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ACTION IN THE FIELD OF POPULATION: RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS
AND STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

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1. The new position of the international community

The United Nations showed their concern for the population problem almost since their inception. As early as 1947 the Economic and Social Council decided to establish the Population Commission integrated by country representatives of all regions of the world, entrusting it with the preparation of studies and information on (a) the size and structure of population and their changes; (b) the reciprocal action of demographic, economic and social factors, and (c) policies to affect the size and structure of population and their changes.^{1/}

Activities in the population field during the 50's centered mainly on the first type of studies, having as an important frame of reference censuses taken around 1950. The First World Population Conference, held in Rome in 1954 under the sponsorship of the United Nations, constituted an important milestone in the progressive awareness of the characteristics that demographic dynamics was adopting in the developing world and in the discussion around its determinants and consequences for the attainment of the development objectives. Two phenomena which were new in intensity, started to concentrate attention: demographic growth in the developing countries, and the urbanization process and metropolitan concentration. Their magnitude, particularly in Latin America, has no precedent in history.

These facts are discussed two years later at the Bandung and Rio de Janeiro meetings. The complexity and specificity of the study of the reciprocal relationships between the development process and the demographic dynamics in the different regions, in addition to the magnitude of the requirements envisaged in this field, lead to recommend, in both meetings, the establishment of regional centres for training, research and technical assistance in demographic matters. The implementation of these recommendations by the United Nations led to the establishment of the following centres: Bombay, Cairo, and Santiago, Chile (CELADE, 1957).

^{1/} ECOSOC, Resolution 150, VII Session (19 July - 29 August, 1948).

The United Nations General Assembly held in December 1962 its first debate exclusively devoted to population, approving Resolution 1838 (XVII) on Population Growth and Economic Development. The General Assembly recommends through this resolution, that the Economic and Social Council, in cooperation with the specialized agencies, the regional economic commissions and the Population Commission, intensify their studies and research on the interrelations between population growth and social and economic development, with particular reference to investment needs of developing countries in health and educational services, within the frame of their general development programmes. This recommendation is based on three considerations which should be mentioned here: In the first place, the speed of economic and social progress of developing countries depends to a great extent on the capacity of these countries to provide their populations with education, better standards of living and productive labour. In the second place, economic development and population growth are closely interrelated which implies that, on the one hand, the attainment of the above mentioned objectives depends to a certain extent upon the speed of demographic growth and, on the other, that advancement in the attainment of these economic-social goals affects in a significant manner the speed of population growth. And, in the third place, the results of recent censuses (1960) showed that demographic growth during the 50's had been particularly great.

A detailed analysis of the 1960 census results had important repercussions on the different positions advocated by the international community. In October 1966, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs published the study "World population prospects as assessed in 1963". This report indicated that the total world population could reach 6 130 millions in the year 2000, 165 millions more than the provisional estimate published in 1964 and almost doubling the population of 3 281 millions estimated for 1965. However, this population could be much greater if the expected fertility decrease in developing countries would not appear, reaching even 7 522 millions for the year 2000, i.e., 1 392 millions higher than it had been calculated.

On the basis of the above information and the analysis submitted on the occasion of the Second World Population Conference (Belgrade, 1965), the General Assembly unanimously adopted in December 1966 its resolution 2211 (XXI) which, aware of the sovereign right of nations to formulate and promote their own population policies, exhorts the United Nations organizations, among them the regional economic commissions, to continue developing and strengthening training,

research, information and advisory activities in the population field, keeping in mind the particular characteristics of population problems in each country and region.

A few months later, in June 1967, the United Nations Programme and Coordinating Committee, when analyzing the Organization's work programme, suggested that the United Nations population programmes "should focus more on action programmes at the national and regional levels" and that "research should be restricted to studies which might serve as practical instruments to elaborate policies or support field work".

Thus, through the 20 years elapsed between the establishment of ECOSOC's Population Commission and 1967, emphasis was changing from the more basic function of undertaking studies on "the size and structure of population and their changes" to the perspective of action in terms of technical assistance for the formulation and implementation of policies with demographic objectives, going through the analysis of the interrelations between population dynamics and the economic and social development processes.

