

THIRD INTERREGIONAL DIALOGUE ON **EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, AFRICA AND EUROPE**

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

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1. MAIN PRINCIPLES

The Third Interregional Dialogue on Education and Development unfolds in a world very different from that of 2022 and 2023, when this process began — a world in which multilateralism, cooperation, collective construction, co-creation, and the recognition of others as equals, worthy of equal or even greater respect than oneself, are increasingly called into question. Within this shifting landscape, our Dialogue consolidates five key principles as the outcome of the discussions held in Bogotá:

1.Reimagining cooperation through a polycentric and inclusive approach

The Third Interregional Dialogue reaffirms the need to rethink international cooperation from a polycentric perspective, where multiple centres of knowledge, action, and decision-making coexist — across all regions, including Europe, China, North America —and interact on an equal footing. This Dialogue seeks to redefine traditional North–South hierarchies and promotes cooperation first among the various Souths and then with the various Norths — participatory, equitable, and grounded in shared responsibility and mutual accountability. From this perspective, cooperation becomes an exercise in political innovation, rooted in cultural diversity, equity, and sustainability as the essential pillars of shared development.

2.Multilingualism as a political expression of interregionalism

The Third Interregional Dialogue reaffirms that multilingualism — often denied or undervalued — is not merely a communicative tool but a political and ethical fact and objective that expresses and promotes equality among peoples and systems of knowledge. The coexistence of diverse languages — Swahili, Zulu, Spanish, English, Arabic, Portuguese, French, Catalan, among others — embodies openness and reciprocal respect in the construction of plural governance. In this sense, multilingualism constitutes an ontological principle of interregionalism: cooperation understood as the capacity to dialogue from difference, not despite it. It is not about making others understand our grammar or syntax, nor about promoting our own language; it is about incorporating theirs into ours. Recognition begins with listening in the language of the other.

3.Universities as strategic actors of development

The Third Interregional Dialogue reaffirms that universities are not passive recipients of policy but genuine actors of development. Since 2022, this process has recognized the central role of higher education institutions and their associations as political agents and catalysts of transformation. Universities produce public value by linking research, innovation, and direct service to local communities. Universities can be and are essential instruments of a diplomacy of knowledge, deepening cooperation among Souths and Norths and generation of tangible impacts on public policy, science, and education. University cooperation must be geared to the improvement of people's lives — both materially and symbolically — and to amplifying the voices of those who have none. Universities are the institutions best placed to become effective development agents, by putting education, science, and innovation at the service of development.

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4. Interregional cooperation as the foundation of a renewed multilateralism

The Interregional Dialogue on Education and Development consolidates itself, through the consensus of all participating institutions, as a living and sustained mechanism of cooperation among different regions of the world. The inclusion of the Arab world in this third edition enriches the process and encourages us to move together toward peace, inclusion, and sustainability. We are confident that new partners will join in the future, as anticipated in Bogotá. At the same time, collaboration with UNESCO — through its Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World and its International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (UNESCO INRULED) in China — demonstrates that our Dialogue strengthens also the United Nations multilateral system, at a moment when that system itself is under scrutiny.

5. The centrality of women in rethinking development

The Third Interregional Dialogue reaffirms that development cannot be conceived without the full participation of women — not only by removing barriers that unfairly hinder their equal participation in science, technology, and innovation, but also by recognizing their fundamental role as community builders, agents of social cohesion, and peacebuilders. Women embody forms of leadership that integrate care, empathy, and resilience — qualities essential for any sustainable and just process of cooperation. Development will not be truly interregional or equitable unless it is also feminist.

