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**FINAL REPORT OF THE MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF STATISTICS  
OF THE AMERICAS**

(Santiago, Chile, 24-26 March 1999)



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## A. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date

1. The Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, Chile, from 24 to 26 March 1999.

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Spain and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of the following organizations also attended by special invitation: World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI).

### Election of officers

4. The following officers were elected by consensus:

Chair:	Peru
First Vice-Chair:	Mexico
Second Vice-Chair:	Canada
Rapporteur:	ECLAC Secretariat

### Opening session

5. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, expressed the Commission's willingness to act as technical secretariat for the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas. He recalled that the Meeting would discuss a proposal for a new institutional structure to bring it in line with United Nations practice in other regions.

6. With respect to the relationship that should exist between national authorities and national statistical offices, he stated that the latter should act independently in presenting the results of their studies and research, especially macroeconomic and social indicators

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<sup>1</sup> See annex 1 for list of participants.

and price statistics. The value of such indicators should not be the subject of discussion before being made available to the public, and the dates of publication should be included in a schedule distributed well in advance. However, that should not preclude the authorities' receiving the statistics a short time in advance so that they can prepare an appropriate response.

7. Lastly, he reviewed the full range of items on the Agenda, highlighting the importance of the discussions that Directors would hold during the Meeting, and wished them success in establishing the biennial programme of activities for international and regional cooperation.

### **Agenda and documentation**

8. The participants had before them the documents listed in annex 2 and adopted the following agenda:

#### **1. Activities of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations**

- a) Ongoing functions
- b) Technical cooperation
- c) Principles of official statistics
- d) Working groups; follow-up to major United Nations conferences; participation of Latin American countries

#### **2. Cooperation programme in the field of statistics**

- a) Subprogramme 1: National Accounts
- b) Subprogramme 2: Environmental statistics and indicators
- c) Subprogramme 3: Social and poverty statistics and indicators
- d) Subprogramme 4: Dissemination of statistical information
- e) Possibility of creating a subprogramme on horizontal cooperation and a subprogramme on statistics concerning the service sector
- f) The year 2000 population census round.

#### **3. Topics of general interest**

- a) Institutional reforms in recent years
- b) New demand and funding
- c) The Y2K problem: its implications for statistics

#### **4. Training**

- a) European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (CESD), Madrid

- b) National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI), Mexico
  - c) Statistics Canada programme
5. **Consideration of a proposal made by Canada, Mexico, Peru and the ECLAC secretariat for the establishment of a Statistics Conference of the Americas**

## **B. MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

### **Activities of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations (agenda item 1)**

The following agreements were adopted:

9. The ECLAC secretariat was asked to pursue and expand its work of dissemination of the activities of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations.
10. The Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas would communicate to the Statistical Commission the views expressed and agreements reached at the meeting with respect to its activities.
11. In response to the Statistical Commission's request that it should be informed of the views of the directors of statistics on the report **technical cooperation** adopted by the expert group, participants expressed the following views:
- a) Donor countries should give special consideration to the needs of Latin American countries. In that regard, it was desirable that, in the preparatory and technical cooperation stages, institutional means should be found for channelling that demand. The ECLAC secretariat was one of the agents best able to provide cooperation in that area.
  - b) The technical cooperation provided was often of a general nature and therefore of limited relevance, particularly when compared with the services provided by experts hired by the countries to deal with specific issues corresponding to their needs.
  - c) In some cases, technical cooperation was geared more towards general academic or methodological issues than towards the needs of the countries.
  - d) Efforts should be made to avoid duplication of technical cooperation from different sources.

- e) Countries receiving technical cooperation should ensure the continuity of activities once the assistance was completed. Cooperation work should not be initiated unless continuity was guaranteed.
- f) The cooperation required by Latin America and the Caribbean was qualitative rather than quantitative. The aim should be to determine critical areas in which the transfer of methodologies and operational methods was more important than the availability of external groups to do the bulk of the work.

12. The Meeting adopted a **proposal presented by Peru** for a Website to be set up with a link to ECLAC, so that other countries can have access to offers of horizontal cooperation made by statistical offices in the region. The following additional features should be incorporated in the design of the Website:

- a) The nature of the offers should be clearly stated, in order to avoid confusion between a country's capacity and the availability of resources for placing that capacity at the disposal of other countries.
- b) The financial resources available for implementing offers of technical cooperation should be clearly stated.
- c) Assistance should be requested from another country for the creation within the Website of a section where countries that have received technical cooperation can present their assessment, both of successful cases and of those that posed difficulties.
- d) An effort should be made to include in the Website offers from countries not mentioned in the document prepared by Peru.
- e) Areas in which several offers have been made should be examined, and consideration should be given to the possibility of coordinating them, in order to improve efficiency in the use of resources.
- f) Care should be taken to ensure that such offers of bilateral cooperation are not detrimental to multilateral cooperation.

13. At the request of the Statistical Commission, the Meeting of Directors considered the possible actions that might be undertaken in the region with respect to the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

The actions being implemented internationally include:

- a) A guide being drafted by Statistics Netherlands as a complement to the Fundamental Principles.



- b) A feasibility study being prepared by the United Nations Statistical Office on the establishment of a Web page that would provide access to documents on the application of the 10 fundamental principles prepared by more experienced statistical offices.
- c) The revision of the Manual prepared 20 years ago by the United Nations on the organization of statistical offices in collaboration with a consultant with wide experience in the field.

In response to these activities, countries of the region might:

- a) Consider that it would be relevant to have a manual or handbook;
- b) Express a desire for a document of regional scope or a preference for one that would be applicable worldwide.

It was agreed that the ECLAC secretariat would hold consultations with countries in the course of the following month and would advise participants of the regional view.

14. The Meeting adopted a system for assigning responsibilities among the countries and ECLAC in order to guarantee their participation in the groups of cities operating within the framework of the United Nations Statistical Commission. It was agreed that the countries that participated in the groups would do so actively and, at least once a year, would report to the other countries on those activities and agreements that were most relevant to the region.

15. It was agreed that the ECLAC secretariat would hold consultations with countries within one month and would prepare a list of the groups of cities and countries that would represent the region in these groups.

#### **Cooperation programme in the field of Statistics (agenda items 2 a), b), c) and d))**

16. The Meeting of Directors considered and adopted the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean - 1999-2000, comprising four subprogrammes. The first is concerned with the adaptation and production of basic statistics in the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993; the second, with environmental statistics and indicators; the third, with social and poverty statistics and indicators, and the fourth, with the dissemination of statistical information. The Programme, including the changes introduced by the Directors at the Commission's suggestion, is contained in Annex 3.

#### **Cooperation programme in the field of statistics (agenda item 2 f))**

17. With respect to the matter of population and housing censuses, it was agreed that the Chair of the Steering Committee of the Meeting of Directors would send a letter to the President of the Inter-American Development Bank stressing the importance of opening a line of credit to support the 2000 round of censuses. It was also agreed that the Chair would follow up on the action taken, in collaboration with Costa Rica and Panama and that CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC would provide the necessary technical assistance.

**Cooperation programme in the field of statistics (agenda item 2 e))**

18. Regarding the possibility of creating a programme of activities in the area of statistics concerning the service sector, it was agreed that the ECLAC secretariat would, on the basis of the guidelines set forth in the document Service Sector Statistics (LC/R.1889 (Sem.88/3)), hold consultations with countries to consider the possibility of creating working groups in some of the service areas identified in the document.

**Consideration of a proposal made by Canada, Mexico, Peru and the ECLAC secretariat for the establishment of a Statistics Conference of the Americas (agenda item 5)**

19. The Meeting endorsed the proposal for a new institutional framework providing for the establishment of the Statistics Conference of the Americas, along with its Bureau, as a subsidiary organ of ECLAC. This proposal is included herewith as annex 4. The ECLAC secretariat undertook to submit the proposal at its biennial meeting scheduled for the year 2000.

20. It was agreed, pending approval of the proposal, to appoint a Steering Committee of the Meeting of Statistical Directors of the Americas, which would be governed by the objectives and regulations contained in the aforementioned proposal. The elected officers would thus serve in that capacity until the end of the first meeting of the Conference.

