "Una Brújula para la Democracia." 2008.; And "Una agenda para la gobernabilidad democrática en América Latina." [www.scribd.com/document/23353428/Agenda-Para-La-Gobernabilidad](http://www.scribd.com/document/23353428/Agenda-Para-La-Gobernabilidad). Both of which drew on the input of senior policymakers from across Latin America.
- 65 Interview with George Gray Molina, October 2017.
- 66 Interview with Fernando Calderón, March 2018.
- 67 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.14.
- 68 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009, p.5.
- 69 Interview with George Gray Molina, October 2017.
- 70 Interviews with Carlos Vergara (October 2017), George Gray Molina (October 2017) and Antonio Aranibar Arze (February 2018). Also see "UN envoy holds 'positive' meeting with new Bolivian President." UN News Service. 14 June 2005, [reliefweb.int/report/bolivia/un-envoy-holds-positive-meeting-new-bolivian-president](http://reliefweb.int/report/bolivia/un-envoy-holds-positive-meeting-new-bolivian-president).
- 71 "Notes for a political roadmap." PAPEP Confidential Policy Paper for the Bolivian Presidency. June 2005.
- 72 Compounding the political shifts, strong political backing for the Morales government from Brazil (Lula), Argentina (Kirchner) and Venezuela (Chavez) dramatically reconfigured the country's political alliances. Email exchange with Antonio Aranibar Arze, March 2018.
- 73 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.14., and email exchange with UN official, April 2018.
- 74 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009, p.5.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.14.
- 77 Ibid, p.5.
- 78 Segura, R and Bellamy, C. 2009.: "The revolving door of acting representatives eroded the UN's public profile and the coherence of the work." Segura, Renata and Catherine Bellamy.
- 79 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.17.
- 80 See "El Estado del Estado." UNDP. 2007, [hdr.undp.org/en/content/state-state](http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/state-state).; And La Otra Frontera, which won the global award for excellence in the category of policy analysis. "La otra frontera: usos alternativos de recursos naturales en Bolivia." UNPD. 2008, [hdr.undp.org/en/content/la-otra-frontera](http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/la-otra-frontera).
- 81 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012.; And interview with Pablo Ruiz, conducted by Laura Rutishauser, January 2018.
- 82 Interview with Santiago Daroca, February 2018.
- 83 The UNCT also received funds from the MDG fund for windows focused on gender, infant nutrition, and development and the private sector. In total, the UNCT received around US\$28 million from the MDG Fund. "Bolivia." Fondo Para El Logro De Los ODM. April 2013, [www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Bolivia%20Joint%20Programmes%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Bolivia%20Joint%20Programmes%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf).
- 84 UNDP more broadly, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and UNODC also benefited from the funds allocated to the peace window. Ibid.
- 85 "Una carta de navegación para PAPEP." Internal UN document.
- 86 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.30.
- 87 Interview with Carlos Vergara, October 2017.
- 88 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 89 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.50.
- 90 Interview with Carlos Vergara, October 2017.

- 91 "The PAPEP Experience." 2011, p.23.
- 92 Interview with George Gray Molina, October 2017.
- 93 Ibid. As Gray Molina explained: "We used [our] data in combination with the soft power of the UN... we had UN values, so the data was seen as objective and we were using it to push toward something better than a slide into violence and conflict."
- 94 PAPEP, inter alia, articulated a roadmap toward ratifying a new constitution and addressing regional autonomies through referenda; undertook public opinion polls on key public policy issues; produced regular political reports based on primary and secondary data and interviews; and created informal spaces for dialogue among national actors. "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.48.
- 95 Ibid. p.48.
- 96 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 97 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.22. For instance, Carlos Romero, a MAS official, and Carlos Bohrt, an opposition Senator, along with a constitutional lawyer, co-authored a book offering three viewpoints for moving toward a new constitution. See here for the text: Alarcon, Carlos et al. *Hacia una Constitucion democratica, viable y plural: Tres miradas*. Fundacion Boliviana para la Democracia Multipartidaria (fBDM), 2008, [www.scribd.com/document/67298116/Hacia-una-constitucion-democratica-viable-y-plural](http://www.scribd.com/document/67298116/Hacia-una-constitucion-democratica-viable-y-plural).
- 98 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.67.
- 99 "Notes for a political roadmap." 2005.
- 100 These included the autonomy referenda in May-June 2008 (which the CNE rejected); the recall referendum of 2008; and the referendum to approve the new Constitution, which was ultimately accomplished in January 2009. "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.31.
