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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF THE STATISTICAL
CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC) 2007-2009***

* Report prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

A. INTRODUCTION

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

At its fourth meeting, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC adopted the strategic plan 2005-2015, which defines the mission, vision, strategic goals, specific goals and principal lines of action on which the Conference should focus its work during the period ending in 2015.¹

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

At its fourth meeting, the Conference approved the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2007-2009, and the Executive Committee, as mandated by the Conference, discussed and approved the final version of that programme at its seventh meeting.²

The present document offers a report on the progress of the activities planned in the biennial programme 2007-2009, for the period since the fourth meeting of the Conference (July 2007), organized according to each of the four strategic goals. Activities of the working groups are presented in a summarized form here, since these are detailed in their respective activities reports.

B. PROGRESS REPORT

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

Working Group on Institution-building. This working group acts as the framework for the implementation of the project for the integration and harmonization of social statistics (INAES), corresponding to the Regional Public Goods Program of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the overall goal of which is to help improve levels of harmonization of measurement instruments and

¹ See ECLAC, Strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2715(CEA.4/3)), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

² ECLAC, Biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, 2007-2009 (LC/L.2814/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

methodologies used to produce statistical data on social issues. The INAES project has continued to be implemented according to the planned programme.³ The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico has been working since 2005 on an inventory of International Statistical and Geographical Standards, and has requested the support of IDB in order to create a similar inventory for the region based on the Mexican experience.⁴ This inventory will provide basic information for each standard: its goal, the international organization that recommends it, and version and description of the standard, which will facilitate consultation of and access to information sources or the original documents. Conceptual maps will be developed to show how the standards relate to each other from the perspectives of different international agencies.

Strengthening of national statistical offices for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. In coordination with the Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, ECLAC organized two events to strengthen the role of national statistical offices in monitoring the Goals, mainly as regards the implementation of the strategy to reconcile data from national databases with those of international agencies. These were the regional seminar entitled “Statistical and institutional challenges for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean” (Bogota, 27 and 28 November 2007) and the regional seminar “Towards a regional statistical reconciliation strategy for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals in the Latin American and Caribbean countries” (Santo Domingo, 20 and 21 October 2008).

Enhanced credibility of the national statistical offices. At its fourth meeting, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC welcomed the initiative by a number of countries to take action in the region to promote awareness and discussion on adaptation of the Code of Practice on European Statistics, bearing in mind the situation in each country, and requested the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) and ECLAC to prepare a programme of action to implement this initiative.⁵ The aim of this initiative is to establish guidelines for good statistical practices deemed appropriate for the region and to promote their adoption, particularly at the institutional and organizational level of national statistical offices, taking into account the specific situation of each country,⁶ under the principles of professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, impartiality and objectivity.⁷ To date, the first two activities envisaged have been implemented: the establishment of a working group formed by Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, EUROSTAT and ECLAC, and a study of the European questionnaire and a version of this adapted to the circumstances of the region’s countries. The third activity, now under way, is the implementation of the self-administered pilot phase of the questionnaire in eight countries of the region. ECLAC, together with EUROSTAT, will present a preliminary report on the survey findings to the eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

³ See Report on the implementation of the Project on Integration and Harmonization of Instruments for Social Statistics (INAES) (LC/L.2945(CE.8/15)).

⁴ See Activities report of the working group on institution-building (LC/L.2944(CE.8/14)).

⁵ See the Report of the Fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (LC/L.2795), Santiago, Chile, 8 October 2007.

⁶ Principles 1 to 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice. See the “Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice”. Document prepared for the seminar on Strengthening National Statistical Offices: credibility and autonomy (DDR/8), 12 July 2007.

⁷ See Report of the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (LC/L.2870), 28 February 2008.