21. The following officers were appointed to serve on the Steering Committee:

Chair: Peru

Members: Argentina, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Mexico.

The country that would represent Europe on the Steering Committee would be decided following a consultation headed by Spain.

**Institutional reforms in recent years (agenda item 3 a))**

22. The relevant actions being taken at the institutional level are outlined below:

23. At the meeting on institutional issues, the directors identified a series of issues that posed challenges for their agencies and proposed operational mechanisms for addressing them.

24. The majority of participants considered the challenges set out below to be particularly important:

- a) There was a clear perception of the growing importance of information in modern society, which was commonly referred to as the “information society”. A significant qualitative change has occurred which calls for an in-depth review to be made of the functions and activities of statistical offices. Some participants underscored the importance of quality of information, while others emphasized the need to respond in a timely manner and to ensure wider coverage, since statistical agencies faced competition from other institutions, both public and private.
- b) Societal changes were reflected in new information needs. Current and potential users had increased substantially, especially as a result of new communications technology, and the same had occurred with information coverage. Whereas the need in the past was mainly for economic information, currently the emphasis tended to be on social and environmental indicators. Underlying those changes were society’s preoccupation with quality of life and the environment and the fact that governmental bodies were no longer the sole or primary users since, increasingly, other social sectors were becoming involved on the basis of their political rights or specific activities. The new working groups established within the Statistical Commission also responded to new demands, since they were working to create a response capacity in frontier areas. Under those circumstances, it was necessary to articulate such demands in view of the limited response capacity of the government agencies.
- c) Statistical agencies had reacted to such new requirements in different ways. On the one hand, they had responded to the requirements of the government apparatus of which they were a part. On the other, they had displayed a significant change of attitude, in that they had adopted an active policy of studying the views of current and potential users. That change of attitude also implied a change in culture for statistical agencies, since it implied that the central criterion for orienting activities and setting priorities was the identification of the most important social needs.
- d) The participants expressed dissatisfaction with the way statistical work was viewed by the public and by Governments. They suggested various ways of improving public perception of the importance of statistics in evaluating, designing and monitoring policies. One suggestion was to create statistical committees made up of both public and private agents representing the full spectrum of users. Users would thus be able to take an active role in the

decisions of statistical agencies and would achieve a greater understanding of statistical work and its importance. A second suggestion was to create a statistical "lobby" in international organizations to urge them to exert their influence on government opinion and to consider including a statistical component in existing international cooperation programmes and projects in a wide range of non-statistical activities. A third suggestion was that in establishing their priority programmes and plans, governments should spell out the statistical needs inherent in the efficient formulation and execution of such programmes and plans. A fourth was to promote the use of statistical information, either through the activities of the statistical agencies themselves or through the programmes set up in collaboration with key users.

- e) It was noted that major changes were taking place in the management and financing of statistical agencies. The efficiency criteria being applied to public spending had affected these agencies as well. When statistical offices had taken an active stance in this respect, they had found new sources of financing by saving resource and had been able to establish a fruitful dialogue with finance ministries. Most agencies had discovered that information marketing could be a growing source of self-financing, while at the same time improving civil servants' attitude towards users of information. Nevertheless, in a number of countries, statistical agencies were still forced to operate on clearly inadequate budgets, often with very little access to international cooperation.
- f) The structure of the national statistical system was seen as a problem area. Progress had been made in some countries in coordinating the activities and financing of public and private agencies for specific tasks. Some felt that it was still essential for the statistical agencies themselves to conduct the primary statistical operations in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Others saw greater potential in inter-agency cooperation. The autonomy of statistical agencies in terms of both their professional functions and their financing still raised concerns; in some countries, institutional reforms had been adopted tending to reinforce that autonomy.

25. The participants suggested ways to address these challenges. One suggestion was to create working groups of directors who shared common concerns in which they could exchange experiences and solutions. Access to the Internet would greatly facilitate joint work, which had been hindered because of the costs involved in organizing meetings. A second solution would be to ask the ECLAC secretariat to cooperate with the Steering Committee of the Meeting of Directors in transmitting the views of the directors to the political authorities in the countries. A third suggestion was that the Steering Committee should present the directors' request to the United Nations Statistical Commission and to the various international financial institutions with a view to channelling them to the international forums attended by the governments of the region and to ensuring that statistical components are included in international cooperation programmes and projects. A fourth suggestion was to ask the ECLAC secretariat to provide its advisory and

cooperation services to the countries on a selective basis; in that connection, the programme of activities to be adopted by the Meeting of Directors of Statistics would serve as a valuable tool.

#### **Training (agenda item 4)**

26. It was decided that a list would be prepared of the courses provided by statistical agencies of the countries participating in the Meeting of Directors that were or might be the subject of regional or international cooperation activities. ECLAC, in consultation with the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information (INEGI) of Mexico and the European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (Madrid) would design a questionnaire to be sent out to the countries. Strict criteria would be applied in order to limit the number of training activities to be included in the inventory and thus obtain a workable list. The types of courses that were most helpful to potential users would be identified.

27. Once the inventory had been completed, INEGI would head a working group that would consider the prospects for cooperation in that area. In addition to seeking some degree of consensus and avoiding possible duplication, the group would consider the feasibility of providing information on methodology and course levels.



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**ANNEX 2**  
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**SECRETARIAT DOCUMENTS**

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LC/L.1185(Sem.88/1)	Provisional Agenda
LC/R. 1888(Sem.88/2)	Programa de trabajo estadístico internacional para América Latina y el Caribe 1999-2000
LC/R. 1888(Sem.88/2)	Programme of international statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean
LC/R.1888 (Sem.88/2) Add.1	Censos de población y vivienda de la década del 2000
LC/R. 1888 (Sem.88/2) Add.1	The 2000 population and housing census round
LC/R.1889(Sem.88/3)	Estadísticas sobre el sector servicios
LC/R. 1889 (Sem.88/3)	Service sector statistics
LC/R. 1890(Sem.88/4)	Un programa de capacitación integrado y regional
LC/R. 1890(Sem.88/4)	An integrated regional training programme needs and feasibility
LC/R. 1891(Sem.88/5)	Reuniones sobre los principios fundamentales de las estadísticas públicas
LC/R. 1891(Sem.88/5)	Meetings of fundamental principles of official statistics
LC/R.1892(Sem.88/6)	Actividades de la Comisión de Estadística de las Naciones Unidas
LC/R.1892(Sem.88/6)	Activities of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations
LC/R.1893(Sem.88/7)	Propuesta para el establecimiento de la Conferencia Estadística de las Américas
LC/R.1893(Sem.88/7)	Proposal for the establishment of the Statistical Conference of the Americas

- LC/R.1894(Sem.88/8) Informe de actividades relacionadas con el programa de trabajo estadístico internacional para América Latina y el Caribe, 1997-1998
- LC/R.1894(Sem.88/8) Report of Activities related to the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean 1997-1998
- LC/R.1896(Sem.88/9) Informe del Taller sobre Generación de Indicadores Ambientales sobre Tierras/Suelos

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- DDR 1- Repercusiones estadísticas de las conferencias recientes importantes de las Naciones Unidas (Comisión de Estadística # 14)
- DDR 1 - Harmonization and rationalization of development indicators in the United Nations System (Statistical Commission # 14)
- DDR 2 - Programa provisional y anotaciones (Comisión de Estadística # 1)
- DDR 2 - Provisional agenda and annotations (Statistical Commission # 1)
- DDR 3 - Estadísticas demográficas, sociales y de migración. Grupo de Siena sobre estadísticas sociales (Comisión de Estadística # 11)
- DDR 3 - Siena Group for Social Statistics (Statistical Commission # 11)
- DDR 4 - Informe sobre las estadísticas de la pobreza (Comisión de Estadística # 15)
- DDR 4 - Report on poverty statistics (Statistical Commission # 15)
- DDR 5 - Estadísticas del Medio Ambiente (Comisión de Estadística # 12)
- DDR 5 - Environment Statistics (Statistical Commission # 12)
- DDR 6 - Cooperación técnica (Comisión de Estadística # 19)
- DDR 6 - Technical cooperation (Statistical Commission # 19)

