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CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND
REGIONS OF DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

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INTRODUCTION

In the last few years the subject of co-operation among developing countries and regions has been given increasing importance at international meetings. The idea of mutual co-operation emerged as another sign of the consciousness and the will of the developing countries which, through a new international economic order, seek to accelerate their development on the basis of their own internal efforts, mutual co-operation and effective support from the international community.

The information about this new approach to international co-operation stems from the actual countries concerned which, at different meetings and in different geographical regions, have decided to undertake joint programmes of action in different fields and sectors which call for mutual co-operation in order to confront together the new problems that have arisen at the regional, subregional and interregional levels.

The first indication of the importance of this new action mechanism of the developing countries was at the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77, held at Algiers in 1967, when the participating countries emphasized that "... trade expansion and economic co-operation among themselves is an important element of a global strategy for development".^{1/} The developing countries' determination to strengthen their collective self-reliance through mutual co-operation has been expressed in several declarations, resolutions, recommendations and decisions on technical and economic co-operation among developing countries adopted by United Nations and other organizations.^{2/}

^{1/} See Section F of the Programme of Action of the Charter of Algiers adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 on 24 October 1967.

^{2/} Among these mention may be made of General Assembly resolutions 3177 (XXVIII), 3202 (S-VI), 3241 (XXIX), 3251 (XXIX), 3281 (XXIX), 3442 (XXX), 3461 (XXX), 31/119 and 31/179; resolution 92 (IV) and decision 142 (XVI) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at The Third Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 (Manila, 26 January-7 February 1976); and the decisions of the Conference of the Group of 77 on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (Mexico, 13-22 September 1976).

These resolutions and declarations not only show the prevailing discontent with the old international economic order and with the slow progress made in remedying its defects, but they also progressively and collectively outline the objectives and elements of a programme of action in which the developing countries could co-operate with the aim of solving the problems of underdevelopment. Although they state that only a complete restructuring of the present international economic relations can offer a lasting solution to the existing problems, the developing countries have expressly recognized the immense possibilities of establishing new modalities in their economic, trade and technical relations among themselves.

The measures envisaged in connexion with economic co-operation among developing countries cover practically all spheres of economic development and are based on the interdependence and complementarity of the developing countries' economies, on the strengthening of co-operative and mutual assistance ties and on the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for mobilizing collective efforts.

A new dimension of economic co-operation among developing countries was subsequently included in discussions at international meetings, i.e., the mobilization of technical co-operation among developing countries, since development is an indivisible unit within which financial, trade, agricultural, industrial, scientific, technological, cultural, administrative and institutional, educational and other factors are interrelated. In other words, technical and economic questions are closely interlinked in the design and implementation of development strategies, plans, programmes and projects. Technical co-operation among developing countries is a basic and interdependent component of economic co-operation among developing countries and a special instrument for ensuring its viability. Such co-operation is effected through the development of capacities and techniques designed to increase the productivity of the countries' economic activities.

1. Questioning the old international economic order

Co-operation among developing countries stems, on the one hand, from the necessity for action in the face of the crisis and collapse of the old international economic order instituted at the end of the Second World War and, on the other hand, from the urgent need to review not only the prevailing styles of development, but at the same time the manner of dealing with problems of underdevelopment, and the relations of developing countries among themselves and with the industrialized countries. These situations are closely interlinked as regards both their causes and their possible solutions.

The pronounced inequalities in the levels of living prevailing in the developing countries are only too well known. The operation of the international economic system in the last few decades - most efficient from a certain point of view and for a certain group of nations - has not succeeded in narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor nations, or in distributing on an equitable basis the opportunities of the various social groups of obtaining access to the fruits of progress. This has helped to create an increasingly widespread consciousness of the need to construct a new international economic order on the basis of equity and justice and a new international distribution of labour at a world level. The international community has been devoting its efforts in the last few years to this noble aim, by means of difficult negotiations, particularly at United Nations meetings. There is still, of course, a long way to go before new rules of the game and new institutions which should emerge from the present confusion and insecurity can be established.

