

participation and representation of indigenous people at all levels of Guatemalan society. It is the only accord that specifically includes a gender perspective recognizing the double, even triple, discrimination against indigenous women and it creates an organism for the defense of indigenous women.

Representatives of the Mayan movement at the Roundtable emphasized the dynamic nature of their cultural identity. They pointed out that Guatemalan indigenous sectors encompass as great a diversity of ideological perspectives as the rest of civil society. Myths and stereotypes must be broken down: not all indigenous people are peasants; many are urban people more interested in professional work or private sector business. Leaders of the Mayan movement reject policies - indigenistic or paternalistic - which continue to marginalize their full participation in the political, social, economic and intellectual life of their country. They are not seeking a form of indigenous self-government since the Maya are a majority in Guatemala and also have a presence in neighbouring countries. Many indigenous people want more than a piece of land and do not want to be relegated to traditional roles of providing cheap labour in the agricultural sector. The need to democratize Guatemalan society, including civil society, begins with support for indigenous organizations and institutions which support the Mayan people.

Within Mayan organizations, however, difficult issues such as indigenous identity and gender must be addressed. The Mayan cosmovision recognizes the complementarity of women and men but this doesn't remove the real inequality that exists between indigenous men and women. Women's participation in decision-making or policy development is still marginal even in many grass roots organizations. Proposals for the decentralization of the state and national entities will not work without women's active participation grounded in the day-to-day reality of women at the local level.

The Mayan people want to maintain their cultural values but some things have to change. Unequal gender roles in the family and in the wider indigenous community must be examined and transformed. Third parties, including the international community, can provide opportunities for discussion and can assist women to develop capacities to assume new roles within a Mayan movement now led primarily by male leaders. Some international cooperation agencies have already made a contribution to Mayan women by insisting that the projects and programmes they support include a gender perspective and that women take part in defining the priorities and strategies of project proposals.

Implementation of the accord on indigenous identity and rights cannot be separated from the rest of the peace process. Some achievements to date include the emergence of significant new actors such as the indigenous sectors, increased opportunities for social and political participation and the building of civil society