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

Working Group on Human Resource Education and Training. One of the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC was the creation of a knowledge transfer network, with a mandate to develop a sustainable training programme at the international level. This training programme was to be developed by consensus, be consistent with the real training needs of the region's statisticians, and combine the efforts and activities of the different training centres located in national statistical offices. At its seventh meeting, the Executive Committee took note of and approved the 2008-2009 training programme developed by the network.⁸ A number of the courses included in the programme have now taken place, funded with a contribution from the International and Ibero-American Foundation of Public Administration and Policies (FIIAPP). Additionally, the council of the knowledge transfer network, with the support of the Chair and the Secretariat, have taken steps to secure funding to implement the network's programme, and a project was presented to the World Bank with a view to financing the basic staff unit of the network to make it operational.⁹

Training in new statistical methodologies. As part of the review of the Commission's method for measuring poverty, a training course is planned for 2009 on the new methodology for poverty measurement. With funding from the European Union's EUROsociAL Programme, ECLAC carried out a project on the system of indicators to monitor and assess the degree of social cohesion, which culminated in the publication of the book *A system of indicators for monitoring social cohesion in Latin America*, in December 2007.¹⁰ It is planned to continue this work through the project on measuring social cohesion in Latin America, which includes the organization of seminars to achieve a degree of convergence on a basic set of social cohesion indicators and the provision of technical assistance in an effort to close the corresponding information gaps.

Organization of horizontal cooperation for training. A range of horizontal cooperation activities have been used for the creation of business directories and the use of mobile data capture devices for purposes such as census-taking and surveys. However, the Executive Committee still has to establish and implement a work procedure that can make the most of the horizontal cooperation mechanism for training and capacity-building in the network of experts.

Training in demography. In 2007, ECLAC signed a mutual collaboration agreement with the Externado University in Colombia in order to expand and deepen research and the teaching of demography and population studies dealing with economic and social realities at the national and regional levels. Two Master's degree theses in population studies have been supervised under this arrangement. Agreements have also been signed with the University of Cordoba (Argentina). Furthermore, the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, has taken part in a module on population and development in the demographic analysis course run by the National Statistical Office of the Dominican Republic, and in the postgraduate migration module on population and local development organized by the interdisciplinary programme on population and sustainable local development (PYDLOS) at the University of Cuenca in Ecuador. Also as part of the effort to offer a

⁸ See the draft programme of work of the Knowledge Transfer Network for statistical training in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008-2009 (LC/L.2815), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

⁹ See Report on the activities of the knowledge transfer network (LC/L.2934(CE.8/4)).

¹⁰ Pablo Villatoro and Juan Carlos Feres, *A system of indicators for monitoring social cohesion in Latin America* (LC/G.2362/E), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), December 2007.

training strategy for demography, population and development in the region, CELADE took part in a meeting convened by the Andean Institute of Population Studies (IAEP), Externado University of Colombia and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), held in Bogota in July 2008, at which it presented guidelines for a demographic and population training strategy applied to countries in the Andean region. A similar presentation was given in Cordoba (Argentina) at the meeting of the Latin American Population Association (ALAP) (24 to 26 September 2008). During the second half of 2008, CELADE will conduct a series of internal conferences on demography and population for training research assistants. These will also serve as an exercise in preparation for the Intensive Regional Course on Demographic Analysis for Development (CRIADD), which has been programmed for the second quarter of 2009. Discussions are under way with IDB with a view to securing the necessary funding for this course.

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

1. Millennium Development Goals

Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As approved at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the programme of the Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals was revised in order to focus its activities, during the first stage, on analysing discrepancies between the data produced by countries and those used by international agencies in monitoring the Goals.¹¹ With financial support from the IDB Regional Public Goods Program, ECLAC has drawn up a regional statistical reconciliation strategy in order to provide common methodological guidelines for the production of statistics related to the Millennium Development Goals, create opportunities for institutional coordination at different levels, and support and promote technical capacities to properly follow up and monitor progress towards the Goals. A series of activities have been carried out in order to establish benchmarks and define best practices for statistical production in the region, in terms of both methodology and inter-agency coordination at the national and international levels.¹²

Capacity-building for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and targets and proposal for complementary indicators. ECLAC coordinated the preparation of a new United Nations inter-agency report on progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals published in May 2008, *Millennium Development Goals. Progress towards the right to health in Latin America and the Caribbean*.¹³ ECLAC has also published updated reports on regional progress towards the Goals on environment and education, incorporating new targets and indicators, “El séptimo objetivo del Milenio en América Latina y el Caribe: avances al 2007”,¹⁴ and “Propuesta de ampliación del segundo objetivo de desarrollo del Milenio: un estado de

¹¹ At the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee it was also decided that the project to update the methodology for poverty measurement used in Latin America and the Caribbean would be separated from the tasks of this working group. Hence activities carried out under that project are reported on later in this document.