Concurrently with this quest, severe criticism has been levelled at the development styles prevailing in both developed and developing countries in the last few decades. In the rich world, dissatisfaction with the existing development styles is based on the excesses of economic affluence. In the poor world, it stems from the excessive poverty. The former's reaction today is to examine the relation between economic growth and the deterioration of the environment, to

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denounce the ambivalence of technology in relation to the nature and quality of life, to discuss the inconsistency of the idea of simple indefinite linear progress, and to search perseveringly for a new combination of the magnitude and quality of economic growth. The poor countries have quite a different approach to the problem. It is not merely a question of improving the quality of life but also of attaining the minimum levels of income necessary to sustain life itself.

The economic systems of the developing countries were designed in the image and likeness of the developed countries, and this has been fostered by all the forms of international relationships through which the developing world became progressively dependent and linked with the industrialized world. Those development models operated only to a limited extent, however. The great majority of the developing countries have not yet succeeded in solving the problems of the broad masses which were gradually excluded from progress and from the minimum conditions of human dignity. Realization of this despairing situation has led to questioning the forms of growth followed in recent decades, and the conclusion is that the traditional forms emanating from countries which are now developed are proving too slow to solve within a reasonable span the acute problems created by extreme poverty and economic inequality. Such questioning is not merely an economic problem; it is, above all, a social and political issue.

The problems of the old international economic order are closely linked with these traditional forms of development. The old order has been as useful in the progress of the rich nations as were the classic models of development of their productive forces. It did not operate in quite the same way for the developing countries, however, since here the traditional forms were incapable of adequately distributing the fruits of progress or of solving the problems of poverty. Neither were the traditional mechanisms of international economic relations capable of eliminating the inequality between the rich and the poor nations, or of achieving the conditions for a fairer international distribution of labour and income.

2. Horizontal co-operation

The developing countries increasing awareness of the inability of the traditional formulas to solve the basic problems of underdevelopment has prompted them to seek new instruments and take new action, from the intellectual and political angles, to speed up the slow advance of progress for the broad masses. At the national level, the countries' efforts are aimed at exploring new forms of development, and at the international level, since they are closely linked with the former, at promoting new forms of mutual co-operation through the adoption of measures of collective self-reliance and confidence in their own means, as a way of forging and strengthening the links between them and transforming their relations with the rest of the world.

In essence, collective self-reliance is an act of faith in each society's human and material potentialities at any stage of its development. It is sought by this means to orient the development process, awaken idle potentialities, appeal to each country's historical and cultural bases to sustain new forms of organization of production or development of appropriate techniques, and mobilize idle human and natural resources. In this way the aim is to strengthen economic independence through a greater capacity to adopt decisions enabling each country to pursue its own progress and promote development programmes, plans and projects along the lines best suited to its own interests, at both the national and the regional and interregional levels.

Each country should define its own concept of self-reliance, in the light of its stage of development, size and supply of resources. Each country should also define the role played by the instruments constituting self-reliance as central elements of its economic action or as complementary elements of its own development models.

For the great majority of the developing countries and regions, self-reliance as thus envisaged will consist primarily of a new examination of their own markets, both domestic and regional, as a way of infusing fresh dynamism into the development of their productive forces.

At the international level, collective self-reliance represents a renewed co-operation effort among developing countries which aimed at achieving forms of mutual support and complementarity for the progress of their respective economies and societies. As such, it is not a substitute for the new international economic order, but an additional instrument for mobilizing the developing countries' own capacities. Nor should it constitute a rejection of or a substitute for the existing bilateral and multilateral machinery for co-operation between developed and developing countries; on the contrary, it is a natural and necessary complement to it, since this new dimension of co-operation among developing countries helps to promote but does not generate development.

In the past, the economies of the developing countries grew under the influence of a relationship between the centre and the periphery which promoted trade, financial, technological and investment flows between the industrialized north and the underdeveloped south.

Mutual co-operation is a new concept which is seeking gradually to diminish the exclusively north-south interdependence and to open up a horizontal interdependence, that is, among developing countries and regions, by taking advantage of existing experience and capacity, the development of new capacities and the promotion of collective self-reliance in the economic, scientific and technological fields.