2. NEXT STEPS

Building upon the momentum of the Bogotá Dialogue and the wealth of concrete recommendations emerging from plenaries and workshops, participants agreed that the next phase must consolidate an Interregional Coordination Mechanism (ICM), co-led by the African Union Commission (AUC), the CELAC pro tempore presidency, and OBREAL, with the participation of university associations and cooperation and education agencies from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa, as well as potential partners from other regions such as Canada and China (e.g. S-DHG Group members, IDRC, and others). The Coordination Mechanism will oversee the drafting of an Interregional Action Plan for Education and development, to be presented — as proposed by the Government of Colombia — at the AU-CELAC Summit in 2026. This plan will be grounded in measurable targets, shared responsibility, and inclusive participation across regions.

a. Strengthening Knowledge, Research, and Learning Networks

Strengthening knowledge, research, and learning networks is essential to advancing the spirit of the Bogotá Dialogue. Building on successful experiences such as the PAU-Argentina collaboration, participants highlighted the need to expand joint teaching and research programmes among African,

¹ Since 2011, the S-DHG is an annual forum that brings together funding and implementing agencies and organisations dedicated to sustainable international development and capacity building in higher education. It provides a platform to connect and discuss good practices and future initiative on themes such as building alliances in international and development projects and creating sustainable and long-term impacts through higher education and research. With a proven track record of delivering transformative results, the partners involved in S-DHG have longstanding experience in supporting equitable projects for universities and offering scholarships to students, researchers, and academics in partner countries within Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America.

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Latin American, and Caribbean universities, progressively including, European, and other regional partners such as China. Efforts will focus on promoting interregional research and innovation hubs addressing shared priorities — including climate resilience, food security, artificial intelligence for local development, and energy transition — while ensuring the meaningful participation of women and young researchers. To support these goals, the Dialogue encourages the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring impact, tracking academic mobility, research outputs, and employability, and translating these findings into policy dialogues at regional and multilateral levels.

b. Advancing Gender Equality and Inclusion in Science and Innovation

Promoting gender equality and inclusion must remain a cornerstone of interregional cooperation. All programmes should integrate gender and inclusion indicators, advancing the “feminisation of science” through targeted scholarships, mentorship opportunities, and leadership initiatives that empower women and underrepresented groups. At the same time, partners are encouraged to develop inclusive education policies informed by solid, gender-disaggregated data and aligned with continental and regional frameworks such as STISA, CESA, and PIRESC V and other relevant regional or national frameworks and strategies that account for gender inclusion.

c. Promoting Joint Areas of Interest in Science, Technology, and Innovation

Defining shared actions that can be implemented with multi-regional perspectives and approaches must be central to the next phase of this Dialogue. Key thematic areas already identified include Artificial Intelligence, Climate Change, Biotechnology and Agriculture, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In these fields, universities, research institutions, and innovation agencies are encouraged to work together to design joint initiatives and pilot projects that foster knowledge exchange, strengthen institutional capacities, and stimulate innovation-driven development across regions.

2.1 TOWARDS 2026

Looking ahead, participants agreed on the need to maintain the political and institutional momentum generated in Bogotá. In this regard, a technical preparatory meeting will be convened in 2025 to align the forthcoming Interregional Action Plan with the priorities of both the African Union and CELAC, ensuring coherence with regional and continental agendas and full ownership by all participating actors.

The Dialogue also calls for the mobilisation of existing regional organisations and partnerships — including under the Team Europe approach, to contribute to the design and implementation of the Plan, and to consolidate a shared framework for action. The consolidated roadmap will be presented at the AU–CELAC Summit as a tangible expression of a renewed commitment to a more equitable and inclusive system of international relations.

The major challenge ahead lies in translating these principles into concrete policies, programmes, and funding instruments capable of ensuring effective implementation. This is no small task in a global

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context marked by shrinking cooperation budgets and increasing indifference toward collective challenges.

Nevertheless, this is a challenge worth undertaking. It is within the framework of the joint decision by the Government of Colombia and the African Union to advance preparations for the African Union–CELAC Summit in the first half of 2026 that these commitments take on renewed significance and urgency.

Institutions and actors engaged in this Dialogue therefore commit to deepening interregional cooperation among Africa, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean and expanding it to other regions of the world, mobilising resources, knowledge, and partnerships to foster balanced and mutually beneficial exchanges. In doing so, it reaffirms the shared responsibility of all regions — in the North and in the South alike — to co-shape a fairer and more sustainable world order.

The next edition of the Dialogue will take place in Cairo, under the auspices of the Minister of Research and Science of Egypt, the Association of Arab Universities, the African Union Commission, and Obreal.

Bogotá, 6 November 2025.