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**PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES, 2007-2009**



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## I. BACKGROUND

1. As stated in resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, one of the objectives of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is “to draw up a biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, to meet the demands of the countries of the region, subject to the availability of resources”.

2. The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC has presented, and will update and adopt at its fourth meeting, a strategic plan 2005-2015, which defines the mission, vision, strategic goals, specific goals and principal lines of action on which the Conference should focus its work during the period ending in 2015. The choice of 2015 as the deadline for the strategic vision coincides with the target date set for the Millennium Development Goals, which constitute a serious challenge for national statistical systems in the region, insofar as it will be necessary to develop an appropriate system of information to monitor progress towards the Goals. Indeed, the Conference will be facing three major challenges in the medium term: the preparation of the 2010 round of population censuses, the implementation of the system of national accounts (1993 SNA) in all countries of the region and the revision of the methodology of the system of national accounts scheduled for 2008.

3. Hence, the strategic plan 2005-2015 of the Conference is intended to serve, now and in the future, as a frame of reference for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation. This long-term vision will enable the Conference to optimize the contribution that the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities will make to the effective fulfilment of the four strategic goals of the plan. The programme will sum up the specific goals for a two-year period, which should be consistent with one or more of the four strategic goals of the plan and facilitate progress towards its implementation. Furthermore, in keeping with the specific goals of the plan, the biennial programme should contain clear guidelines to provide direction and stimulate concrete action by countries, international and subregional organizations and the different coordination and cooperation bodies created for these purposes (for example, the working groups and committees of experts).

4. The strategic plan outlines four major strategic goals, which, in turn, are broken down into specific goals and translated into different lines of action.<sup>1</sup> The four strategic goals are as follows:

**Goal 1:** To strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users.

**Goal 2:** To promote the training of staff in producing statistical information, managing national statistical systems and carrying out research into statistical methodology.

**Goal 3:** To promote the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information in the region.

**Goal 4:** To promote coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and international agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> See ECLAC, Final draft strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2575), Santiago, Chile, July 2006.

## **II. GUIDELINES FOR THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC, 2007-2009**

### **A. DEFINITION OF PRIORITIES AND COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME**

5. The biennial programme should include lines of action whereby progress can be made in each of the four strategic areas set out in the foregoing paragraph through regional, subregional and international cooperation projects and activities. Nevertheless, given the magnitude and complexity of the challenges outlined, it is necessary to identify an optimum number of central lines of action —of the 26 included in the strategic plan— which should be prioritized in the period 2007-2009, in order to avoid dispersal of efforts.

6. In identifying priorities for the biennium, the Conference should take into account the commitments, mandates and recommendations that the international statistical community may deem essential for the period 2007-2009. In particular, attention should be drawn to the development and strengthening of statistics reflecting progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and targets in areas such as poverty, gender and the environment. In addition, the Conference will identify specific activities for the region which can translate into modifications of the above-mentioned commitments or the adoption of new commitments.

7. There are a number of activities and projects which are part of the ECLAC subprogrammes for the period 2007-2009 and which encompass many of the priority areas and lines of action of the strategic plan. International cooperation activities should, however, be coordinated through the working groups, committees of experts and other coordination and cooperation bodies that the Conference considers appropriate, in order to complete the biennial programme and integrate the different programmes of action within the framework of regional priorities.

8. The biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities 2007-2009 contemplates the implementation of concrete activities relating to the lines of action of the strategic plan. ECLAC will carry out activities designed essentially to promote cooperation among member countries and to boost their participation in various activities, while the working groups and committees of experts, together with other coordination and cooperation bodies that the Conference deems appropriate, will carry out activities relating to the priority tasks and the commitments of the international organizations that conduct statistical activities in the region.

9. In addition, for information purposes, the Conference will keep a register of regional and international cooperation activities relating to the issues it covers and will receive reports from the agencies that act in the region. This systematic register could become an integrated programme of statistical activities in the region, similar to that of the Conference of European Statisticians.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Integrated Presentation of International Statistical Work [online] <http://unece.org/stats/ces.html>.