- DDR 7 - Grupo de expertos sobre algunas prácticas óptimas para las estadísticas oficiales (Comisión de Estadística # 26)
- DDR 7 - Expert Group on some best practices for official statistics (Statistical Commission # 26)
- Informe del Taller sobre Contabilidad Ambiental y Economía Integrada (LC/R.1848)
- Report of the Workshop on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (LC/R.1848)
- DDR 8 - Convenio de Cooperación Estadística con los países del MERCOSUR. Argentina INDEC
- DDR 9 - Programa de Trabajo en Materia de Estadística a ser emprendido por parte del FMI en la región de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe en 1999-2000. FMI
- DDR 10 - Cómo hacer posible la implementación de nuevas estadísticas en la región Argentina.
- DDR 11 - La modernización del INE. Chile
- DDR 12 - Servicios Estadísticos: Preparándose para el futuro. Canadá
- DDR 13 - Participación en Grupos de Trabajo. CEPAL
- DDR 13 - Participation in Working Groups. ECLAC
- DDR 14 - Oferta de Cooperación Técnica horizontal en estadística en los países de América Latina y el Caribe. INEI - Perú
- DDR 15 - Problema Informático del año 2000. INEI - Perú
- DDR 16 - INFOINEI - Servicios en línea del Perú. INEI - Perú
- DDR 17 - La experiencia peruana en el desarrollo del Programa MECOVI. INEI - Perú
- DDR 18 - Estadísticas sobre el sector servicios. INEI - Perú
- DDR 19 - Hacia un enfoque integral de los censos nacionales 2001. INEI - Perú
- DDR 20 - Sistema de Información sobre mercados laborales - SISMEI. INEI - Perú

- DDR 21 - Estadísticas e Indicadores del Medio Ambiente. INEI - Perú
- DDR 22 - Adaptación y producción de Estadísticas básicas para la implementación del sistema de Cuentas Nacionales 1993. INEI - Perú
- DDR 23 - Environmental Statistics for Belize. Belize
- DDR 24 - Memoria de Actividad 1998. CESD-Madrid
- DDR 25 - Proyecto de Censo Común en el MERCOSUR. Argentina
- DDR 26 - Sistema de información estadística y planificación estratégica del Estado. Bolivia
- DDR 27 - Metainformación y multidimensionalidad en la búsqueda y recuperación de la información estadística. Brasil
- DDR 28 - Estrategia, organización y sistemas para difusión en ambiente de INTERNET (Consultor) Chile
- DDR 29 - Programa MECOVI. BID/BM/CEPAL
- DDR 30 - Report of the Establishment of an Environmental Statistics. Unit at the Central Statistical Office of Belize. Belize

**ANNEX 3**

**PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1999-2000**



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**E C L A C**

**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas**

**Santiago, Chile, 24 - 26 March 1999**

**PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1999-2000 \*/**

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The programme of activities described below represents an effort to incorporate into a single document the activities of statistical cooperation being carried out by international and regional bodies and by countries within and outside the region.

Particular attention will be given in this document to a number of major programmes which will be under way during the biennium 1999-2000. These include the programmes of the European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (CESD) of Madrid, the statistical cooperation project between the European Union and the Mercosur countries (EU-Mercosur), the general and specific dissemination programmes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the programme to improve surveys on living conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank and ECLAC. This document does not discuss the training activities carried out by CESD-Madrid and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico (INEGI), which will be dealt with in a separate document.

The EU-Mercosur project launched in late 1998 includes five types of activities:

- I. Working groups
- II. Training modules
- III. Methodology studies
- IV. National subprojects
- V. Conferences

There are 10 working groups, six of which will deal with the respective chapters of the programme of work. These groups will begin work in the second quarter of 1999 and will meet twice a year. The remaining activities are at the design stage, and their work schedules will be provided to the Directors in due course.

It should be emphasized that, from the beginning, the Directors of Statistics of Mercosur have expressed interest in opening up the activities of the project to other countries.

ECLAC is taking part in the project as an observer. According to the demands of the Project manager, ECLAC will collaborate by bestowing available operative and methodological material, the experience and reports of other groups working in the region and at the international level, and material from countries that have underway activities useful for the project objectives.

The MECOVI project was presented to the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile, in October 1996. In the present document, under the heading

of subprogramme 3 on social and poverty statistics and indicators, a brief outline will be given of the project's objectives, activities to date, and those planned for the biennium 1999-2000.

A description of IMF programmes relating to the dissemination of information is provided in a separate document (DDR/9).

The programme of activities consists of four subprogrammes: national accounts, environmental statistics and indicators; social and poverty statistics and indicators; and dissemination of statistical information. This document presents each of the four subprogrammes, beginning with a brief introduction and detailing the subprogramme elements involved in each one. Efforts have been made to identify the various activities and allocate responsibility for each to a particular organization or a national statistical office. In every case, owing to financial and other constraints affecting the region, certain activities planned for the year 2000 are not yet sufficiently well defined.

**SUBPROGRAMME 1: *Adaptation and production of basic statistics in the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993).***

**INTRODUCTION**

1. According to the first two versions of the regional statistical programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, this subprogramme comprised activities to assist countries in implementing the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993), a long-term task which is now being carried forward into the biennium 1999-2000.

2. Activities in this sphere were divided among five subprogramme elements. They involved such tasks as: translating technical documentation and providing access to that documentation for those responsible for SNA 1993 and to producers of basic statistics; supporting the countries of the region in the adoption of international concepts, definitions and classifications recommended for the production and organization of basic statistics; training experts in the area of national accounts and production of basic statistics; and improving and expanding basic and price statistics.

3. The following programme of activities takes into account the experience of the past two bienniums and is designed to continue and broaden this area of work.

**SUBPROGRAMME ELEMENTS**

**Subprogramme element 1.1:** Providing access to technical documentation for those responsible for SNA 1993 and for producers of basic statistics in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. ECLAC will complete the translation into Spanish of the manual "Inflation accounting: manual on national accounting under conditions of high inflation", now in preparation.

5. ECLAC with the financial support of the Statistics Division of the United Nations (UNSD) will translate into Spanish the "Glossary of National Accounts Terminology SNA 1993", prepared by OECD. This glossary will be part of the new "Questionnaire of National Accounts" that the United Nations will implement in 1999.

6. ECLAC proposes to distribute the following manuals to those responsible for elaborating basic statistics and national accounts, with the collaboration of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and UNSD:

- a) Compilation and analysis of input-output tables (UNSD).
- b) Household accounts (UNSD).
- c) Relationship between business accounting and national accounts (UNSD).
- d) A systemic approach to the compilation of national accounts. (UNSD).

- e) Computerization of national accounts: a compendium of national experiences (UNSD).
- f) Concepts and methods for environmental indicators (UNSD).
- g) Central Product Classification, version 1.0 (UNSD).
- h) Classification of outlays by purpose: Classification of the Function of the Government, Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose, Classification of the Purposes of the private non-profit institutions serving households, Classification of outlays of producers by purpose, UNSD
- i) A Manual on Government Finance Statistics (IMF).

7. With the collaboration of the Statistics Division of the United Nations, ECLAC will prepare the Spanish language version of SNA 1993 for publication on a CD-ROM.

8. In order to improve dissemination of and access to documents produced by technical meetings and seminars, ECLAC will make available a Web page on its Internet server so that users within and outside the region can consult the documents. Circulation of the Spanish language version of SNA News and Notes will continue, with cooperation from INEGI (Mexico).

**Subprogramme element 1.2:** Follow-up and support of the SNA 1993 implementation process and of efforts to improve the production of basic statistics.

9. ECLAC, which is acting as the focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean in the SNA 1993 implementation process, will continue to evaluate progress in this area. It will continue to conduct an annual survey among producers of national accounts, requesting information on the progress made in implementing SNA 1993. An annual report will also continue to be produced, identifying blocks of national accounts data which are complete or awaiting completion, areas where the countries need to cooperate to facilitate implementation, efforts made to improve basic statistics, and training requirements which have been identified.