In this way, the Secretary General when inaugurating the 43rd Session of the General Assembly and on the basis of resolution 2211 (XXI) mentioned above, declared that "with the force of a historical resolution of the Assembly, the United Nations could now engage in a vigorous and more effective action programme in this field". At the same time, he announced the creation of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

In October 1970, the General Assembly proclaimed the Second United Nations Development Decade and adopted the corresponding International Strategy, whose goals and objectives are structured around two central subjects: growth and redistribution.

"As the ultimate purpose of development is to provide increasing opportunities to all people for a better life, it is essential to bring about a more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting both social justice and efficiency of production, to raise substantially the level of employment, to achieve a greater degree of income security, to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare, and to safeguard the environment". It is further stated that "these objectives are both determining factors and end-results of development; they should therefore be viewed as integrated parts of the same dynamic process, and would require a unified approach".^{2/}

^{2/} General Assembly, Resolution 2626 (XXV), International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, paragraph 18.

As regards growth, it states that "the average annual rate of growth in the gross product of the developing countries as a whole during the Second United Nations Development Decade should be at least 6 per cent".^{3/} "The average annual rate of growth of gross product per capita in developing countries as a whole during the Decade should be about 3.5 per cent with the possibility of accelerating it during the second half of the Decade in order at least to make a modest beginning towards narrowing the gap in living standards between developed and developing countries".^{4/}

The Strategy for the Second Decade does not explicitly adopt demographic goals, however, it stresses the need that national governments adopt them when it states that "the target for growth in average income per capita is calculated on the basis of an average annual increase of 2.5 per cent in the population of developing countries, which is less than the average rate at present forecast for the 70's. In this context, each developing country should formulate its own demographic objectives within the framework of its national development plan".^{5/}

It should be noted that despite the emphasis that the Strategy for the Second Decade places upon objectives of basic services, social services, housing and employment, it does not take explicitly into account aspects related to the spatial population dynamics (migration, settlement patterns) when formulating these problems.^{6/}

The first evaluation of the Strategy in Latin America (Quito Evaluation, March 1973) carried out by ECLA, limited itself to record, in global terms, the demographic growth and increase in the percentage of urban population occurred between 1960 and 1970. The Evaluation of Chaguaramas, on the other hand, made by ECLA in May 1975, at the middle of the decade, reviews in a relatively extensive manner the trends in terms of demographic growth, urbanization patterns, internal migration and international migration, relating these phenomena to different aspects of the economic and social development.^{7/} Thus, the consideration of demographic dynamics is becoming increasingly more ample and complex in the definition of the problems of economic and social development, as far

^{3/} Ibidem, paragraph 13.

^{4/} Ibidem, paragraph 14.

^{5/} Ibidem, paragraph 15.

^{6/} The only explicit reference to these problems is made on paragraph 71: "The developing countries ... will seek to remedy the ills of unplanned urbanization and to undertake necessary town planning".

^{7/} ECLA, Evaluation of Chaguaramas, May 1975, paragraphs 13 to 17.

as the implementation of the International Development Strategy is concerned.

The growing concern for the environment problem, which is added as a new aspect of the general development problem during the 60's, placing it in a planetary context and at a very long term, contributes to make the treatment of population phenomena even more complex.

The United Nations Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm, June 1972) stated in this respect that "the natural growth of population poses constant problems related to environment preservation, and appropriate measures and rules should be adopted to face these problems, according to each case".^{8/} Assigning great importance to spatial distribution of the population, it established in Principle 16 of its Declaration that "In regions where the risk that the demographic growth rate or excessive population concentration might endanger the environment or the development process, or in which low population density might hinder the improvement of human environment and interfere with development, demographic policies should be applied respecting the fundamental human rights and counting on the approval of the interested governments". On the other hand, in the recommendations, it assigns priority to research on socio-economic and demographic factors conditioning migration and spatial distribution of the population, including the transition settlement problem.

The activities developed by the United Nations around the World Population Year, in particular the Third World Conference, brought about an important qualitative advancement in the consideration of the demographic problems by the international community. In addition to scientific activities, such as symposia, the execution of meetings at the political level -as the Bucharest Conference and, in the case of Latin America, the San Jose (April 1974) and Mexico (March 1975) meetings- opened the way for an ample debate among governments which enabled to reach some basic consensus of great significance for future action in the population field. "The formulation of a World Population Plan of Action reflects -as pointed out by the Bucharest Conference- the awareness of the international community of the importance of demographic trends in socio-economic development and the socio-economic character of the recommendations ... reflects the awareness of the crucial role played by development in what it affects demographic trends".^{9/}

^{8/} Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, I,5.