¹² See Report on the activities of the working group on the monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (LC/L.2940(CE.8/10)).

¹³ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Millennium Development Goals. Progress towards the right to health in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.2364), Santiago, Chile, May 2008.

¹⁴ Rayén Quiroga, “El séptimo objetivo del Milenio en América Latina y el Caribe: avances al 2007”, *Estudios estadísticos y prospectivos series*, No. 57 (LC/L.2782), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.116.

avance,”¹⁵ as well as coordinating the preparation of the inter-agency document *Millennium Development Goals 2006: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*.¹⁶ The regional seminar on Statistical and institutional challenges for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogota, 27 and 28 November 2007) was convened for directors of national statistical offices in the region, those responsible for national reports on the Millennium Development Goals, and representatives of international agencies, in order to create an opportunity for dialogue for all those taking part in statistical production regarding these Goals.

Updating the poverty measurement methodology used in the region. Within the framework of the IDB Regional Public Goods Program, ECLAC is implementing a project to update the methodology used to measure poverty in the region, in collaboration with the countries concerned.¹⁷ To date, project activities have focused on the development of a methodological proposal to measure poverty. The main obstacle to making quicker progress has been the unreliable quality of some of the available data. In order to overcome these obstacles, progress is being made in two areas: the exploration of alternative methodological approaches and incorporation into the analysis of new household budget surveys, which are available in various countries in the region. Once new results are available, the working groups and regional workshops will continued with their planned activities, which are indispensable for advancing towards methodological convergence and comparability of poverty estimates among the region’s countries.

2. Gender statistics

Working Group on Gender Statistics. The Working Group’s programme was presented at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, where it was agreed to approve the proposal, having requested the Working Group to prioritize its activities. In response to that request, the programme was reviewed and priority was given to activities that could produce results by June 2009. This was done in collaboration with the National Women’s Institute (INMUJERES) and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico, (which coordinates the Working Group), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, which acts as secretariat of the Working Group. The reviewed work programme is set out in the respective report on activities of the Working Group, along with the results and outputs that will be presented at the fifth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and the Working Group’s general guidelines for the period 2009-2011.¹⁸

Use of free time and unpaid work. The ninth International Meeting on Gender Statistics. 2010 Census Round (29 and 30 September and 1 October 2008) will be held in Aguascalientes (Mexico), to be followed by an intensive training course on gender statistics held in the same city (2 to 4 October 2008). During the period covered by this report, two international meetings of experts on time-use surveys were held in Mexico City, organized by INEGI, INMUJERES, the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC and UNIFEM.

¹⁵ Pablo Villatoro, “Propuesta de ampliación del segundo objetivo de desarrollo del Milenio: un estado de avance”, *Estudios estadísticos y prospectivos series*, No. 62 (LC/L.2856), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.179.

¹⁶ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Millennium Development Goals 2006: a look at Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.2352-P)*, Santiago, Chile, December 2007.

¹⁷ See Report on the activities of the project for the update of poverty measurement methodology used in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2947(CE.8/17)).

¹⁸ See Report on the activities of the Working Group on Gender Statistics (LC/L.2935(CE.8/5)).

Guide to time-use surveys. With support from the institutions participating in the Working Group on Gender Statistics, INEGI prepared a project on time use and unpaid work (guidelines for harmonizing time-use surveys in Latin America and the Caribbean), the goal of which is to develop a conceptual and methodological framework and a classification of time-use activities, thus allowing data to be compiled with a gender focus and providing a basis for carrying out national data surveys that provide standardized statistics.