10. ECLAC will update the directory of national accounts experts of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and make it available for consultation on a Web page on its Internet server.

11. ECLAC will organize a meeting of experts during the second quarter of 2000 to analyse major aspects of the SNA 1993 implementation process in the countries of the region.

12. ECLAC will promote participation by the countries of the region in the working groups responsible for updating classifications and manuals for general use. In the process of updating the Manual on statistics on international trade in services (UNSD) will participate the National Statistical Institute of Uruguay.

**Subprogramme element 1.3:** Sharing of experience and training of national accounts experts and producers of basic statistics related to SNA 1993.

13. ECLAC will continue to act as a “clearing house” for requests for advisory services, locating experts who can provide the required cooperation. It will also undertake to locate, upon request by a country, technical experts who are nationals of other countries which have greater experience of specific matters in the areas of basic statistics, national accounts, prices, and processing and dissemination of data.
14. Jointly with the Statistics Division of the United Nations and INEGI (Mexico), ECLAC will also organize a seminar on national accounts during the fourth trimester of 1999.
15. ECLAC and UNSD with the support of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Netherlands Antilles, organize a seminar on national accounts and classifications to be held from 31 May to 4 June 1999.
16. With the co-sponsorship of ECLAC and UNSD, the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia will organize a regional seminar in the year 2000 on the incorporation of national accounts classifications and definitions in the production of basic statistics.
17. With the co-sponsorship of ECLAC and UNSD, the National Statistical and Informatics Institute of Peru will organize in the year 2000 a regional seminar on the 2000 round of economic censuses: Definitions and coverage, classifications and nomenclature, and unit of observation.
18. During the 1999-2000 period, training organizations working in Latin America will continue to give regional courses in connection with improvements in basic statistics for the implementation of SNA 1993, and the elaboration of blocks and information systems relating to SNA 1993, such as institutional accounts, balance of payments, and monetary and financial statistics.
19. In 1999 and 2000, the Centre for Latin American Monetary Studies (CEMLA) will organize courses and seminars in national accounts, balance of payments and monetary and financial statistics at the request of central bank authorities and statistical offices in the countries of the region, a significant part of these activities are carried out in close collaboration with the IMF in the framework of their programme of technical assistance and training.

The following programmes have so far been planned for 1999:

PROGRAMME TITLE	VENUE	DATE
Balance of payments (seminar)	Madrid, Spain Banco de España	7-11 June 1999
Financial and monetary statistics (course)	Mexico City, CEMLA	8-26 November, 1999
Strategy for elaboration of financial and monetary statistics (workshop)	Mexico City CEMLA	Date unknown. Duration 3 days
Financial and monetary statistics (course)	Caracas, Venezuela Central Bank of Venezuela	Second semester of 1999 (three weeks)
Financial and monetary statistics (course)	Bogotá, Colombia Banco de la Republic	Second semester of 1999 (three weeks)
National accounts (course)	Panamá Office of the Comptroller- General of the Republic	July 1999 (two weeks)
Balance of Payments (course)	Central Bank of El Salvador	First half 1999
Balance of payments (workshop)	Central Bank of El Salvador	Second half 1999

20. During the 1999-2000 biennium, CESD-Madrid will offer courses pertaining to all the subprogrammes of this programme of work. Activities will be carried out under each subprogramme in 1999. In addition each subprogramme will include activities of the EU-Mercosur project in the management of which CESD-Madrid is involved. Included under this is a general international cooperation activity corresponding to Working Group 9, on guidelines for the statistical information systems of EU-Mercosur, which will meet twice in 1999. The following activities have been scheduled for 1999:

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**Subprogramme 1: Adaptation and production of basic statistics in the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993)**

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1.1 Exchange of experiences and training of experts in national accounts and producers of basic statistics related to the SNA 1993

- CESD-Madrid: XXI Introductory course to National Accounts (Madrid, October 1999)
- CESD-Madrid: Seminar on Financial Accounts (Madrid, October 1999)
- CESD-Madrid: XXI Course of Surveys to Enterprises (Madrid, May 1999)
- CESD-Madrid: Seminar on External Trade Statistics (Cartagena, July 1999)
- CESD-Madrid: Seminar on harmonized CPI (Lima, June 1999)

1.2 International technical cooperation

- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Customs and External Trade Statistics"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Investments Statistics"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Service Statistics"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Transport Statistics"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Macroeconomic indicators"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Competitiveness and Productivity of Enterprises"
- EU-Mercosur: Working group on "Classifications and nomenclatures"
- CESD-Madrid: Course/workshop on the year 2000 (Latin American headquarters)

1.3 Science and technology statistics

- CESD-Madrid: Seminar on Science and Technology Statistics (Montevideo, November 1999)
-

21. ECLAC will cooperate with national bodies that request its assistance and have the necessary financial resources in the organization and implementation of local training courses and workshops on national accounts and basic statistics.

**Subprogramme element 1.4:** Improvement and extension of the production of basic statistics for the implementation of SNA 1993.

22. Using the annual survey on progress made in implementing SNA 1993 mentioned in paragraph 9 above, ECLAC will cooperate with the countries in defining international and regional technical assistance programmes and establishing priorities for improving their basic statistics. In addition, a module will be designed to evaluate the situation in terms of censuses, surveys and administrative records used with basic statistics in the elaboration of national accounts.

23. With a view to disseminating practical methods for the use of basic price statistics, ECLAC and the World Bank will announce the results of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) for 1996.

24. The International Trade, Finance and Transport Division and the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC will obtain support from the statistical office of a developed country with appropriate experience and from countries of the region which have acquired such experience, in order to organize a regional programme on improvements in statistics on international trade in services, the basic purpose will be to promote and support the use of a standard questionnaire for collecting the relevant data in all the countries of the region.

25. Within the framework of this subprogramme ECLAC will, if so requested by those responsible for the European Union/Mercosur Project referred to in the Introduction, provide support with that programme to the following working groups:

WG1. Customs and foreign trade statistics

WG2. Investment statistics

WG3. Services statistics

WG4. Macroeconomic indicators

WG7. Classifications and nomenclatures

WG10. Transport statistics



Each of these working groups will meet twice in 1999, according to the following schedule:

Working group	First meeting		Second meeting	
	Venue	Date	Venue	Date
WG1	Buenos Aires	First semester 1999	Asunción	Second semester 1999
WG2	Montevideo	First semester 1999	Asunción	Second semester 1999
WG3	Montevideo	First semester 1999	Asunción	Second semester 1999
WG4	Buenos Aires	First semester 1999	Asunción	Second semester 1999
WG7	Buenos Aires	First semester 1999	Rio de Janeiro	Second semester 1999
WG10	Montevideo	First semester 1999	Rio de Janeiro	Second semester 1999

The working groups are expected to have the same number of meetings in the year 2000. The schedule and venues will be announced in due course.

Training modules corresponding to these working groups will also be organized. The dates and venues will be announced later.

26. Mercosur member countries, in conjunction with Chile and Bolivia, have established a group to harmonize procedures and practices used in calculating consumer price indices. ECLAC acts as Secretariat for the group. In consultation with the group, it will consider the possibility of including other countries of the region in these exercises and find ways to disseminate the group's conclusions to the other countries in the region.

**Subprogramme element 1.5: International technical cooperation.**

27. ECLAC will continue to participate in the implementation of project PAN/93/002, "Improving the national accounting system and the compilation of basic statistics" (Panama).

28. ECLAC will continue to encourage horizontal technical cooperation activities among the countries of the region.

29. ECLAC will cooperate with national statistical agencies and other institutions responsible for national accounts in organizing and implementing regional and international cooperation programmes. When appropriate, it will coordinate these activities with other bodies including IMF, UNSD and IDB. This will require the use of internal resources as well as the mobilization of independent experts from other organizations.

30. UNSD will continue collaborating with the Central American Monetary Council giving support to Central Banks of Central American countries in the establishment of links between national accounts and financial programming. It will also continue to collaborate with the Caribbean Community (Caricom), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Central Bank of the Eastern Caribbean in lending support to Caribbean countries in connection with the development of basic national accounts for small island economies, including tourism satellite accounts within the table on supply and use of goods and services.