^{9/} World Population Plan of Action, paragraph 14 c.

At the Bucharest Conference and its follow-up at the regional level, i.e., the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, a renewed concept of population policy emerges which arises, on the one hand, from a deeper knowledge of the interrelations between the demographic dynamics and the development processes and, on the other, from the ratification of a set of principles of ethical and judicial character which clearly establish the rights of the individuals and the limits for the action of the State in connection with demographic behaviour.^{10/}

This concept stresses the instrumental character of population policies: the demographic objectives acquire significance to the extent that their achievement contributes in a positive manner to the attainment of the objectives of development. Keeping in mind the close relationships which exist between population growth dynamics and its spatial distribution dynamics, it is recommended that governments should "formulate global population policies ... which take the different components of demographic dynamics integrally into account".^{11/} In third place, it stresses the multisectoral character of population policy: The ethical-judicial frame mentioned above, inhibits the State in the use of regulating policies directly affecting demographic behaviour. The population policy should thus be implemented by basically resorting to indirect instruments which while acting on determining or conditioning factors of demographic behaviour -such as educational levels, localization of employment opportunities, access to health services, integration of rural population to the urban market, etc.- may influence this behaviour in the desired direction.^{12/} Mention should be made of a last characteristic of this new concept which is the need to have as a reference goals at the long and very long terms: "Given the characteristics proper to dynamics and to the nature of its interrelations with socio-economic structures and processes, these population policies should be formulated in a long term perspective within the context of economic and social development, foreseeing future demographic trends and adopting well in advance -if modifications are desired- the appropriate decisions and measures".^{13/}

^{10/} Second Latin American Meeting on Population, Report of the Meeting, Chapter III, Conclusions and Recommendations, ST/CEPAL/Conf.54/L.9, paragraphs 119 to 130.

^{11/} Ibidem, paragraph 134.

^{12/} CELADE, Políticas de población: Notas sobre algunos problemas para su formulación. Document (G-1) submitted to the First Technical Exchange Meeting of Governmental Entities in Charge of Population Policies in Latin America, San Jose, Costa Rica, November 1976.

^{13/} Ibidem, paragraph 133.

In the light of the above considerations, the conclusion of the governments at the Mexico meeting acquires full meaning, according to which "international cooperation in matters connected with the study, formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies should be guided by the principles of the WPPA and directed towards giving full effect to the conclusion of this Meeting that the basis for an effective solution of population problems is, above all, socio-economic transformation and that population policies can be successful only if they constitute an integral part of economic and social development".

2. Brief account of progress made in matters of statistical information and demographic studies

a) Basic statistical information

The sources of basic statistical information for the study of the demographic situation and trends have traditionally been vital statistics and population censuses. Demographic surveys through sampling, of a national character, have only recently been initiated and have proved extremely useful for estimating the main demographic variables at the national level.

In general, censuses taken in Latin America before 1950 did not adjust to uniform international standards and showed deficiencies as far as quality of the information is concerned. With the 1950 Census of the Americas rules and modern census procedures started to be applied which enabled to obtain more complete and relevant information for the analysis of the demographic situation and trends with a high degree of international comparability.

Since then, demographic data collection and elaboration methods have greatly improved. Thus, in the 1970 censuses of a good number of countries of the region, questionnaires were enriched with new topics enabling the retrospective study of mortality, fertility and internal migration. In general, the tabulations programmes have expanded and gained analytical capacity in connection with economic and social aspects. However, if compared with progress made in the developed countries in this matter, Latin America still shows deficiencies in quality, elaboration process and opportunity of submission of census data.

Although different measures have been adopted and plans applied during the last two decades in order to improve civil registry systems and vital statistics the latter show less progress than the one made in connection with population censuses, so that despite a few exceptions, omission and other errors in the enumeration of births and deaths seriously limit the usefulness of this source

of information to measure recent changes in demographic trends, not only at the country level, but even more so when the analysis refers to regions and socio-economic groups.