- 101 Specifically, PAPEP provided the President of the CNE, Exeni, with: "(i) Strategic political advice; (ii) regular institutional and political scenarios; (iii) Legal and technical assistance to back the NEC's plenary sessions' resolutions' elaboration; and (iv) institutional advocacy with political and social actors." "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.48.
- 102 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.7.
- 105 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.23.
- 106 Aín Bilbao, G. 2012, pp. 99-107. Further, the government supported a UNASUR-created commission to investigate the Pando massacre.
- 107 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.11.
- 108 Initially, the government's invitation to the UN mentioned only an "inauguration to the dialogue." Hence, the RC and Ortuño thought they would go to Cochabamba briefly, and then return to La Paz and think through how the UN could best support the dialogue. The RC began discussing with DPA the possibility of sending a high-level mediator from headquarters. However, there turned out to be no time to wait for headquarters to dispatch an envoy, as the dialogue started immediately upon their arrival in Cochabamba, and Yasukawa and Ortuño had to decide on the spot to stay and observe on behalf of the UN. Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 109 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 110 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.27. According to Gastón Aín Bilbao, "Before, during and after the negotiations, the representative of UNASUR [Valdés] exercised good offices between [the opposition and the government], suggesting and thinking of possible solutions to issues that made it difficult to overcome the crisis." Aín Bilbao, G. 2012, p.107.
- 111 See "Una Brújula para la Democracia." 2008.
- 112 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 113 Interview with Ruben Costas conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 114 As Carlos Romero said, due to the complexity of the Congress phase, "it was perhaps no longer enough [for the observers] to just witness the dialogue... they assumed some role as dialogue managers... to find alternatives that unlocked polarizing issues... [they] gave tranquility to the political scene, they pacified the country, and they managed to make viable the Referendum for the Political Constitution of the State." Interview with Carlos Romero conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 115 The RC also worked closely with UNIC to manage and distribute her office's public communications in support of peace, and with OHCHR in later years on some human rights issues. Interviews with Yoriko Yasukawa and Robert Brockmann, November 2017.
- 116 Interview with Carlos Vergara, October 2017. RC Yasukawa concurred, saying she would not have wanted any international PDA in place of Ortuño as her political advisor. Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 117 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.23. As the RC recalled, "It was a kind of cheerleading, moral support that was

important. It was about being by the side of national actors through difficult endeavors, and simply saying you're not alone." Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.

- 118 As Ortuño explained: "Usually, mediators try to get the actors to enter into their logic, but this is less likely to work when the actors are less formalized, more disorganized and more polarized. Classic mediation mechanisms fail [in these contexts] because the actors don't accept order; they work within the chaos. We learned in the dialogue that we couldn't impose practices of negotiation or mediation on the actors; instead we had to accompany the dialogue even if it wasn't always coherent." Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017. Yasukawa concurred: "It was a situation that was super chaotic, disorganized, incomprehensible at times but one in which if you go, you have to adjust to that chaos and improvisation... improvisation is part of how people work and it does not work that we as foreigners come and say but, what is this disorder, here there needs to be order and methodology." Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 119 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 120 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, pp. 32-33.
- 121 The RC likened this continual accompaniment to the way "friends are there for one another in times of difficulty." Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 122 They withdrew in protest of the arrest of a citizen in Tarija. Interview with Armando Ortuño conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 123 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 124 In August 2008, polls showed that 83% of the population across Bolivia's diverse regions wanted non-violent solutions approaches to change in the country. In September, 92% of respondents were demanding that the dialogue continue. It was not how we imagined it, 29. For additional poll results, see "Del Conflicto al Acuerdo: Los Bolivianos Frente a la Crisis." 2009.
- 125 As explained in the report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations: "Impartiality must mean adherence to the principles of the Charter and to the objectives of a mission mandate that is rooted in Charter principles. On the ground, the impartiality of the United Nations missions should be judged by its determination to respond even-handedly to the actions of different parties based not on who has acted but the nature of their actions." Although this refers to UN peace operations, Yasukawa noted it should also apply to UNCTs. Yasukawa email exchange, March 2018.
- 126 Interview with Gastón Aín Bilbao, November 2017.
- 127 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 128 For instance, George Gray Molina is now the Chief Economist in UNDP's Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean; Antonio Aranibar is now the Head of the UN Mission in Medellín; Armando Ortuño is now senior political advisor to several UNDP offices in Latin America; Santiago Daroca is now a Peace and Development Advisor (PDA) in Guatemala. International staff who worked with the HDR and PAPEP teams in Bolivia, too, moved on to senior prevention functions at the UN; for instance, Marc Andre Franché is now the head of the UN Peacebuilding Fund.