The aim of horizontal co-operation, both economic and technical, is to promote and channel new demands with their own special features, in addition to those already existing, and to achieve complementarity between the economies of countries with similar economic structures. Not all developing countries or all developing regions in different geographical areas have reached the same stage. There are marked differences and more progress in some compared with others in specific fields. It is precisely because of those differences that the possibility arises of reciprocal complementarity among developing countries and regions, particularly in the trade, financial, technological and investment sectors.

3. Latin American and horizontal co-operation

Latin America occupies an intermediate position between the group of industrialized countries and other developing regions. Many of the Latin American countries have, in the past two decades, developed forms of economic organization, technical capacities and scientific knowledge which may be better suited for use or adaptation in other developing countries of the region or, as the case may be, in developing countries of other geographical areas.

Mutual co-operation is not, of course, a new concept in Latin America. Through the action of its leaders, its art and thinking, and its collective presence on the world scene, in Latin America's history there has been a permanent Latin American identity and identification. These led to principles of regional solidarity which have particular force, in fact more than in any other region. The many examples of regional co-operation are rooted in an innate sense of solidarity and in the feeling of belonging to a historical reality and having a common origin.

In the last few years, Latin America has made pioneering efforts to strengthen technical and economic co-operation, both bilateral and multilateral, among the developing nations of the region. Perhaps, the most important examples of multilateral co-operation have been the regional and subregional economic integration groups. Latin America has shown distinct signs of progress in this connexion, which is being achieved, not without some inevitable difficulties, by increasingly complex stages in all areas. Four schemes are currently in progress; they have their ups-and-downs and problems, but do represent an attempt to explore avenues of close co-operation.

The Latin American Economic System (SELA) was set up with the purpose of establishing forms of intra-regional economic co-operation, and serves as a forum for consultation and co-ordination of Latin America's position vis-à-vis third countries and at international meetings.

A number of regional public sector organizations have been set up in recent years to exchange experience and provide reciprocal technical assistance.^{3/}

Latin America has also developed progressive co-operation in the field of financial co-operation. The long-term resources mobilized within the region not only supplement capital inflows from industrial countries, but also reflect, in conjunction with increased short-term intra-regional financing and compensatory payments between central banks, necessary progress in regional and subregional economic integration.

No less important are the bilateral co-operation and complementarity and reciprocal co-operation conventions and agreements concluded between Latin American countries in such wide-ranging fields as technical and financial co-operation; trade and economic co-operation; special régime for the treatment of technical assistance personnel and equipment; professional and vocational training; cultural, scientific and technological exchange; development of border areas; and exploitation of water resources.

Lastly, it should be recalled that co-operation among the countries of the region has also been provided spontaneously with varying results between enterprises and institutions of the public and private sectors, though not recorded in the form of agreements. This includes co-operation exchange of information and knowledge through scientific, technological, cultural, entrepreneurial, trade union, professional and other associations which today make up a wide network capable of sustaining a major technical co-operation effort.

As may be noted, the efforts developed in different fields in the region are an indisputable fact. Nevertheless, they are not sufficient; in this new stage, Latin America should explore new areas for mutual

^{3/} Among these may be mentioned the Regional Electricity Integration Commission (CIER), the Latin American State Petroleum Enterprises Mutual Aid Association (ARPEL), the Inter-American Telecommunications Commission (CITEL), the Latin American Railways Association (ALAF), the Latin American Shipowners' Association (ALAMAR), and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE).

co-operation, define its nature and scope, its objectives and priorities and its operational mechanisms and means of action, while endeavouring to obtain more knowledge about the potential supply of resources, goods and services available in the region. This co-operation should be based on a broad conception of horizontal co-operation and should mobilize all national and international institutions able to contribute to the common activities of the region.

To that end, the political bases should be laid for more vigorous efforts centring around four pillars of priority importance:

(a) collective solidarity among the countries of the region; (b) faith and conviction concerning this new approach and the political will to translate it into practice; (c) the capacity for mobilization at the national, regional and subregional levels for co-operation among countries and groups of countries; and (d) the transformation of deep-rooted mental attitudes of resistance to change so that the countries can constitute the principal agents, subjects and beneficiaries in the exchange of experience and knowledge gained in the process of securing their own well-being.

In addition, the present institutional structures will have to be brought into line with the requirements of horizontal co-operation. All the institutions can help to achieve this, but a redefinition of aims and a review of their own objectives and instruments will be necessary in order to meet this new challenge in the form of broader regional co-operation.