Fortunately, as mentioned above, this situation has partly improved through adequating and/or developing other sources of demographic information (censuses and surveys) to investigate vital facts. In this connection, mention should be made of the system of demographic surveys through sampling at the national level, being promoted by CELADE and carried out up to this moment in six countries, as well as of the World Fertility Survey, sponsored by the International Statistical Institute, with the participation of 14 countries of the region.

b) Demographic research

Demographic research around 1965 in Latin America, was almost strictly limited to descriptive studies and analyses aimed at quantifying the main variables which determine, at the most immediate level, changes in population size and structure, i.e., fertility, mortality and migration. With the scarce and often unreliable information available during the 50's, studies were carried out leading to a better understanding of the main dimensions and trends of the population change process in the countries of the region. The 1960 censuses provided more recent information and at the same time, enabled to determine more accurately which had been the trends during the preceding decade. These studies included estimates of levels and patterns according to fertility age, mortality levels, including construction of life tables and some descriptive analyses of mortality by causes, and indirect estimates-using census information- of volume and composition by sex and age of urban-rural migration and among regions.

Analyses of census information were also carried out, in connection with population composition taking into account some characteristics of studies on economically active population, educational situation, migration, spatial distribution and population urbanization.

Many of these studies which might be considered as descriptive diagnoses, were used as a basis in the elaboration of total population projections, geographic divisions and specific population groups projections of interest for planning purposes, according to hypotheses which resulted, in general, from the extrapolation of observed trends.

Numerous surveys on reproductive and migratory behaviour started to be undertaken during the 60's which, in addition to obtaining more detailed information on these phenomena, sought their sociological explanation. Among these

studies, mention should be made of those carried out in some countries of the region on the basis of the PECFAL -urban and rural- surveys and the migration to metropolitan areas surveys, promoted by and undertaken with CELADE's collaboration.

As more complete and detailed demographic information from censuses and surveys became available, research studies deepened the knowledge on differential demographic behaviour of population from different regions and socio-economic strata.

3. The demographic variables in planning

Since population is the main agent of economic and social development, planning should include it as one of the fundamental variables in every aspect of economic and social development in which it intervenes as a "problem" element, such as employment, urban and rural development, habitat and quality of environment, basic social services and natural resources, among others.

There is at present unanimous agreement regarding the interdependence between population change and economic and social development and, consequently, on the need to take demographic variables into account in development planning. However, a series of circumstances contributed to make the inclusion of these variables in the different stages of the planning process rather limited in Latin America. Among these, mention should be made of the lack of basic demographic information with the required degree of disaggregation and in accordance with classifications which are relevant for analysis, the lack of knowledge of the nature and degree of interrelations between the demographic variables and economic and social factors, and the current use of economic planning models in which the objectives and goals of social development are not adequately established.

In the planning practice in Latin America, information and demographic studies have been used in the diagnosis stage. They have also been used, although to a lesser extent, in the determination of objectives and goals of the plans, taking for this purpose population projections into account, with different disaggregation levels according to the requirements of the planners.

Lastly, the little consideration which has been given to demographic factors when determining the means or instruments for the implementation of policies, reflects the limited knowledge available on the interrelations between these

factors and other socio-economic variables in addition to the fact that the models used, when they incorporate demographic variables, only consider them as data. In the projections generally available, hypotheses on the economic and social change which would occur during the period they embrace are not explained and, on the other hand, neither are the effects of population dynamics on these hypotheses.

The consideration of demographic variables merely as data can be regarded as acceptable when short term plans, and perhaps, medium term plans are prepared but even in these cases it is necessary to have a more long term view of the different options or alternatives for development and their feasibility and, within this perspective, it is important to take into account the influence economic and social changes might have upon those variables.

The relatively recent concern for long term prospects and for the social aspects of planning have stimulated in the world interest in quantitative simulation models which include the fundamental relationships between economic, labour, educational and demographic systems. ECLA and CELADE work programmes in the last years envisage this line of research to which significant contributions have already been made.^{14/}

4. The state of population policies and activities oriented to serve in their formulation

The response of numerous governments of the region to the Third Inquiry carried out by the United Nations on demographic policies within the development context in 1976^{15/} in addition to the reports submitted by the national representatives to the First Technical Exchange Meeting of Governmental Entities in Charge of Population Policies in Latin America convened by CELADE in San Jose, Costa Rica, in November 1976, portray quite approximately the situation in demographic policy matters.

With the exception of Argentina and Uruguay which have low population growth most of the remaining countries of the region estimate that their fertility level and natural growth rates are too high. However, approximately only one half of these countries declare having adopted a policy to affect these variables. In most of the cases where a policy to influence reproductive behaviour has been

^{14/} See documents E/CEPAL/1030, pages 34-36 and E/CEPAL/1035, chapter III, paragraphs 1, 5 and 6.