## **B. ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

10. In accordance with the experience achieved to date, the working groups, committees of experts and other coordination and cooperation bodies that may be adopted for the regional cooperation activities must function in line with specific criteria for optimizing their activity and results. In analysing this topic at its fifth meeting, the Executive Committee took into account the document presented by the Chair.<sup>3</sup> The Report of the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee presents the points of view set forth in the document of the Chair together with the comments made by participants.<sup>4</sup>

11. In order to function effectively, the working groups must, among other requirements:

- (a) Harmonize fully their mandates with the goals of the strategic plan of the Conference;
- (b) Have a clear and well-defined mandate, in terms of both the deadline for fulfilment and its contents;
- (c) Define the responsibilities of the members of the groups, both operationally and in terms of human and financial resources;
- (d) Organize its work in the light of existing initiatives within and outside the region and with regard to the activities of other working groups;
- (e) Establish measures for the follow-up of the advances that are achieved and problems that arise, and
- (f) Keep abreast of the activities of the working groups, city groups and other initiatives in the field of statistics within the United Nations.

12. At its third meeting, held in June 2005 in Santiago, Chile, the Conference agreed to set up six working groups and at the meeting of the Executive Committee in November 2006 in Mexico City, the terms of reference of these groups were established.<sup>5</sup> In defining the priority activities for the preparation of the biennial programme 2007-2009, at its fourth meeting, the Conference is expected to assess the performance of these working groups in terms of their contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Conference and, on this basis, to decide whether or not to renew their mandates or possibly create new working groups or groups of experts. The Executive Committee has before it a report on the activities of the working groups prepared by the Secretariat (LC/L.2595), which will serve as a basis for this assessment.

## **C. PRINCIPAL GUIDELINES OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS STRATEGIC GOALS**

13. The activities of the biennial programme 2007-2009 fall under the strategic goals of the plan and the implementation of its corresponding lines of action. However, since the strategic plan envisages a

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<sup>3</sup> ECLAC, Implementation and monitoring of the programme of regional statistical work, July 2005-June 2007: responsibilities of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and tentative terms of reference of the working groups (DDR/3), Santiago, Chile, November 2005.

<sup>4</sup> ECLAC, Report of the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2505), Santiago, Chile, March 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Institution-building, human resources, censuses, the Millennium Development Goals, national accounts, information and communications technologies.

long list of lines of action, it would be useful to select a few priority lines on which the activities to be incorporated in the biennial programme 2005-2007 would be based. The lines of action should be closely linked to the major challenges that the national statistical institutes and national statistical systems will be facing in the next ten years, namely:

- (a) Monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals;
- (b) Preparation and implementation of the 2010 round of population censuses;
- (c) Implementation of 1993 SNA in all the countries of the region and, in particular, the revision of national accounting methodology scheduled for the year 2008.

14. The ECLAC projects and activities relating to these three statistical challenges and other relevant lines of action for the period 2007-2009 are described below. The Executive Committee, having assessed the progress and achievements of the working groups, should recommend to the fourth meeting of the Conference the renewal of the mandate, the termination of the activities of the existing working groups or the creation of new working groups or groups of experts to address the priorities for the period 2007-2009. Moreover, the Executive Committee will be promoting the incorporation of commitments of the regional statistical organizations that are involved in this biennial programme.

### **1. Monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals**

#### **(a) Social statistics**

15. *Institution-building.* One priority line of action will be to promote and develop actions to enable statistical offices to play a more active role in the preparation of national reports to monitor progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

16. *Development of technical capacities and methodologies.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC will be implementing two projects relating to the Goals. In 2006, it completed a significant number of the activities relating to the first of these projects entitled “Strengthening the capacity of Latin America and Caribbean countries to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals”. In 2007, a number of technical documents on the proposal for complementary indicators for monitoring fulfilment of the Goals and targets and on the regional situation relating to official indicators and new proposed indicators will be published. Also in that year, further technical assistance activities will be provided to strengthen statistical capacities for monitoring progress towards fulfilment of the Goals. The second project consists in a review and update of the methodology used to quantify indigence and poverty in the region and to improve the follow-up to fulfilment of the first of the Goals. This project includes the implementation of methodological and empirical research activities, meetings of experts for the analysis of specific aspects of the method, a training course for officials of national entities that are in charge of monitoring poverty issues and regional workshops that will examine topics such as measurement of well-being and the improvement of household surveys in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This programme provides for the active participation of the countries, especially through the creation of working groups that will be responsible for data processing and the exchange of ideas on specific elements of the process of poverty measurement. In addition to the generation of a new methodology for the construction of poverty lines, the project includes the creation of a database with the new harmonized poverty measurements of the countries of the region as well as a series of methodological documents on procedures to be used and their results.