- 129 Internal UN documents, 2017.
- 130 Internal UN document, 2017.
- 131 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 132 Internal UN documents, 2017.
- 133 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.50.
- 134 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 135 Interview with Nigel Baker, January 2018.
- 136 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 137 In 2009, Yasukawa said: "My instinct was in this moment was to say no, I think no, because though we may only be signing as witnesses, what the public will see is us only with the government side signing something, and this would be fatal... imagine the message this would send to society." Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 138 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.33. For an overview of these statements, see p.34 of the same document.
- 139 Interview with Carlos Vergara, October 2017.
- 140 "The PAPEP Experience." 2011, p.12.
- 141 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 142 Internal UN document, 2017.
- 143 Internal UN document, 2017.
- 144 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 145 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 146 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.26.
- 147 Interview with Yoriko Yasukawa, November 2017.
- 148 Other conditions that helped ensure the dialogue's success included: restricting participation to a small number of participants; the absence of the media; the establishment of technical committees to harmonize the draft constitution

- with autonomy statutes; and the strong public demand for dialogue in the aftermath of the Pando massacre. "It was not how we imagined it." p.11.
- 149 Interview with Carlos Romero conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 150 Interview with Ruben Costas conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 According to Costas, RC Yasukawa played a "fundamental" role in the dialogue: "With her prudence, with her, so to say, sweetness (dulzura), she makes one feel confident and enables one to say what he feels and believes. And surely she played a very determinative role, very important. Of course, the government did not want facilitators, nor observers, nor did they ever accept it. But at the end and of the day, [the observers] transformed into facilitators and witnesses, even though the government did not want to see this situation." Senator Pinto similarly praised Yasukawa's role personally, saying "I always highlight the presence of Yoriko and that deep look of hers, and [her] concern that an agreement and consensus would be reached." Opposition senator Tito Hoz de Vila said: "very few times have we had people like Yoriko [as RC/UNDP RR] the definitive role[s] were those] of the two EU ambassadors, of Yoriko, and Raul Lagos." Interviews with Roger Pinto, Ruben Costas, and Tito Hoz de Vila, conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcripts courtesy of UNIC La Paz. Opposition Senator Carlos Bohrt agreed, singling out the RC for providing "crucial" support in accompanying the parties in the dialogue. "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.32.
- 153 Interview with Carlos Romero conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 154 Bohrt explained that because he had already adopted a pro-dialogue position, the publication of the polls only helped to reinforce his existing position; however, he did feel that the publication of the polls influenced key actors within PODEMOS. He added that the polls probably influenced government actors to continue the dialogue. PODEMOS Senator Pinto said the polls represented "a cry of the whole society, and indicated that he felt the polls must have impacted the government, as "if seven people in a poll tell them there needs to be dialogue, the government cannot ignore it." Interviews with Alejandro Colanzi, Carlos Bohrt, and Roger Pinto, conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 155 Interview with Carlos Romero conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 156 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.49.
- 157 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.7.
- 158 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.32.
- 159 "Del conflicto al acuerdo: Los Bolivianos frente a la crisis." 2009.
- 160 For instance, the RC publicly deplored the (government's) break up of a peaceful march against a proposed highway that would run through territory mostly inhabited by indigenous groups, and against the alarming number of judicial cases against opposition politicians. See: "Violenta represión de gobierno boliviano contra marcha indígena." El Universo. 25 September 2011, [www.eluniverso.com/2011/09/25/1/1361/violenta-represion-gobierno-boliviano-contramarcha-indigena.html](http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/09/25/1/1361/violenta-represion-gobierno-boliviano-contramarcha-indigena.html).; The UN in Bolivia also put out several press statements expressing concern about government actions deemed repressive or undemocratic, including the alarming number of judicial cases against opposition politicians. See: "Naciones Unidas Manifiesta Su Preocupación Por Los Conflictos Sociales Y Los Procesos Judiciales a Personalidades De La Oposición." ONU Bolivia. [www.nu.org.bo/noticias/comunicados-de-prensa/naciones-unidas-manifiesta-su-preocupacion-por-los-conflictos-sociales/](http://www.nu.org.bo/noticias/comunicados-de-prensa/naciones-unidas-manifiesta-su-preocupacion-por-los-conflictos-sociales/).
- 161 "Bolivia: Pando Report Concerns; OHCHR Response Cable." Wikileaks. 2 February 2009, [search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09LAPAZ175\\_a.html](http://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09LAPAZ175_a.html).