^{15/} CELADE, Notes on Population Policies in Latin America, document submitted to the ACC Sub-Committee on Population, Twelfth Session, New York, September 1976.

adopted, though, this has been restricted to the development of family planning activities, supplemented in some instances with education on sex, family and population. It should be noted, however, that almost in all countries private family planning programmes had been initiated during the second half of the 60's, and that in 1976 all Latin American countries, with the sole exception of Uruguay and Argentina, were implementing (or about to implement, as in Peru) public family planning programmes, usually as components of mother and child health services. In this connection, mention should be made of the fact that in most cases, family planning activities had fundamentally medical-social objectives, such as the fight against abortion and maternal morbi-mortality and/or an ethical-juridical character such as facilitating to parents the exercise of their right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.^{16/} These activities had as a main explicit objective to contribute to a reduction in fertility only in a very few cases.

Regarding spatial dynamics of the population, practically all the countries declared, in the above mentioned survey, that their present spatial distribution patterns were unsatisfactory. Their main concern is the rapid and highly concentrated urbanization, as well as, in many cases, the opposite phenomenon, i.e., low density and disperse population settlement patterns in some rural areas.

Many of the countries of the region have announced in their development plans, policies aimed at attaining a more balanced population distribution in their territory. The main objectives proposed have been the partial reorientation of migratory movements towards medium size cities, the retention of rural population, to populate underpopulated areas through settlement programmes and the grouping of disperse rural population. These objectives have been, in general, associated to regional development policies. However, the available information shows that either these policies have been only partially or locally applied or, being very recent, their results are still unknown. The migration of nationals is a serious concern in many countries, in particular in those where this process has become chronic and quantitatively important. There is general concern specifically in relation to migration of professionals and skilled workers. The Third United Nations Inquiry shows, however, that very

^{16/} World Population Plan of Action, Third World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1974, paragraph 14, item f.

few countries have adopted a policy in this field and in those who have, this has been limited to custom exemptions for personnel which return to their country of origin.

The Second Latin American Meeting on Population "emphasized the desirability of moving on from declarations of principle to their effective implementation ...". With this purpose, the Meeting recommended that the countries of the region which had not yet done so should explore the possibility of setting up high-level councils, commissions or other equivalent units, able to formulate comprehensive population policies and to ensure their timely implementation by the competent bodies, evaluating them periodically.^{17/}

At the time of the Meeting, some countries had already underway or at least formally constituted bodies of this nature. After the Meeting, no similar bodies have been established in other countries although in some cases responsibilities in this connection have been entrusted directly to planning offices. In any case, few countries approach the model proposed at the Mexico Meeting in terms of institutional location, coverage and functions.

It may thus be concluded that "moving on from declarations of principle to their effective implementation", as recommended at the Mexico Meeting, has been in many cases an extremely complex task requiring, among other things, the accumulation and constant exchange of experience as well as the optimum use of technical assistance resources available in this field.

The progressive study of economic-social factors determining or conditioning demographic behaviour in the Latin American countries, undertaken by CELADE during the 1960 decade and first half of the present decade, set the necessary bases to tackle the population policy problem.

By means of research, internal discussion and active participation in successive international forums, CELADE has contributed towards a new concept in population policy which emerged at the World Population Conference in Bucharest

^{17/} Second Latin American Meeting on Population, Report of the Meeting, chapter III, Conclusions and Recommendations, document ST/CEPAL/Conf. 54/L. paragraph 134.

and later on at the Second Latin American Meeting on Population in Mexico.^{18/}

This new concept of population policy by which it is conceived as an integral part of the general economic and social development policy, with a global and multisectoral character and projected at the long and very long term, poses multiple scientific-technical requirements both for its formulation and its evaluation. CELADE has therefore committed itself to the complex task of progressively tackling problems of a theoretical, methodological and technical character posed by the production of inputs for the design and evaluation of demographic policies. Thus, diagnosis research studies are being undertaken, with an interdisciplinary approach, which attempt to study in a disaggregated manner the demographic transition and spatial distribution processes, identifying key social sectors necessary for the occurrence of these processes, detecting economic and social factors which would be strategic to explain or induce change, and estimating the role played (or to be played) by the State, through its public policies, in the orientation of these processes. In carrying out these studies, countries of the region were selected markedly differentiated in political systems and development strategies which have oriented the action of the State, in order to estimate the differential impacts which different development modes might have upon the demographic dynamics.^{19/}