31. The statistics department of IMF is preparing a medium-term technical assistance programme for the region and plans to provide the equivalent of five or six person-years in assistance each year. This technical cooperation will consist of approximately thirty missions per year, each mission will focus on one specific subject, i.e., statistics relating to balance of payments, public finance, money and bank and real statistics (national accounts, consumer prices, producer prices and external trade). Two multithematic missions may also be sent. The department will also provide training courses on all these subjects at IMF Headquarters in Washington and will offer regional courses on selected topics.

32. The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (INEI) will set up a Web page with a link to ECLAC in which it will make available to the countries of the region offers of horizontal technical cooperation from the statistical offices in the region. It was suggested that the configuration of this page, the following additional requirements should be borne in mind:

- a) The nature of the offers should be clearly stated in order to avoid confusion between a country's capacity and the availability of resources for placing that capacity at the disposal of other countries.
- b) The financial resources available for implementing offers of technical cooperation should be clearly stated.
- c) Assistance should be requested from another country for the creation within the Website of a section where countries that have received technical cooperation can present their assessment both of successful cases and of those that had posed difficulties.
- d) An effort should be made to include in the Website offers from countries not mentioned in the document prepared by Peru.
- e) Areas in which several offers have been made should be examined, with a view to coordinating them, in order to improve efficiency in the use of resources.
- f) Care should be taken to ensure that such offers of bilateral cooperation are not detrimental to multilateral cooperation.

**SUBPROGRAMME 2: *Environmental statistics and indicators.*****INTRODUCTION**

33. At the 1996 Meeting of Directors of Statistics, the role to be played in this area by national statistical agencies was discussed. It was observed that it was a new area, in which agencies usually had little experience. The Directors noted, however, that there was growing demand for environmental statistics and indicators, and that responsibility for collecting basic data was dispersed among many public- and private-sector bodies. In any case, national statistical offices should play a central role in coordinating activities, disseminating information and ensuring the quality of data.

34. In close cooperation with INEGI (Mexico) and the UNSD, ECLAC has been carrying out activities designed to enable the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to benefit from experience gained in other regions and share the advances achieved within the region. The difficulties encountered have clearly exceeded those experienced in other spheres within the region. This is all the more reason for increasing these efforts rather than abandoning the cause. Clearly, cooperation activities in this area limited, and it is quite difficult to find institutions that have operational experience.

35. In 1996, INEGI and ECLAC conducted a survey in the countries of the region in order to produce an analytical study on the compilation and generation of environmental statistics in the region.

36. Two workshops were held in 1998. The first, on environmental accounting, took place from 20 to 24 April 1998, with the cooperation of UNSD. The second, on soil indicators, was organized jointly with INEGI (Mexico) and was held from 11 to 13 November 1998.

37. It would be appropriate to start activities for the biennium in this subprogramme with a new assessment of progress achieved in 1997-1998. The conclusions reached at the thirtieth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, held from 1 to 5 March 1999, should be given special attention.

## **SUBPROGRAMME ELEMENTS**

**Subprogramme element 2.1:** Analysis of the status of environmental statistics and indicators in countries of the region.

38. Using the results of the survey conducted in 1996, INEGI (Mexico) and ECLAC will work together in the second half of 1999 on the preparation of a new questionnaire, with a view to updating and deepening the analysis of the status of environmental statistics in the countries of the region.

39. This new study, to be conducted in 1999, will serve as the basis for proposing environmental cooperation activities to be undertaken by countries in 2000.

**Subprogramme element 2.2:** Transfer of international experiences, training and technical cooperation.

40. CESD-Madrid will organize a seminar on environmental statistics to be held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) in October 1999.

41. During the first half of 2000, a workshop on primary environmental data will be organized jointly with INEGI (Mexico), to deal with some environmental issues (water, air) not addressed at the November 1998 meeting.

42. In conjunction with UNSD, a meeting on integrated environmental and economic accounting will be held in the second half of 2000, to examine in greater depth certain issues discussed at the April 1998 workshop.

### **SUBPROGRAMME 3: *Social and poverty statistics and indicators***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

43. The activities comprising this subprogramme are a follow-up to those envisaged in the programmes of work adopted at the Meetings of Directors of Statistics in 1994 and 1996.

44. In recent years, much emphasis has been placed on social statistics, for which there is now greater political support in most countries. As will be seen below, international financial agencies, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank, have provided and continue to provide support for activities in this area.

45. Also at the international level, governments and international organizations attach special importance to the development of methodologies in the area of social statistics and indicators. The fact that groups of experts, such as the Canberra, Rio, Delhi or Siena groups, operate under the auspices of the United Nations Statistical Commission is undeniable evidence of the interest attached to social statistics and the indicators derived from them.

46. In these activities, special attention is paid to the use of social statistics; ECLAC is particularly committed to work in this area.

The subprogramme is divided into six parts, as follows:

#### **SUBPROGRAMME ELEMENTS**

##### **Subprogramme element 3.1: Improvement of household surveys**

##### **I. The programme to improve surveys on living conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI)**

##### **Background**

47. The current state of the economy in the region is such that there is a constant need for data that can be used to assess the impact of economic and social policies on peoples' living standard, especially with respect to those groups perceived as most vulnerable. In this regard, it is increasingly important to dispose of timely, reliable information in order to follow up on the variables that affect levels of employment, income distribution and poverty.

48. During the current decade, countries in the region significantly stepped up activities aimed at strengthening the technical, methodological and operational aspects of the planning and execution of household surveys. They have also carry out research designed to generate indicators of the extent of and trends in poverty and income concentration.

49. Although significant advances have been made, the consensus is that it is still necessary to continue to refine measurement tools and operational activities for improving the quality and timeliness of the information generated. The MECOVI, an initiative promoted and financed by IDB, the World Bank and ECLAC, was brought on stream in 1997. The purpose of this project is to give technical support to countries in the design, planning and operation of household surveys with a view to generating appropriate indicators for monitoring the living conditions of households.

50. Currently, the countries participating in the programme are Argentina, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru. Other countries are expected to join in the course of the year.

**a) Regional workshops for discussion and analysis**

51. Activities planned under the MECOVI programme are expected to include regional workshops to consider, discuss and analyse important issues relating to the execution of surveys and the development of indicators for assessing living standards, poverty, employment and income distribution. ECLAC is responsible for the coordinating and implementing these activities, and in 1999, it will hold two regional workshops on the following issues: Measuring expenditure in household surveys, and methodologies for measuring poverty.

52. As in the workshops held in 1998, ECLAC will prepare the respective work agendas and will coordinate the preparation of technical documents for presentation at the meetings; this documentation will help to identify important points for discussion and will contribute to debate and consensus-building. In the year 2000, two regional workshops will also be held; the issues to be addressed will be defined in the course of 1999 on the basis of countries' interests and the progress made with the programme.

53. INEGI (Mexico) and the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC-Argentina) will also participate as co-sponsors of the activities in question. These organizations also serve as hosts for the regional workshops that ECLAC coordinates under MECOVI.

54. As its technical contribution on the issues under consideration and as a means of disseminating information on national experiences of relevance to the region, ECLAC will prepare reports on the most important aspects of discussions held, technical studies to be presented as background papers at meetings, and reports on national experiences relating to methodologies and working procedures used in conducting and analyzing household surveys.

55. In order to achieve an appropriate level of dissemination of the material generated in the workshops and to facilitate access to the documentation, ECLAC has set up an Internet Website ([www.eclac.cl](http://www.eclac.cl)) where reports on regional activities may be viewed and downloaded by a wide readership both within and outside the region..

**b) Data bank of the MECOVI programme**

56. Proper management of the MECOVI programme calls for the analysis and monitoring of the region's experience in generating information through household surveys. A data bank is therefore being set up based on the experience gained by ECLAC and the studies it has prepared in recent years. In this regard, IDB and ECLAC have signed a cooperation agreement with a view to standardizing, harmonizing and documenting the databases developed from the household surveys carried out by different Latin American and Caribbean countries between 1996 and 1998. An analysis will be made of their capabilities and limitations regarding the study of the living conditions of their populations.

