

- 3) **Perception and knowledge of Peace Accords:** Most Guatemalans (particularly those who live outside the capital) know very little about the content of the Accords and often hold inaccurate expectations of the Accord provisions (e.g. some rural poor are under the impression that they will be given land). The daily concern is security. On the other hand, those who have been involved in the Accord process are in danger of being captured by that process, seeing the Accords as the sole peace issue and mechanism. Peacebuilding in Guatemala is not only about the Accords. We need to be looking outside of the Accords yet see them as an essential part of the peace process.

### **Accords: Creation and Contents**

There are 7 signed socio-economic accords which were negotiated by the Government of Guatemala and the URNG, neither of which represented the majority of Guatemalans. One civilian group, the Association of Civil Society (Asociacion da Sociedad Civil -ASC), actively negotiated, debated and made proposals to try to influence the Accord negotiation, but had no formal space in the process. Given the lack of broad based participation in the Accords, they must be seen as a base but must not be made to be, or accepted as, the limit to what can be achieved in the peace process. We need to focus on supporting Guatemalans to advance the spirit of the Accords without focussing excessively on the timelines set out in the Accords. A key element on the Accords is the promotion of national consultation and dialogue; this aspect should be encouraged to continue following the completion of the Accord process.

#### **The Accords call for:**

- 1) Increased citizen participation in socioeconomic development, a decentralization of decision-making in the social and economic area, and the strengthening of municipal authorities;
- 2) The active participation of women in socioeconomic development and the ending of all discrimination against women;
- 3) Promoting access of *campesinos* (rural poor) to property in land and sustainable use of the land's resources;
- 4) Protection of municipal and communal lands and limitation on their alienability;
- 5) Creation of a land bank from existing state owned land and acquired land;
- 6) A goal of increasing taxes as a proportion of GNP by 50% over 1995 levels by year 2000.

#### **The Accord:**

- 1) Set a government goal of 6% annual growth for the country;
- 2) Commits the government to an increase of 50% over 1995 levels in the proportion of GNP spent on health and education by the year 2000.
- 3) Commits the government to ensure that children aged 7-12 get three years of schooling by the year 2000 and sets a goal of increasing literacy rates to 70%.

The Socio-Economic Accord is seen as a minimal accord which has some use and potential if used as a base. It was supposed to have dealt with the fundamental issues which caused the conflict, but it leaves out stated transformational goals of the URNG. This has (almost?) caused a split in the URNG. Popular organizations were furious as none of the ASC proposals for structural reforms in agriculture, land tenure and tax reform are present.