On the other hand, CELADE has also attempted to advance in the study of policy instruments which have been applied in different contexts to affect demographic behaviour, in order to systematically gain knowledge which might be

18/ Among CELADE contributions, mention should be made of:

- Miró, Carmen, Políticas de Población: ¿Qué?, ¿para qué?, ¿cómo?, paper submitted to the Latin American Regional Population Conference, Session 6, Mexico, August 1970.
- CELADE, Population Policy and the Family. The Latin American Case, World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1974, Background Paper E/Conf.60/CBP/9. (This document had been previously submitted by CELADE to the Latin American Preparatory Meeting for the World Population Conference, San Jose, Costa Rica, April 1974).
- CELADE, Implicaciones para América Latina del Plan de Acción Mundial sobre Población, Second Latin American Meeting on Population, Mexico, March 1975, paper by the Secretariat, ST/CEPAL/Conf.54/L.4.
- CELADE, Políticas de Población: Notas sobre algunos Problemas para su Formulación, First Technical Exchange Meeting of Governmental Entities in Charge of Population Policies in Latin America, San Jose, Costa Rica, November 1976, document by the Secretariat (G-1).

19/ See Informe de Actividades del Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía. Project on Development Strategies and Population Policies in Latin America, document DA/9, March 1977, pages 18 and 19.

used in technical assistance for the design of population policies.^{20/}

Different studies and investigations have also been carried out which enable to advance in the preparation of instruments making the execution of prospective analysis and ex-ante evaluation of policies possible.^{21/} Progress has also been made in the study and application of methods for the evaluation of the demographic effects of some specific policy instruments, such as family planning programmes.

In connection with technical assistance in this matter, exchange of experience has been initiated in relation to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of demographic policies through the organization of the First Technical Exchange Meeting of Governmental Entities in charge of Population Policies in Latin America. Government representatives agreed during this Meeting "to request CELADE that, using the experience gained in the field during the last years, transmit it in the manner of technical assistance to the entities in charge of population policies, collaborating both in the design of research studies for the formulation and evaluation of policies as well as in their analysis". They also agreed to request CELADE the promotion, technical support and organization of national, subregional and regional courses for the training of personnel working or collaborating with institutions responsible for the formulation and evaluation of population policies.^{22/}

Mention should finally be made of the increment of social research around the fundamental problem of the relationships between population and development. This research is frequently oriented to the study of the determinants and economic, political, social and cultural consequences of the demographic behaviour of population. These studies intend to investigate, at the macrosocial level and with an interdisciplinary approach, the explanatory value of structural factors and the role of the State upon the demographic trends and patterns of the countries of the region. With this approach, emphasis has been placed on the analysis of the productive organization, income distribution, employment, social stratification, migratory movements and the quality of human settlements.

^{20/} See Ibidem, Policies of geographic redistribution of population, page 13.

^{21/} Ibidem, Demographic simulation models, page 13, and Growth and Transfer of Labour Force from the Country to the City, page 15.

^{22/} First Technical Exchange Meeting of Governmental Entities in charge of Population Policies in Latin America, San Jose, Costa Rica, November 1976, Report of the Meeting, III. Conclusions and General Recommendations made by Government Representatives.

CELADE's interest in promoting the development of this line of research which is expected to contribute in a significant manner to the difficult task of formulating population policies, has led the Centre to participate actively in the establishment of the Programme of Social Research on Population Problems relevant to Population Policies in Latin America (PISPAL), which embraces a good number of national social research centres whose programme of activities is coordinated by a Central Unit which functions within CELADE.

5. Towards a regional cooperation strategy

To the extent that growth, geographic distribution and demographic and social characteristics of population are not in harmony with development goals or constitute an obstacle in some of its stages, a critical situation arises in the population-development problem. To contribute to bring demographic trends and economic and social development trends into harmony, should therefore constitute the explicit objective of concerted regional action in this field.

Since this task is a government responsibility within the frame of regional and international cooperation and solidarity given the global character of problems, it seems logical that activities in population and allied matters be organized around two directive axes, namely, policies and planning.

From this perspective, basic data, research, transfer of knowledge and technology, diffusion of information and other inputs, will be explicitly oriented, and polarized if possible, to the above mentioned axes in order to serve the concrete, theoretical and operational, requirements of policy design and action programmes as well as of the planning process at the governmental level.