57. In 1999, ECLAC will prepare a total of 14 databases corresponding to household surveys conducted in 1997 in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. For ease of access, the data will be recorded on a CD-ROM, which will contain the microdata relating to each survey, the reading format, the size of records, the field description, the dictionary of variables, the admissible ranges, the format of the questionnaire used for data collection, the variables developed by ECLAC and control figures for checking the consistency with statistics published by individual countries.

58. A similar number of databases, corresponding to 1998 surveys, will be prepared in the course of the year 2000.

**c) Regional training**

59. In 1999, two regional training courses will be held in the context of the MECOVI programme. These activities are aimed at improving the technical expertise of national officials responsible for the design and execution of surveys and of those working on studies of living standards. In 2000, two other courses will be held on the same topics, in order to extend up-to-date training on issues of regional interest to a larger number of national officials. These training activities will be hosted by INDEC (Argentina) and INEGI (Mexico).

**d) National Projects**

60. In the 1999-2000 biennium, technical assistance will be provided to beneficiary countries, as part of the substantive contribution of ECLAC to the MECOVI programme, on issues relating to survey design and execution, statistical analysis, construction of social indicators and the preparation of poverty studies.

61. In addition, ECLAC will transmit to all the countries of the region, in a timely and comprehensive manner, the technical documentation generated, along with reports on any new matters of relevance to the MECOVI programme, and accounts of national experiences. The aim is to promote cooperation among countries and improve the analytical and operational capabilities of national statistical offices in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## **II. Direct technical assistance**

62. ECLAC will continue to provide technical assistance to countries of the region on issues relating to the statistical design of household surveys and on methodological and operational aspects of field work in connection with this type of project. It will also maintain its technical support for the processing and analysis of employment, poverty and income distribution indicators.

**Subprogramme element 3.2:** Use of information generated by the household surveys.

### **a) Update of ECLAC data bank**

63. During the 1999-2000 biennium, ECLAC will constantly update its household survey data bank, which will be a vital tool for developing studies and constructing economic and social indicators in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The support of the national statistical offices is essential to ensure timely access to the documentation and databases of the surveys conducted in the second half of the decade.

### **b) Social Panorama of Latin America**

64. Towards the end of 1999 and in the year 2000, ECLAC will disseminate the editions of the Social Panorama of Latin America for those years. These publications will include up-to-date information on trends in employment, poverty and income distribution. In collaboration with UNICEF, they will continue to incorporate information that is useful in assessing the situation of children with respect to various issues of regional interest. Data generated from household surveys will be a vital input in the preparation of these reports.

### **c) Joint studies with countries**

65. ECLAC will continue to plan joint activities with the Latin America and Caribbean countries involving research into poverty, employment and income distribution. Cooperation agreements have been concluded with Brazil, Chile and Mexico, and the opportunity is open for other interested countries to join forces with ECLAC in such endeavours.

### **d) New phase of the project with the Government of the Netherlands**

66. The new phase of this project is geared to the preparation of studies on poverty and income distribution trends in the Latin America and Caribbean countries. Substantive activities to be carried out include national research projects in Brazil, Honduras and Mexico. In addition, regional training activities will be conducted to promote dissemination of working methodologies and presentation of the findings of completed research projects.



**e) Preparation of methodological material on the construction of social indicators**

67. There is interest in and a need for materials that can be used by officials of countries involved in the construction and analysis of social indicators, especially those that reveal trends in employment, poverty and income distribution. During 1999 and 2000, ECLAC plans to prepare handbooks describing the methodological and operational aspects of the construction and interpretation of social indicators. In addition, regional forums may be held at which such material can be distributed and explanations can be given on their use in conducting national and regional studies on social issues.

**Subprogramme element 3.3: Implementation of population and housing censuses.**

68. As an on-going activity leading up to the 2000 round of population and housing censuses, the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC) will remain in regular contact with the countries and will provide technical assistance on methodological and organizational issues relating to the conduct of the censuses and to the design, construction and use of databases containing information on individuals and households. (See document LC/R.1888(Sem.88/2) Add.1).

69. CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC will provide technical advice on the conceptual design of the censuses, including the type of census to be conducted, selection of topics to be researched, preparation of questionnaires and tabulation plans. Since countries are already engaged in conducting the censuses, this is a priority activity for the biennium. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will also publish in book form the papers presented at the Seminar on conceptual design of the 2000 round of censuses in Latin America.

70. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will make available to the countries a faster version of its retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputers software (REDATAM) – winR+ in 32 bits – during the second half of 1999. It will also undertake advisory missions and provide internships at ECLAC and training workshops on the operation of this programme.

The first version for Windows was sent free of charge to each national statistical office in February 1998. During the first half of 1999, CELADE will finalize preparation of the other databases (such as vital statistics or household surveys), from existing files in IMPS, ISSA, SPSS, DBF, ASCII or other formats.

71. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC, will advice countries on the evaluation and analysis of census data. In the 1999-2000 biennium, joint activities are envisaged only with countries that are reviewing their data as a result of delays with the programme or because they need to incorporate new inputs. These activities will include technical assistance missions and internships for technical staff from those countries at CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC.

72. Each year, as part of its technical training programme on demographic analysis for professionals from countries of the region, CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will organize an intensive regional course on demographic analysis for development, as well as specific workshops on tools and technologies for the creation of databases in REDATAM format and the use of winR+ and ZonPlan for the analysis of census and other data.

73. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will prepare a roster of professionals as part of its efforts to support and coordinate horizontal technical cooperation and enable countries to make better use of national technical capacity.

74. As regards the population and housing censuses, the Chair of the Steering Committee of the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas will send a letter to the President of IDB drawing attention to the importance of opening up a line of credit to support the 2000 round of censuses. The Chair, in collaboration with Costa Rica and Panama, should follow up on these initiatives, and ECLAC and CELADE should provide the necessary technical assistance.

75. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will distribute the results of the survey on census experience, held in 1998, to the statistical offices in the region, identifying the countries concerned in order to promote greater horizontal cooperation.

76. CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC will issue a demographic bulleting focusing on the Investigation of International Migration in Latin America (IMILA) programme, based on the population censuses and on a specific study on the issue.

**Subprogramme element 3.4:** Project on statistical cooperation between the European Union and the MERCOSUR countries.

77. The project on statistical cooperation between the European Union and the Mercosur countries, referred to in the Introduction, will come into effect in 1999. The central aim of this activity is to harmonize MERCOSUR statistics; a time-frame of three years has been set for this task. For operational purposes, the activities are divided into 10 sub-topics; reference is made here only to the one relating to the development of social indicators.

78. During the first half of 1999, ECLAC will participate as an observer in the first meeting of the working group on social indicators. The purpose of the meeting is to define guidelines for 1999 and to identify areas for action and substantive activities that need to be carried out in order to fulfill the objectives of the project.

**Subprogramme element 3.5:** Regional and national training activities.

**a) International workshop on poverty measurement**

79. The ninth and tenth annual international workshops on poverty measurement will be held by ECLAC and INEGI (Mexico) in Aguascalientes in 1999 and 2000. The workshops are designed for Latin American and Caribbean civil servants involved in conducting studies on the

extent of and trends in poverty, and the objective is to continue training national experts in the area of social statistics. ECLAC supports this activity by providing teaching staff and material for use in academic and practical sessions.

#### **b) National training workshops in statistical methods**

80. ECLAC will provide training staff and teaching materials to support national training efforts in statistical methodology and analysis designed to enhance the analytical capacity of staff of national statistical offices involved in projects and studies based using data generated from household studies and population and housing censuses.

#### **c) CESD-Madrid training activities**

##### **81. Implementation of population and housing censuses**

CESD-Madrid: Workshop on experiences in population and housing censuses (3 weeks' duration, at the Latin American headquarters) in conjunction with CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC, in early 2000.

