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Edgardo García Larralde, a Venezuelan citizen, has been based in the UK since 1997. He has been working as facilitator and trainer in multi-stakeholder consensus-building and conflict management for the past 15 years, mainly in Latin America (Peru, Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico) and the UK. He has also worked in Africa (Nigeria, Uganda and Equatorial Guinea) and in Russia. Much of his work has centred on projects developed by the extractive industries, often in partnership with national government bodies. He has worked with government ministries of Venezuela, the UK, Peru, Uganda and Equatorial Guinea, as well as with national and international NGOs, community-based groups, indigenous peoples of Venezuela, Peru and Mexico and international corporations such as Shell, STATOIL, the Venezuelan state-owned oil corporation PDVSA (*Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.*), Placer Dome and SINCOR (a strategic partnership between oil companies TOTAL, STATOIL and PDVSA). Between 1997 and 2003 he was Latin America Programme Manager for *Living Earth Foundation*, a London-based environmental education NGO dedicated to the promotion of sustainable community development. Today Edgardo continues to work on *Living Earth* projects, as LEF Senior Associate. From 2000 to 2003 he worked as facilitator and trainer for the international pilot programme *Business Partners for Development (BPD)*, in the promotion of tri-sector partnerships (corporations – government – civil society organisations). Most of his work today is carried out through the London-based consulting firm *DIALOGUES for Sustainable Development*, of which he is founding member and Director.

CONSENSUS-BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

Conflicts are inherent to human societies. The aim is not to eliminate them, but to avoid their escalation to destructive dynamics and violence. Sustainable development requires constructive, synergic relations between key social actors in the pursuit of common goals, a process closely linked to the idea of social capital. The meanings of the terms *conflict*, *sustainable development*, *consensus*, *legitimacy*, *social capital* and *tri-sector partnerships* are suggested, with reference to practical examples of consensus-building, conflict management and the promotion of sustainable development in Venezuela, Peru and other countries. The idea of consensus, as well as the practical conditions required to achieve it, are explored. An introduction is provided to basic principles, steps and tools to promote and facilitate dialogue and negotiation among different stakeholders. The key features of interest-based negotiation are presented, as well as a brief summary of emerging lessons for communities, corporations, governments and other stakeholders. Especial references are made to the challenges faced by small-scale artisanal mining. Reflections are shared regarding issues, trends, risks and options related to small-scale and artisanal mining. An attempt is made, at the end of the presentation, to provide food for thought on priorities, strategies and actions.