Demographic variables are interrelated in a multiple and complex manner with economic, technological, political, social and cultural dimensions of development. The first step in tackling the population-development problem is to identify areas presenting critical problems and areas of governmental action. These are precisely those strategic areas of development in which demographic variables play a vital role and to which governments and international organizations have devoted preferential attention. Among these, particular mention should be made of problems related to employment and income distribution, regional development, habitat and quality of urban and rural environment, basic social services (health, education, social security), food and natural resources.

On the other hand, considering the internal structural diversity of each national society, reflected in important socio-economic and demographic behaviour differences, attention should focus on population groups defined by ecological and social criteria, which are considered as strategic from the point of view of policy and planning. In this sense, mention should be made of marginal populations in metropolitan areas, disperse rural population, population in emerging cities with an explosive demographic growth, extreme poverty groups and labour force in the informal urban market.

The critical problem areas and the strategic group areas mentioned above can rapidly be identified among the subjects which have received particular attention in inter-governmental and ECLA meetings held during the last years as well as in the Executive Secretariat's work programmes.^{23/}

Recent international and regional forums proclaimed that policies and measures aimed at influencing population are an integral part of socio-economic development policies. Therefore, when formulating demographic objectives and goals, they should explicitly be part of both development policies and the corresponding planning process.

In order that this task may be put into practice with possibility of success, certain conditions or requirements should be previously met or at least be simultaneously accomplished. In the first place, the existence of coherent development and planning policies, with clearly defined economic and social objectives and goals, and of long term strategies which might serve as a frame of reference for population policies and programmes. Secondly, that a sufficient level of awareness and certain national consensus be attained on the importance of biologic-demographic, ecological-demographic and socio-demographic aspects in the emerging, magnitude, and solution of economic, social and environmental development problems. In the third place, to create or adapt institutional mechanisms, provide specialized training to national personnel, scientists, technicians and administrators, as well as to count on the technology and knowledge which are necessary to handle and respond to those development problems in which population trends and characteristics play an important role.

23/ Conclusions and Recommendations of CEPAL Meetings held in the period 1975-1977, E/CEPAL/1031, March 1977.

Draft Annual Report, E/CEPAL/1030, March 1977.

Programme of Work of the Commission 1977-1979, E/CEPAL/1032, March 1977.

The World Population Plan of Action (Bucharest, 1974), after recognizing that it is the responsibility of each government to decide on its own policies and formulate its own action programmes to face the population and the economic and social progress problem (paragraph 97), assigns to international cooperation a supporting role in the attainment of the objectives contained in the Plan, such as ... the execution of comparative research in population, resources and consumption matters, and promotion of exchange of information and experience among countries in demographic and consumption policy matters (paragraph 100). It also envisages the participation of international and regional organizations in research and training programmes, according to the priorities established by the countries (paragraphs 82, 87 and 103). In accordance with the World Population Plan of Action and the positions held by the governments at the Latin American Preparatory Meeting for the World Population Conference (San Jose, 1974), international organizations should be able to expand their action in the fields of research, technical assistance and orientation and evaluation activities and, more concretely, United Nations organizations operating in the region should coordinate and concentrate their action in order to collaborate actively with the countries in the training of personnel, data collection and the necessary research for the formulation of policies and planning (IV-28).

In this connection, special mention should be made of the fact that ECLA, ILPES and CELADE, because of the very nature of their functions and work programmes and considering that they concentrate resources generally scarce in the region, are in a good position to assist the countries in matters of statistical information, studies, training, technology, direct technical assistance and, at a different hierarchical level, with thought, results of experience, background information and alternative approaches and solutions useful for the elaboration of population policies and programmes and their implementation.