The first step has already been taken in the field of technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC).

In compliance with General Assembly resolution 3461 (XXX), the representatives of the member countries of the region met at Lima (10-15 May 1976) with the purpose of formulating conclusions and recommendations that might be submitted to the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, and recognized that, in order to promote TCDC, it is necessary to design new methods and procedures for the effective mobilization of the capacities of the region.

/The conclusions

The conclusions and recommendations of the Lima Meeting state that the goal of TCDC is to contribute to achieving the collective self-reliance of the developing countries and, accordingly, the exchange of experience and knowledge replaces the traditional concepts of the north-south relationship. An important conclusion concerned the interest in promoting an intra-regional technical co-operation network and the need to study the design of methods and procedures that would enable TCDC to be put into effect.

With this end in view, the Latin American countries decided to entrust a group of government experts with experience in the problems and management of national technical co-operation offices with a study of priority areas and operational mechanisms for horizontal co-operation in the region.

This Working Group, which met at UNDP headquarters (27 September-8 October 1976), prepared the bases for a regional project for TCDC with the following general objectives:

- (a) To promote the development and exchange of knowledge, experience and technology among the countries of the region;
- (b) To strengthen institutional and economic capacity at the national, subregional and regional levels in order to increase utilization of the resources of Latin American countries;
- (c) To promote technical co-operation with other regions of the world.

In the report of the Meeting, the Working Group stated that the project should be carried out in close co-ordination and consultation with governments and international co-operation agencies, including, when appropriate, other regional bodies.

4. CEPAL within the framework of co-operation among developing countries and regions

CEPAL's main function is to study the priority economic and social problems of Latin America, make use of the results of its research in its advisory and training activities, transfer this knowledge to government and economic integration bodies in the region, and design appropriate implementation mechanisms.

When the Economic and Social Council established the regional commissions, it included among their functions that of promoting and strengthening co-operation among the member countries of each of the regions they served, and also among the economic commissions themselves.

Within this general framework, CEPAL has always been a centre of information on the real economic and social situation in Latin America, developing its thinking and interpreting that situation from a purely Latin American approach. On the basis of its diagnoses, it gradually outlined a body of economic policies in line with the criterion deriving from its research which, in many cases, had practical application in the region. Firmly convinced of the need for external co-operation as an important complement to the internal effort, it carried out innumerable undertakings on both the theoretical and the practical plane and provided technical co-operation to all the countries of the region in a wide range of economic and social development questions.

Thus, ever since CEPAL was established, it has been co-operating with the countries of the region in the study of solutions to economic and social problems, the preparation of development plans and projects, the provision of specialized training (through ILPES since 1962) for university graduates in the economic and social planning disciplines, the improvement and reinforcement of their institutions, and the strengthening of the subregional economic integration process. CEPAL's co-operation may be considered effective because of its secretariat's interdisciplinary approach, its thorough knowledge of the country's economic and social problems, the

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organization and processing of basic statistics collected in the countries of the region, and the periodical review it makes of the economic and social progress attained by the various countries.

Although the training and advisory programmes being carried out by CEPAL, ILPES and CELADE cannot, strictly speaking, be described as co-operation among developing countries in the region, they have laid the bases for subsequently achieving such co-operation.

In the first place, training in such important fields as economic and social planning and demography has enabled government officials and professional personnel of the public and private sectors and academic centres in the Latin American countries to become acquainted with the basic problems of the region and learn techniques for solving them. Secondly, through these programmes, close contact has been established between those graduating from the courses, who have often gone on to occupy important positions in the public administration of their own countries. In this way, a valuable technical infrastructure has been created which could be used to great advantage in systems of co-operation among countries of the region.

As regards advisory services, it should be noted in particular that CEPAL has co-ordinated or promoted studies for the integration of border areas and carried out important activities in the field of regional and subregional economic integration as a means of promoting and achieving co-operation among the countries of the region.

Both in the regional and subregional integration systems and in the moves towards co-ordination between them, special reference is made to the need to promote co-operation among the member countries of each system and to give preferential treatment in this connexion to the economically relatively less developed countries.