CESD-Madrid: Course/workshop in 2000 (Latin American headquarters)  
 CESD-Madrid: Seminar on the refinement and assignment of statistical data

##### **82. Regional and national training activities**

CESD-Madrid: Twenty-first course on sampling with applications to household surveys (Madrid, April 1999)

CESD-Madrid: Seminar on social indicators (Cartagena, April 1999)

CESD-Madrid: Seminar on poverty statistics (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, September 1999)

**Subprogramme element 3.6:** Participation in working and study groups on issues of regional interest.

83. In accordance with a decision taken by the United Nations Statistical Commission, ECLAC will continue to participate actively in various international working groups which study issues of interest to the region. As member of the Steering Committee on aspects of income measurement, it will attend the meetings of the Expert Group on Household Income Statistics (Canberra Group); in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Rio Group (Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Policy Co-ordination), it will attend meetings of that body on methodologies for poverty measurement; it will also participate in meetings of the Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group), similarly, it will attend meetings of the Siena Group, which deals with various issues relating to social statistics and indicators.

84. As working meetings are held or as reference material becomes available, ECLAC will undertake to ensure wide dissemination of the relevant documentation to national statistical offices throughout the region.

## **SUBPROGRAMME 4: *Dissemination of statistical information***

### **INTRODUCTION**

85. Since the 1987 Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas, ECLAC has assisted the region's statistical offices in bringing about the technological changes associated with the introduction of new electronic statistical data processing techniques.

86. At the last two Meetings of Directors, in 1994 and 1996, a wide range of activities in this area were approved, and almost all of them have since been implemented.

87. The most significant technological innovation now under way is the adoption of Internet-related technologies by countries. Accordingly, the programme of activities for this biennium is designed to take full advantage of the opportunities available to the region's statistical offices in terms of electronic processing and dissemination of information and statistical data.

88. In view of the swift pace at which techniques and procedures in this field are evolving, no specific activities have been planned within this subprogramme for the year 2000, although the expectation is that activities of the type scheduled for 1999 will be carried forward. The countries will be informed as to the nature of these projects in due course.

### **SUBPROGRAMME ELEMENTS**

**Subprogramme element 4.1:** Data search, exchange, dissemination and retrieval in an HTML environment via static and dynamic interactive media.

89. In conjunction with national statistical offices, ECLAC will coordinate and implement the tasks required to permit the exchange of short-term economic indicators and national accounts data in an HTML environment.

90. ECLAC, in collaboration with the national statistical offices of MERCOSUR and associated countries (Msur+2), will define a project for the implementation of statistics-oriented search engines and specialized servers. This project will provide for the creation and maintenance of a metadata system to facilitate the search and retrieval of the data contained in the system. The processing of the data for dissemination will be based on automated procedures for the creation of static Web pages in HTML and of dynamic pages for responding to user-defined interactive queries.

91. With support from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile, ECLAC will prepare a technical document containing proposals for the treatment of statistical confidentiality, security of information, and restricted access to data not intended for public use.

92. During the third quarter of 1999, ECLAC, with the assistance of CESD-Madrid and the collaboration of the National Statistical Institute (INE) of Spain, will conduct a

93. In the first half of 1999, a meeting of the EU-MERCOSUR working group on dissemination and interaction with users will be held in Buenos Aires.

94. In the second quarter of 1999, the national statistical offices of MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile, in conjunction with ECLAC, will hold their annual meeting on Web MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile in Rio de Janeiro.

**Subprogramme element 4.2:** Electronic commerce in the field of data and statistical information.

95. In collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ECLAC will implement, on its own computer platform, a pilot model for the commercial distribution of data and statistical publications. In a second stage, it will promote the use of this model by national statistical offices in the region. Assistance in implementing these procedures on servers of national statistical offices will be provided on request.

96. With the technical collaboration of ITU, ECLAC will organize a seminar/workshop on organization, methods and systems for electronic commerce in statistical data. The seminar will be held at ECLAC headquarters during the second quarter of 1999.

**ANNEX 1**





PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND  
THE CARIBBEAN 1999-2000

**Subprogramme 3: Social and poverty statistics and indicators**

Programme elements	Substantive action by ECLAC	Organizations responsible and coordination required	Expected results
<p><b>3.1</b> <b>Improvement of household surveys</b></p> <p><b>A. MECOVI project</b></p> <p>- <b>Regional workshops for discussion and analysis</b></p>	<p>- Two regional workshops for discussion and analysis will be held in 1999. The first, on measurement of expenditure in household surveys, will be organized jointly with INEGI (Mexico), and the second, on methods for estimating poverty, will be held in collaboration with INDEC (Argentina).</p> <p>- Two regional workshops will be scheduled for the year 2000, on subjects to be determined in the course of 1999.</p>	<p>- ECLAC, IDB and World Bank</p> <p>- ECLAC, in coordination with INDEC (Argentina) and INEGI (Mexico).</p> <p>- For both 1999 and 2000, the venues for these events will be Aguascalientes and Buenos Aires.</p>	<p>- Following these regional workshops, summaries of the papers presented will be published in both printed and electronic media, to add to the region's bibliographic resources on the subject of technical aspects of household surveys and the measurement of poverty.</p>
<p><b>MECOVI programme data bank</b></p>	<p>In 1999, in accordance with the cooperation agreement with IDB in the framework of the MECOVI programme, data files will be prepared containing information from 14 household surveys conducted in 1997 by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>- In 2000, the delivery of those data files will be completed.</p>	<p>- ECLAC</p>	<p>- Two CD-ROMS will be prepared, each containing data from 14 surveys; the databases will have been standardized.</p> <p>- Technical documentation for users of the databases, containing: file description, record size, dictionary of variables, control figures, and codes used.</p> <p>- Technical documentation of the surveys: questionnaires and list of codes.</p>

<p><b>- Regional training</b></p>	<p>- Two regional training courses will be held in 1999, on subjects related to household surveys and measurement of living conditions. - Two similar courses will be held in 2000.</p>	<p>- IDB, World Bank and ECLAC. Appropriate coordination will take place with Argentina and Mexico, which have been selected as the host countries for these events.</p>	<p>- During the biennium, a total of 120 national technicians will be trained in subjects related to the conduct of surveys and standard-of-living studies.</p>
<p><b>- National projects</b></p>	<p>- Technical assistance missions to countries participating in MECOVI. - Promoting the sharing of technical documents and results of the MECOVI programme in the region.</p>	<p>- ECLAC, in coordination with IDB, the World Bank and the MECOVI countries.</p>	<p>- Technical assistance will be provided to countries for design, execution and analysis of household surveys, for statistical analysis of data, and for construction of indicators and studies related to measurement of poverty and income distribution.</p> <p>- Adequate regional dissemination of national research and practices applied by bodies participating in MECOVI on subjects related to survey design and execution and to measurement of poverty and income distribution.</p>
<p><b>B. Direct technical assistance</b></p>		<p>- ECLAC, in coordination with the countries</p>	
<p><b>- Support for design and execution of household surveys</b> <b>- Support for the analysis of surveys and construction of social indicators</b></p>	<p>- Technical assistance for statistical design of surveys and analysis of data.  - Technical assistance in the construction of social indicators.</p>		<p>- Assistance will be provided to the countries of the region in the design and execution of national projects for the realization of household surveys, data analysis, and construction of poverty, employment and income distribution indicators.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Use of household survey data</b></p>			