The Regional Population Programme constitutes the basic instrument by means of which ECLA, through CELADE, develops its action in the specific field of population. The draft Programme for 1977-1978 submitted to the Commission at its XVII Session, is based on the general orientations of the World Population Plan of Action, the recommendations of the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, the corresponding resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, as well as on the recommendations, mandates and programmes approved by the Commission. In summary, the Regional Population Programme is oriented towards the

creation of capacities, knowledge and inputs which are necessary for the formulation of population policies and development plans, and to provide direct technical assistance to the countries in the accomplishment of these objectives. The Programme is organized along working lines embracing specific activities through which functions are accomplished which are essential for the Programme's objectives.^{24/}

The feasibility and efficacy of the task in population undertaken by the Commissions's technical bodies depend, in the last instance, on the level of development and modes of regional cooperation in this field. Some ideas can be advanced as to principles and elements to define the terms of this cooperation. In the first place, the need should be stressed of a more ample and direct participation of governments in the orientation and assignment of priorities in action programmes of regional organizations, establishing for this purpose the appropriate advisory mechanisms in the Commission. This participation would be conveniently supplemented with technical meetings on matters of priority interest for the governments, aimed at examining the defining problems, propose theoretical and methodological approaches for their study as well as alternative solutions, and at planning and coordinating activities.

A more frequent and direct participation of the countries in regional technical meetings and organizations in the field of population should be in harmony with governmental action regarding support and strengthening of national entities and programmes in charge of producing statistical information, the training of personnel, preparation of studies and execution of research and, in general, activities which result in inputs useful for governmental plans and actions.

The technical and financial assistance rendered by the international organizations is a partial and transitory substitute to national resources which should be used to establish and put in operation a set of programmes, projects and basic activities in the population field. However, while the countries of the region create the institutional conditions, have at their disposal technical resources and commit the necessary funds, international assistance will continue accomplishing a qualitatively important function. Prospects for the following years show indeed that resources devoted to this assistance should be increased if an adequate response is to be given to new and greater demands

^{24/} ECLA, Regional Population Programme, 1977-1978 and Projections for 1979-1980
E/CEPAL/1036, March 1977.

arising in different spheres and levels of public administration. On the other hand, the growing expectations in this field are not accidental or spontaneous but are rather the result of decisions taken by the countries in international and regional advisory bodies, in conferences and in technical meetings, on most of the aspects and problems of economic and social development and, in particular, in those instances where population was the central subject. The action of the corresponding technical bodies, the implementation of recommendations, mandates and programmes adopted through the above intergovernmental mechanisms have also played a significant role in the growing expectations in the population field.

At the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, the Latin American countries established their positions of principle regarding the relationships between population and development and outlined and coordinated a set of actions in the specific population field within the frame of the proposals contained in the World Population Plan of Action. The Meeting formulated, in a precise and explicit manner, a series of proposals and recommendations on a great number of subjects of priority interest. In particular, mention should be made of those referring to the creation and bases for an institutional instrument for population policies, and those related to requirements in statistical information, research and training of personnel as well as measures and means to meet these requirements. On the other hand, recommendations are made on the minimum goals of policies related to health, demographic growth, population redistribution, human settlements, rural and urban development, and international migration, among other subjects whose adoption by the countries will represent a considerable effort aimed to meet information, research and planning demands which are implicit in the formulation and execution of such policies and programmes.

Finally, when examining ECLA and CELADE's field of action, their responsibility and capacity are acknowledged, in connection with the execution of studies, particularly on: urbanization, metropolization and geographic dispersion; fertility and mortality; international migration; integration of population policies to regional development strategies and policies. Likewise, teaching and training of analysts, planners and other professionals engaged in specific population tasks, by means of high level programmes, as well as direct technical assistance to national institutions, in particular to those integrated to planning systems with the purpose, inter alia, to undertake studies of diagnosis, develop analyses and planning models which include demographic variables, design of policy

instruments, and render support to demographic data collection, elaboration and analysis tasks.

The Regional Population Programme approved by the Commission at its XVI Session already follows the basic lines of the action programme launched at the Second Latin American Meeting on Population. Given the vastness and complexity of this action programme, and keeping in mind the priority needs of the different countries and the volume of available resources, the action of regional technical bodies of ECLA's system should necessarily be selective and concentrated as far as the nature of objectives is concerned and, in its execution, highly coordinated. The acceptance of these proposals leads to the examination of two problems which seem to be of vital importance for future work in the population field, namely:

- Definition of priority areas of action, taking the needs and concrete demands of the countries into account and the efficiency, both of regional programmes and of direct technical assistance, in order to tackle them successfully.
- Coordination of activities in population and related problems, through: formalization of joint programmes and working groups at the inter-departmental and/or inter-institutional level; integration of the population subject into training programmes for economists and planners; and regular participation of population specialists in technical assistance missions for projects on development, planning, habitat, migration, human resources, statistical systems and other matters in which the population subject is a basic component.