In the field of interregional co-operation, CEPAL, at its fifteenth session, adopted a resolution on co-operation among developing countries of different geographical areas, in which it requested the secretariat to undertake studies and, where appropriate

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and in consultation with Governments, promote interregional projects for co-operation among developing countries.^{4/}

In compliance with this resolution and at the request of the Government of Guyana, CEPAL, in conjunction with the other economic commissions in developing regions, co-operated in the formulation of an interregional project for economic co-operation among developing countries of different geographical areas in the trade, manufacturing and transport sectors.

On the basis of this study, which was carried out by the Government of Guyana with CEPAL's assistance and generous contributions from the Governments of Sweden and the Netherlands, the interregional project was initiated in September 1974, with the United Nations acting as executing agency and the Government of Guyana as the executing Government.

The work programme of the project covers four general areas: (a) trade co-operation; (b) producers' associations; (c) industrial co-operation; and (d) transport.

The Government of Guyana sought the collaboration of CEPAL and the economic commissions for Africa, Western Asia, and Asia and the Pacific in initiating the work programme.

In addition to the above example of interregional co-operation, CEPAL has launched a programme of co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as a first step towards mobilizing co-operation among developing countries and regions of different geographical areas. Within the framework of this programme, CEPAL has organized a study tour of African experts from economic co-operation organizations, who will visit the secretariats of the integration and free trade organs operating in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to acquaint themselves with the experiences of these subregional groups and the progress achieved by their member countries.

^{4/} See resolution 316 (XV) of 29 March 1973.

Furthermore, CEPAL is collaborating with ECA in seeking Latin American experts in certain branches of industry to participate in technical assistance missions being organized by ECA for African countries.

Among the possible areas of co-operation between Latin America and countries of other developing regions may be mentioned the following in which the region has had considerable experience: exchange and adaptation of techniques, relations with foreign investment and transnational corporations, industrial development, import substitution, land and rail transport, integrated rural development, economic policies, expansion of area trade, establishment of regional public sector associations, procedures for negotiations with third countries, international trade policy, and general exchange of practical experience.

As may be noted, the machinery available to CEPAL can contribute effectively to meeting the requirements involved in economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and regions, since it combines in a single organization a stock of technical knowledge in a wide range of specialties of the social sciences with installed comparative advantages for fulfilling the objectives of this undertaking.

Thus, a major role which CEPAL should play in the field of technical and economic co-operation among developing countries is to furnish the conceptual bases, the elements of policies and specific proposals for strategies geared to action aimed at achieving the accelerated development of the region as a whole, of geographical subregions and of countries or groups of countries with certain related characteristics.

CEPAL is currently undertaking - or planning to undertake - a wide range of studies in different fields of economic and social development largely with the object of mobilizing economic co-operation among developing countries or, at least, of placing in the hands of the governments of the region the tools and technical knowledge to help them design mutual co-operation programmes.

/These studies

These studies reflect the development priorities as envisaged by CEPAL and take special account of the objectives of economic co-operation among developing countries established at international meetings. The following studies contain elements which could mobilize and promote economic co-operation among developing countries:

(a) Development of food and agriculture; diversification of agricultural production and stabilization and expansion of food supplies;

(b) Development of basic commodities and raw materials; exploration, exploitation and development of non-renewable natural resources; promotion of agreements between producers and the establishment or strengthening of basic commodity consultation mechanisms;

(c) Expansion of the regional market for exports of manufactures and semi-manufactures and increase in export earnings; establishment of mechanisms for the exchange of information and market research; agreements on reciprocal trade preferences at the regional and interregional levels;

(d) Establishment of a collective financial safety net as a protection against balance-of-payments fluctuations, and regional and interregional services for financing export credit;

(e) Complementarity and industrial integration agreements; establishment of semi-public industrial enterprises and regional multinational enterprises; development of specific branches of industry;

(f) Development of creative technological capacity and appropriate techniques; guidelines for the formulation of national and regional policies and of preferential agreements for the transfer, exchange and use of appropriate techniques; establishment of binational or multinational technological research centres in selected areas;

(g) Promotion of regional and subregional co-operation for the exploitation, extraction, production and use of energy, especially the development of non-conventional energy resources, and for the

integrated development of these resources; co-ordination of energy policies and programmes at the regional and subregional levels, and development of rural electrification;

(h) Development of transport infrastructure by means of regional and subregional co-operation agreements on rail transport; implementation of the Integrated System for the Transport of Goods; inter-island maritime transport in the Caribbean; studies on international intermodal transport; automatization of information systems for transport planning;

(i) Preparation of the countries of the region for the multilateral trade negotiations carried out within the context of GATT;

(j) Strengthening of the bargaining powers of the governments of each region vis-à-vis transnational corporations;

(k) Studies on subregional integration and on the development of specific branches of industry, establishment of a subregional system in Central America for the joint promotion of manufactured products.