17. *Human resources education and training.* Consideration is being given to human resources training through the organization of a training course on the new methodology for poverty measurement, within the framework of the review of the ECLAC poverty measurement methodology.

18. *Databases and publications.* The Social Statistics Unit of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division will be carrying out the maintenance and update of databases of social statistics and household surveys. Between 2007 and 2009, the Unit will continue to expand the Social Indicators and Statistics Database (BADEINSO) and the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) and to provide updated information, which is a crucial input for monitoring living conditions in the region. The Statistics and Economic Projections Division will publish the reports *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean* and *Social Panorama of Latin America*, as well as studies on poverty, equity and income distribution. The Division will also continue to provide technical assistance to countries for improving social information systems and household surveys as well as support in monitoring progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

**(b) Gender statistics**

19. *Gender indicators.* As part of its on-going work to promote gender mainstreaming, the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC is proposing indicators complementary to those adopted officially under the Millennium Development Goals but which do not include the gender perspective. The Unit will continue to provide technical assistance under the project entitled “Use of gender indicators in public policy-making”. This project seeks to promote the generation of gender statistics and the implementation by countries of systems of gender indicators within the framework of social information systems.

20. *Time-use indicators.* Further steps will be taken to promote the development of time-use modules in household surveys and a basic proposal will be put forward for the inclusion of set of questions on the issue designed primarily to increase the visibility of the burden of productive and reproductive work and caregiving.

21. *Study on formal and informal health care in households or in services for the community.* In preparation for the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will be held in 2007, the Women and Development Unit will conduct a study to identify who provides caregiving at both the formal and informal level, whether it be in the home or in services to the community.

22. *Human resources education and training.* The Women and Development Unit, in conjunction with the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico, established a cooperation and joint sponsorship agreement for the organization of the International meeting on gender statistics. Held annually in Aguascalientes (Mexico), this forum is an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas on various issues relating to gender statistics in the different countries. Working in tandem with the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the Unit will offer a training course in time use and the contribution of unpaid work to the economy.

23. *Databases and publications.* As part of the activities relating to the Millennium Development Goals, the studies already published will be supplemented by those prepared in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras and Paraguay. The Women and Development Unit of ECLAC also plans to prepare a periodic publication on gender statistics and indicators. The Unit will continue to update the web page of the system of gender statistics and indicators by incorporating the new information supplied



by the United Nations agencies and bodies or taken from recent household surveys. The system of statistics and indicators will be moved to the new platform of databases (CEPALSTAT), which is currently being developed by ECLAC. Further information will be generated for the countries of the Caribbean, with new periods incorporated and coverage of gender statistics extended to other countries.

## **2. Preparation and implementation of the 2010 round of population censuses**

24. *Preparation of the 2010 round of population censuses.* During the period 2007-2009, the national statistical offices of the countries of the region will be concentrating much of their efforts and resources on the preparation of the next population census, to be conducted in or around 2010. This task poses huge technical and methodological challenges and will also call for a tremendous effort in terms of the systems of recruitment and training, information processing and dissemination and financing of the census exercise, among others. As such, this is one of the priorities that must be reflected in the biennial programme in order to coordinate and complement the efforts of the countries and organizations with a view to obtaining a successful outcome in the 2010 round in the region.

25. *Institution-building.* The preparation and execution of a large-scale statistical operation such as the population censuses poses enormous exigencies and challenges for the national statistical offices in terms of management and, above all, the achievement of adequate financing. The activities of identification and mobilization of resources for fulfilling this purpose are a priority. In this regard, it should be noted that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with the collaboration of ECLAC and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is organizing a seminar to be held in 2007 on the promotion and financing of the 2010 round of censuses.