<p><b>- Update of the ECLAC data bank</b></p> <p><b>- Preparing the Social Panorama of Latin America</b></p> <p><b>- Joint studies with countries</b></p> <p><b>- New phase of the joint project with the Netherlands on analysis of poverty and income distribution in Latin America</b></p> <p><b>- Preparation of methodological materials on the construction of social indicators.</b></p> <p><b>3.3 Implementation of population and housing censuses</b></p>	<p>- Updating the regional data bank with data from household surveys conducted in the second half of the 1990s.</p> <p>- Preparing the 1999 and 2000 editions of the Social Panorama of Latin America.</p> <p>- Carrying out national studies in the social area.</p> <p>- Conducting national studies and regional training activities in relation to the topics involved in the project.</p> <p>- Preparing technical materials to provide support to the countries.</p>	<p>ECLAC, in coordination with all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <p>- ECLAC, with the collaboration of UNICEF</p> <p>- ECLAC, in coordination with Brazil, Chile and Mexico</p> <p>- ECLAC, in coordination with Brazil, Honduras and Mexico</p> <p>- ECLAC</p>	<p>- Harmonization, standardization and documentation of databases from surveys conducted in 1998, 1999 and 2000.</p> <p>- The 1999 and 2000 editions of the Social Panorama of Latin America will be prepared using household survey data.</p> <p>- Updating employment, poverty and income distribution indicators for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>- National estimates will be prepared jointly with the countries regarding the magnitude and trend of poverty and income distribution.</p> <p>- National studies will be conducted on the evolution of poverty and income distribution.</p> <p>- Regional workshops will be organized to analyse results and present methods of analysis.</p> <p>- Working documents containing methodological details regarding the construction and analysis of social indicators.</p> <p>- Regional forums will be held for discussion and interpretation of social indicators.</p>
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<p>- Support for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses</p> <p>- Construction and use of data bases</p> <p><b>3.4 Statistical cooperation project between the European Union and the Mercosur countries</b></p> <p><b>3.5 Regional and national training activities</b></p> <p>- International workshop on poverty measurement</p>	<p>- Technical assistance</p> <p>- Technical assistance</p> <p>- Participation as observer in the programme of work for 1999, on the subject of social indicators.</p> <p>- Participation in skills development and updating activities for technical personnel.</p>	<p>- CELADE, with the countries of the region</p> <p>- Management Unit of the cooperation Project EU-MERCOSUR.</p> <p>- ECLAC, in coordination with INEGI (Mexico)</p>	<p>- Technical support for resolving methodological problems and dealing with practical situations in relation to the conduct of the 2000 census round.</p> <p>- In 1999 ECLAC will participate as observer in the opening meeting providing -on demand of the parties- technical support for the definition of the activities of the social indicators group.</p> <p>- The ninth international workshop on poverty measurement will be held in July 1999, at INEGI (Mexico) in the city of Aguascalientes.</p> <p>- The tenth international workshop on poverty measurement will be held in 2000, in coordination with INEGI.</p> <p>- Skills development and updating for national technical staff responsible for poverty measurement in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.</p> <p>- Teaching materials will be prepared for participants in the workshop.</p> <p>Support will be provided for the countries through the participation of instructors in the execution of statistics training activities of a national and subregional nature.</p>
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<p>- National training workshops in statistical methods</p> <p><b>3.6 Participation in work and study groups on issues of regional interest.</b></p> <p>- Canberra Group: household income measurement</p> <p>- Rio Group: poverty measurement</p> <p>- Delhi Group: measurements of the informal sector</p> <p>- Siena Group: Social statistics and indicators</p>	<p>- Participation in teaching and training activities for the benefit of national technical staff.</p> <p>- Participation in working meetings.</p> <p>- Regional dissemination of technical documents on methods of data collection and analysis.</p> <p>- Technical secretariat.</p>	<p>- ECLAC and countries of the region which organize national or subregional training activities in statistics</p> <p>- ECLAC and those responsible for the working groups</p>	<p>- The analytical abilities of national technical personnel will be strengthened in the area of statistics, data analysis and elaboration of social indicators.</p> <p>- Participation in the working meetings of study groups. Monitoring of activities throughout the world on issues related to household surveys and the poverty measurement, income and the informal sector.</p> <p>- Dissemination in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean of documents analysing the latest methods and techniques for measurement and study of those economic and social phenomena which are researched by means of household surveys.</p>
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**ANNEX 4**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATISTICAL  
CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS**





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**E C L A C**

**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas**

**Santiago, Chile, 24 - 26 March 1999**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATISTICAL  
CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This document contains a proposal prepared by the Governments of Canada, Mexico and Peru and the ECLAC secretariat. It has been reproduced without formal editing.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) of the Organization of American States (OAS), in its resolution No. 34, of 8 October 1998, decided to bring to an end the existence of the Inter-American Statistical Conference of the OAS. It recommended that OAS member states should integrate their efforts to coordinate statistical matters under a single entity within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
2. The ECLAC work program provides for a Joint OAS-ECLAC Meeting on Statistical Matters. The establishment of a Statistical Conference of the Americas to replace the previous Joint Meeting would therefore pose no problem and such a conference could operate as one of the subsidiary organs of ECLAC.
3. CEPCIDI resolution No. 34 further recommended that the statistical offices of Canada, Mexico and Peru should consider the procedure for establishing the proposed Conference referred to in paragraph 2 above.
4. In compliance with this request, representatives of the national statistical offices of Canada, Mexico and Peru, and of the ECLAC Secretariat prepared the enclosed proposal for submission to the Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas to be held at ECLAC Headquarters in Santiago, Chile on 24-25 March 1999.

## PROPOSAL

### A. STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS

#### 1. Definition

ECLAC will create a subsidiary organ to be called the Statistical Conference of the Americas. It will be an international body and will contribute to the advancement of statistical policies and practices in the countries of the region.

#### 2. Objectives

- a) To promote the development and improvement of national statistics and their international comparability having regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other appropriate bodies as necessary.
- b) To encourage international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national statistical offices and international and regional organizations.
- c) To approve, subject to the availability of resources, a biennial programme of activities for regional and international cooperation which responds to the needs of countries of the region.

#### 3. Membership

Membership of the conference is extended to the member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin-America and the Caribbean. These States will be represented by the heads of their national statistical offices or by their appointed representatives.

#### 4. Sessions of the Conference

Regular sessions of the Conference shall take place every two years, normally at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The Conference may accept the invitation of a member government to hold the regular session in its country, on condition that funding is provided to cover the additional expenses of the ECLAC Secretariat. The Bureau may convene a special session between regular sessions, at any venue it may choose, provided that the required funds are available.

5. Officers

The Conference shall elect a Bureau in accordance with the regulations established for this purpose. The Chairperson of the Bureau also chairs the sessions of the Conference.

6. Secretariat

The Division of Statistics and Economic Projections of ECLAC will act as secretariat of the Conference. The Executive Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will place at the disposal of the Conference documents and facilities as approved under the Commission's work program.

7. Participation of international and regional organizations in the work of the Conference

International and regional organizations will be invited to attend the sessions of the Conference as observers, when their special fields of interest are involved.

## **B. BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE**

### **1. Definition**

The Statistical Conference of the Americas will establish a Bureau to assist the Conference as outlined in section 4 below.

### **2. Composition**

The Bureau will consist of a Chairperson and six other members. Its members will be elected from ECLAC member States. Special care will be taken to ensure that all subregional groups of countries are represented on the Bureau. Countries will be represented by the heads of their national statistical offices or by their appointed representatives.

### **3. Election of the Bureau and duration of mandates**

The Chair of the Steering Committee of the Meeting of Directors of Statistics, in consultation with other members of that Committee, will prepare a proposal for the election of the new Bureau.

The new Bureau will assume office after the conclusion of the regular session of the Conference at which it is elected, and will remain in office until the end of the next regular session.

Members of the Bureau, including its Chairperson, will be elected for a two-year term by the regular session of the Conference.

Members of the Bureau may be re-elected for three additional terms. The Chairperson may not be re-elected in that capacity for a second consecutive term, but may be re-elected as a member of the Bureau. Any previous Bureau member may be re-elected to the Bureau after two years have elapsed.

### **4. Functions**

The Bureau has the following functions:

- a) To carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Conference.
- b) To prepare a draft work program every two years for discussion and approval by the regular session of the Conference.
- c) To monitor implementation of decisions made and the work program approved by the Conference.

## 5. Sessions

The Bureau will meet at least twice in the period between regular sessions of the Conferences. At the meeting immediately preceding such a regular session, the Bureau will approve a proposal for the program of work of the Conference for the following biennium, and submit it at the regular session.

The Bureau may invite to its meetings countries or individual experts who can contribute to its work.

## 6. Secretariat

The Division of Statistics and Economic Projections of ECLAC will act as secretariat of the Bureau.

The Bureau will decide on the documentation required for its meetings. As a general rule, no substantive discussion shall take place in the absence of appropriate documentation. The Secretariat is responsible for enforcing this rule.