As regards technical co-operation among developing countries, CEPAL and the institutions forming part of its system, namely, ILPES and CELADE, should also be prepared to assume their responsibility in the regional sphere in compliance with United Nations decisions. CEPAL, with its knowledge of the economic and social situation in the region in general and in each country in particular, and its installed capacity for research, training, advisory and technical information services, combined with its long tradition as a forum for the discussion of topical economic and social questions, has a broad view of the real situation in Latin America, which is a fundamental factor in making reciprocal technical co-operation more expeditious and effective.

There are several ways in which CEPAL could support the efforts to achieve technical co-operation among the developing countries of Latin America and between regions of different geographical areas. The following may be mentioned by way of example:

/(a) Preparing

(a) Preparing studies and projects designed to mobilize co-operation among developing countries and groups of countries in the region in close co-ordination with the United Nations Development Programme;

(b) Intensifying specialized training programmes for professional personnel in developing countries of the region through ILPES and CELADE;

(c) Putting into operation a regional system of information and references applicable to the requirements of technical co-operation among developing countries of the region, to operate in close association with the UNDP electronic system of information on TCDC at the global level, which would play the central role; preparing national diagnoses of the economic and social information infrastructure in Latin America, which would serve as a frame of reference for future national technical information policies; preparing a directory of information systems and units in Latin America to facilitate the exchange of technical information between national units; providing advisory assistance to countries and regional and subregional groups of countries in the establishment or strengthening of technical information units; and co-operating in the organization and implementation of theoretical and technical training programmes for professional personnel in the field of technical documentation and information;

(d) Organizing specialized meetings for the exchange of experience in specific questions among experts of developing countries in the region and between them and experts of developing countries in other geographical areas. CEPAL would present the results of its own analysis and experience at these meetings;

(e) Collaborating in the formulation of tripartite co-operative programmes with the participation of developed and developing countries, if necessary acting as the agency for co-ordinating these programmes, taking advantage of the existing infrastructure in the secretariat. Through these programmes, the developed countries would provide the necessary resources to enable a developing country of Latin America

- or of any other developing geographical area - to furnish technical co-operation to another developing country of the region. This tripartite co-operation could be provided in areas such as: the financing of study and observation tours of technical experts from developing countries to other more advanced developing countries; financing of fellowships so that graduates from universities or technical schools in developing countries may receive more advanced professional training in academic, scientific and technological centres and in private or public enterprises in other developing countries; financing of technical seminars and specialized meetings for the exchange of experience among specialists of developing countries in different geographical areas, or between them and experts of developed countries; exchange of teachers and research specialists between countries of the region, taking advantage of the different degrees of specialized development of the various countries.

5. Horizontal co-operation mechanisms

Many of the tasks which the developing countries have set themselves in their Programme of Action for Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries adopted at the Mexico Conference in September 1976 are intended to foster both economic and technical co-operation, but on a large scale and more intensively than ever before. Undoubtedly, there is, at present, a much firmer decision to take full advantage of the possibilities of collective self-reliance and a much clearer definition of the goals and the means of doing so. Therefore, it is necessary now to ensure that the experience and available planning and implementation mechanisms of CEPAL are mobilized in co-ordination and consultation with other agencies of the United Nations system and of the inter-American system, in order to provide proper support for initiating this Programme of Action.

In some degree, that can be achieved by including in the secretariat's work programme the new priority activities which the developing countries may wish to assign to it. In this respect,

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it should be recalled that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on economic and technical co-operation among developing countries clearly indicate the contributions which, among others, the regional commissions can offer in this new dimension of international co-operation, and give clearly-defined mandates regarding the action they should initiate in both these areas of horizontal co-operation. In order to put into operation and mobilize mutual co-operation in technical and economic fields, it will be necessary to make arrangements for orienting this co-operation among developing countries, and between them and developing countries of different geographical areas.