26. *Development of technical and methodological capacities.* The experience acquired in the previous census round and the proper and timely treatment of the new issues and demands of the next census round will be treated as priorities in the work of the Conference. To this end, meetings of experts must be promoted and different national experiences and challenges, addressed. The Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC is planning to hold a meeting of experts to address the emerging issues (relating to both the content and the operational aspects of the censuses) which are expected to be included in the 2010 round. Thus, CELADE - Population Division will prepare the substantive documentation for these events, in particular, a document on the principal emerging issues to be included in the census questionnaire of the 2010 round. Another document being prepared concerns the usefulness of the new data of the population census of Nicaragua, which could equally well apply to the censuses of the 2010 round. Moreover, CELADE will support the initiatives presented by the MERCOSUR countries and the Working Group on Censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

27. *Meetings of experts and data-processing tools.* A meeting of experts will be held in 2007 to promote better use of vital statistics for updating intercensal estimates of the population by sex and age and for monitoring and assessing social programmes. Further work will be carried out to develop REDATAM-related data-processing tools in order to facilitate the dissemination, processing and analysis of sociodemographic data, especially those from the population and housing censuses and vital statistics.

### **3. Implementation of 1993 SNA in all the countries of the region and revision of national accounting methodology scheduled for the year 2008**

28. *Methodological guide for updating national account systems in Latin America.* As indicated, one of the major challenges facing the countries of the region is the implementation of 1993 SNA and the recommendations that will emerge in the updating process. This is one of the priority objectives of the ECLAC programme of work for the biennium 2007-2009 and a great deal of effort will be devoted to its achievement. Some Latin American countries have not yet adopted all of the methodological recommendations contained in 1993 SNA, while others, in drawing up their national accounts, use a statistical base—weighting and prices—that is far removed from the present structure of their economy. The few countries where a new statistical base has been recently adopted or where such a base is being prepared have come up against countless institutional, technical and financial problems. Thus, one of the projects being pursued by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division is the production of a methodological guide for modernizing national accounts in Latin America. The objective of this project is to formulate a set of recommendations—based on an analysis of recent experiences and good international practices—to enable the different countries to overcome these problems and modernize their national accounting system more efficiently. This project, moreover, meets the demands formulated by national experts gathered at the 2005 Latin American seminar on national accounts, held in Caracas from 24 to 28 October 2005 in relation to the problems faced by countries when modernizing or changing the base year of their national accounting system.

29. *Annual seminars of experts.* The methodological guide for the modernization of national accounts in Latin America should be examined at the annual ECLAC seminars on national accounts. An executive summary of the document, to be presented to the Statistical Conference of the Americas, will highlight the technical and financial prerequisites for keeping the systems of national accounts up-to-date. For its part, the Conference could use this document and its recommendations to rally the support of national authorities for projects to change the base year, bearing in mind that the financial resources needed must be incorporated into the five-year budgets of national statistical institutes or central banks that prepare the nation's accounts and that the statistical operations necessary for changing the base year must be carried out.

30. *Satellite accounts.* In order to meet the demands of the different sectors and of a wide range of users of national accounts, one of the priority lines of work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the period 2007-2009 should be the promotion, support and preparation of satellite accounts in different social and economic areas, including health, tourism, culture and information and communications technologies.

31. *Registering and assigning a value to unpaid domestic work.* The Women and Development Unit and the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC are contemplating the joint implementation of a project for the development of national accounts designed primarily to promote an awareness of, register and assign a value to unpaid housework. They will also continue to collaborate with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the preparation of a health satellite account with a gender focus that includes registering health-care work conducted in the home.

32. *Horizontal cooperation projects.* The promotion of horizontal cooperation projects between countries for modernization of their national accounts, which include adoption of 1993 SNA and the change of the base year with line-of-credit financing from multilateral agencies, may be another priority task for the Statistical Conference of the Americas and a powerful instrument for harmonizing and ensuring the comparability of systems of national accounts of the countries of the region.

33. *International Comparison Programme.* As part of the programme of activities, efforts should be made to implement the second phase of the International Comparison Programme. This second phase will tend to extend the coverage and update the calculation of purchasing power parities and have more precise measurements of per capita GDP in order to carry out international comparisons and calculate regional macroeconomic aggregates. Raising awareness of the need to carry out this programme and the quest for financial resources for implementing it must be a priority line of work during the 2007-2009 biennium.