- 162 Email exchange with Yoriko Yasukawa, March 2018.
- 163 For instance, the RC supported dialogue between two departments engulfed in a border dispute, as well as a dispute between the government and indigenous groups regarding the right to consultation. Yoriko interview.
- 164 Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017. For instance, UNDP, drawing on the input of various UNCT members, supported a mixed commission of senators and deputies in drafting a framework law for autonomy, thereby helping to address one of the most contentious issues of the preceding decade. Interview with Santiago Daroca, February 2018.
- 165 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011.
- 166 For instance, UNDP, drawing on the input of various UNCT members, supported a mixed commission of senators and deputies in drafting a framework law for autonomy, thereby helping to address one of the most contentious issues of the preceding decade. Interview with Santiago Daroca, February 2018.
- 167 For instance, after the start of the Arab Spring in 2011, PAPEP produced a pilot study on prospective scenarios for the Tunisian transition. "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.33. For more on the methodology of PAPEP, see: "The PAPEP Experience." 2011.
- 168 To determine impact, the evaluation assessed perceptions about PAPEP's impact, measured political change against a theory of change, and analyzed the quality of PAPEP's tools for influencing decision-making and strengthening capacities internally (within the UN) and externally (among national actors). The evaluation found: "In Bolivia, 72% of

- respondents believed that PAPEP's impact has been highly positive and almost decisive both internally and externally, and that PAPEP has contributed to avoiding a major nation-wide confrontation of 2009." "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, pp.5-7.
- 169 See the evaluation for a list of "minimum but not sufficient" conditions for PAPEP to function successfully. Ibid. p.77-78.
- 170 Ibid. p.67.
- 171 The evaluation notes that the Honduras case demonstrates how "the famed neutrality" of UNDP can result in inaction and an obstacle to political impact. Ibid. p.10.
- 172 By 2015 PAPEP's budget had shrunk to a paltry US\$13,601. "Análisis Político y Escenarios Prospectivos PAPEP: Substantive Project Revision 2012-2013." UNDP. December 2011, [https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BOL/00049619\\_PAPEP\\_prodoc%202012%202013.pdf](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BOL/00049619_PAPEP_prodoc%202012%202013.pdf).
- 173 Aín Bilbao, G. 2012.
- 174 Ibid.
- 175 Email exchange with Gastón Aín Bilbao, March 2018.
- 176 Interview with Pablo Ruiz, conducted by Laura Rutishauser, January 2018. Also see: "Practical Guide: Early Warning and Response Systems Design for Social Conflicts." UNDP and OAS. 2015, [www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/es](http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/es).
- 177 Aín Bilbao, G. 2012.
- 178 Yasukawa argued that leveraging the weight of the 'moral voice' of the UN to remind national actors of the greater good and the need to avert violence "does have impact on moderating the actions of political actors, or at least getting them to think about [their actions] a little more... and even if it doesn't I still see it as something the UN must try." Email exchange with Yoriko Yasukawa, March 2018.
- 179 "Report on the Evaluation of the Regional Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project (PAPEP)." 2012, p.67.
- 180 This lesson is adapted from a lesson in: Weeks, J and García, O. 2003, p.46.
- 181 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, pp.20-21. Carlos Romero, who participated in the joint analysis of contentious issues in the fBDM dialogues, said: "One of the lessons that we got from this dialogue process is that a dialogue must first be cascaded; that is to say, we built some technical devices that were key to propel the dialogue in the first moment, and in the second moment we took the dialogue with the prefects, and in the third moment with the National Congress." Interview with Carlos Romero conducted by Robert Brockmann, UNIC La Paz, 2009; transcript courtesy of UNIC La Paz.
- 182 Interview with Antonio Aranibar Arze, February 2018.
- 183 As Ortuño said, "the experience of Bolivia shows that delinking the RC from UNDP could create complications for the RC's role in conflict prevention – perhaps Yoriko wouldn't have had such support from PAPEP and UNDP's Constituent Assembly project if there hadn't been an institutional link." Interview with Armando Ortuño, November 2017.
- 184 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, p.37.
- 185 Ibid. A documentary on PAPEP was also produced. See: "The Experience of PAPEP in Bolivia: Supporting Change in Peace and Democracy." UNDP Conflict Prevention and Dialogue. [www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/en/2112/9](http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org/app/documents/view/en/2112/9).
- 186 "It was not how we imagined it." 2011, v.; Email exchange with Gastón Aín Bilbao, March 2018.
- 187 Internal UN document, 2017.