Predominating at all international meetings is the sound decision to avoid the setting-up of agencies or institutions which might result in the emergence of new international processes likely to make more complex or costly or even obstruct the aims of developing countries in their search for new forms of co-operation. Moreover, the feeling at these meetings has decidedly been in favour of utilizing existing mechanisms, taking advantage of the valuable experience accumulated and using it in an expeditious, practical and functional manner.

There is no doubt that, at the regional level, CEPAL will continue to play an important catalytic role in the promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and groups of countries in Latin America, and in the exploration of new avenues of co-operation for development.

Furthermore, CEPAL and the other regional economic commissions make up a world system of support for and co-operation with their respective member countries. Their technical structures cover a wide range of fields which, duly co-ordinated within the framework of their respective work programmes, could already contribute to the objectives of interregional co-operation for development.

In order to comply with the aims of horizontal co-operation at all levels, it will be necessary to identify and register systematically and in a readily accessible manner the

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co-operation potential existing in the various countries. The countries should also have an adequate infrastructure to facilitate and expedite the channelling of the supply and administration of the possible demand for the services and resources resulting from horizontal co-operation.

The international and regional systems are already making efforts to organize themselves in this connexion, and full and adequate use should be made of their mechanisms in order to serve the purposes of co-operation among developing countries. In this respect, CEPAL should be prepared, in close association with the whole United Nations system and the other regional economic commissions, to provide the necessary co-operation in order to comply with the mandates received from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the decisions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, UNCTAD and other international meetings.

The promotion and mobilization of economic and technical co-operation requires official and unofficial machinery for the effective entry into operation of this novel style of international co-operation. At the national level, the countries of the region should accelerate the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for mobilizing and supporting horizontal co-operation. These mechanisms should also serve as offices for liaison and negotiation among themselves, with those established in developing countries of other geographical areas, and also with CEPAL, the United Nations Development Programme and other agencies of the United Nations system.

At the regional level, CEPAL should establish, as soon as possible, a special unit to provide the necessary support for efforts to achieve mutual co-operation among the developing countries of the region. This unit would co-ordinate the preparation of regional and subregional co-operation studies and projects of interest to countries and groups of countries in the region, maintain the necessary liaison with special units of the countries themselves, and of the other regional commissions and the United Nations agencies, and co-ordinate the action of the Latin American Centre for Economic

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and Social Documentation (CLADES) in the compilation, processing, systematization and dissemination of information concerning the requirements involved in mobilizing technical and economic co-operation which are of interest not only to the developing countries of the region but also to the other regional economic commissions.

The question of co-operation among developing countries should be included in the agenda of the regular sessions of CEPAL as a permanent item for discussion by the governments of the region. This would afford the secretariat an opportunity of informing the member governments of any activities of this kind in which it is engaged, not only as regards the countries and groups of countries in the region but also at the interregional level. At the same time, the discussions on the subject would guide the secretariat and give rise to the mandates which the member countries may consider necessary in order to strengthen these activities.

The biennial meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions have already included the question of co-operation among developing countries and regions in their agendas, and constitute a valuable informal mechanism for deciding on joint programmes, projects or lines of action in questions of horizontal co-operation at the interregional level.

Another mechanism for direct action which could make a significant contribution to the horizontal co-operation efforts could be the organization of joint regional and interregional meetings of government and United Nations experts. A direct dialogue between the representatives of the special units for co-operation among developing countries, of both the governments and the regional commissions and other United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme, would achieve a rich exchange of experience which would undoubtedly stimulate and strengthen the action of all those involved in this field.

Through these mechanisms, and any other which might emerge, it should be possible to intensify and make more dynamic the developing countries' action in confronting, through collective

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solidarity, the problems hindering their development; facilitate the countries' full participation in the great economic integration effort; and give the countries confidence in the use of their own capacities, and available human, financial, technological and natural resources. To that end, CEPAL will continue to explore all avenues for strengthening the relations and co-operation of developing countries in the region among themselves and with countries in other developing regions.