#### 4. Other important lines of action

34. This section considers activities that are part of the Commission's institutional mandate. Arising from cooperation agreements signed with other multilateral organizations or projects agreed with external donors, these activities bear a direct relationship to the production, analysis and dissemination of statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean.

##### (a) Economic projections

35. *Activities of the Economic Projections Unit of the ECLAC Statistics and Economic Projections Division.* The mission of the Economic Projections Unit of the Statistics and Economic Projections Unit is to complement the efforts of the ECLAC member countries and the regional community to construct, strengthen and harmonize statistical information systems. Using an analytical approach, the Unit works in three areas, namely: economic projections, modelling and databases. The Statistics and Economic Projections Division, together with other ECLAC divisions, will continue to publish economic projections in the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean* and *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy*. At the same time, these results will, as usual, be disseminated through Internet, through the regular update of the Atlas del Crecimiento.

36. *Modelling.* The Division will continue its work of statistical analysis and modelling of the effects of regional integration and free trade agreements in the region and hopes to pursue its efforts of medium term modelling, in particular, with the development of a small global module for modelling the impact of the world economy on Latin America. In addition, the Division will continue to provide technical assistance to member countries in the area of economic modelling as well as to regional bodies for more specific issues.

37. *Business opinion surveys.* The Division will continue to provide technical support to the Seminar on business opinion surveys, organized jointly with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission. ECLAC will undertake to select a specific methodology and to construct a regional composite indicator. To this end, the countries agreed to send to ECLAC the historical series of reviews of the opinion polls relating to the manufacturing sector.

38. *Dissemination of information.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC will continue with the maintenance and update of its databases and metabases, including the expansion of their historical coverage, the incorporation of new economic, social and environmental issues and the improvement of short-term indicators. These activities also include the maintenance and update of the data bank on input-output matrices and stock of production factors, in order to relate them to national accounting data and widen their focus to encompass concepts of social accounting matrices. Efforts will be made to improve service to internal and external users by incorporating more sophisticated data-processing platforms.

**(b) Socio-demographic statistics**

39. *Follow-up to the main conferences and summits.* One of the activities of CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC involves updating the system of indicators for the follow-up of the recommendations set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and assisting the Women and Development Unit in updating the indicators relating to the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2007, special emphasis will be placed on the implementation of a system of indicators for the five-year review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. In this connection, CELADE will hold consultations with the ECLAC member countries.

40. *Studies on indigenous populations and peoples.* In response to a request from the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Populations and Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, CELADE - Population Division will carry out further work on the development of a system of indicators on indigenous populations and peoples, which will be useful for the design and implementation of programmes and policies targeting these groups.

41. *Population projections.* CELADE - Population Division, in conjunction with competent national institutions, will continue to update population estimates and projections by sex and age, using the most recent demographic data available from up-to-date sources. The results will be included in the United Nations publication *World Population Prospects 2006 and 2008*.

**D. SUMMARY TABLE OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME**

42. The following table is proposed as an appropriate, succinct presentation for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. This proposed layout lists the following : (i) strategic goals; (ii) specific goals; and (iii) lines of action. The format used shows clearly the programme priorities and the participation of the various actors in the regional and international cooperation activities. In addition, it will help to avoid duplication of efforts among the different international organizations that conduct activities in the region, and will be a means of showing and disseminating their activities. To illustrate this point, the layout for strategic goal 1, specific goal 1.1 and the three first lines of action of the Strategic Plan of the Conference is presented below.

**BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF  
THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC**

<b>OBJECTIVES AND LINES OF ACTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES</b>		
<p><b>Strategic goal 1</b> To strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users</p> <p><b>Specific goal 1.1</b> Promote an awareness and application of best practices in terms of legal frameworks, strategic planning, assessment of national statistical systems and financing</p>			
<p><b>Lines of action</b></p> <p>Collect and disseminate information on the legal frameworks governing national statistical systems and national statistical offices.</p> <p>Compile and disseminate information on best practices in terms of organization and strategic management.</p> <p>Form networks of legal and administrative experts in the countries of the region</p>	<b>ECLAC</b>	<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>