Project to eradicate violence against women. The Division of Gender Affairs of ECLAC prepared an interregional project on building up the capacities of countries to eradicate violence against women, entitled “Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women through networking of local knowledge,” funding for which was approved by the United Nations Development Account. The project is to be implemented as soon as possible, under the coordination of ECLAC.

Gender observatory. Significant progress has been made regarding the establishment of a gender observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean, as provided in the 2007-2009 work programme of the Working Group on Gender Statistics. At the forty-first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogota, Colombia, on 24 and 25 April 2008, a proposal for a gender observatory, together with a group of indicators to monitor key themes in the regional gender programme, were approved by the countries, and a request was made to ECLAC to convene two technical meetings to discuss the proposed indicators for Latin America and for the Caribbean, analysis of which, by definition, is the responsibility of the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

3. Preparation and conduct of the 2010 round of population censuses

Working group on censuses. The working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and CELADE, in its capacity as technical secretariat, conducted a survey of national statistical offices in order to ascertain progress regarding the 2010 census round, identify the main changes being proposed and learn about the countries’ needs and priorities in terms of national capacity-building for census proceedings. The survey findings (set out in a report),¹⁹ together with ongoing requests for technical assistance, were used to draw up a list of tasks to address and concepts to discuss with a view to defining the working group’s programme and establishing priorities. Thus, three activities were proposed for the fourth quarter of 2008: a seminar-workshop on inclusion of the ethnic perspective in the 2010 census round, a regional workshop on census cartography for the Latin American census round of 2010, and a seminar-workshop on the census round of 2010 and internal and international migration and other forms of spatial mobility. UNFPA and the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC also convened the Workshop on Preparatory Activities, Analysis and Exchange of Experiences for the Successful Implementation of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in Panama City from 17 to 21 September 2007, with the collaboration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations and the Government of Luxembourg.²⁰ The five members of the working group and other countries participating in the workshop

¹⁹ Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, “Censos de población y vivienda. Encuesta sobre estado de avance de los censos de 2010 e identificación de las necesidades nacionales. Informe preliminar de resultados”, July 2008, unpublished.

²⁰ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), rapporteur’s report on the Workshop on Preparatory Activities, Analysis and Exchange of Experiences for the Successful Implementation of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama, 17-21 September 2007.

presented their experiences and proposals regarding the census round of 2010. In its presentation, CELADE shared reflections about the experience gained from the 2000 census round, the use of the REDATAM software (retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer) to analyse and disseminate data from population censuses and to create integrated databases, the potential of censuses to analyse housing, households and families, specific population groups and issues such as migration.

ECLAC/UNFPA Regional programme on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008-2011. UNFPA has been asked to consider the ECLAC/UNFPA Regional programme on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008-2011, the purpose of which is to build the region's capacity to compile and systematize the information needed to represent its socio-demographic traits and its specific subregional, national and subnational characteristics, and to develop technically sound analyses that can serve for the development, dissemination and promotion of policies. All of this shows up the region's position as regards access to and use of census microdata and other sources of socio-demographic information. The project will include considerable support for two substantive activities: the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) + 15 and the preparation, conduct, dissemination and use of data from the 2010 census round, promoting the formation of regional and subregional forums and networks to share experiences and take collective decisions. Specifically regarding the 2010 census round, the project will seek to improve inclusion of emerging issues (such as international migration, internal mobility, ethnic identification and mortality, among others) and promote high-level technical efforts to develop innovative methodologies for the diffusion and use of these censuses, through the democratization of information and preparation of technical staff and non-specialized users.

Technical assistance for processing and management of census data. During the reporting period, CELADE continued to provide assistance to the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the evaluation, management and use of census information. The final evaluation of the database of the census taken in El Salvador in 2007 was completed. Work was also carried out on the development of procedures to make better use of the migration and daily mobility module and use censuses to explore issues such as residential segregation, housing shortfalls and adolescent fertility, with possibilities of application in the 2010 round of censuses.

Support was provided for designing the programme for making use of censuses in preparation, such as those of Brazil and the Dominican Republic. CELADE also continued to provide technical advice to several of the region's countries in the use of the REDATAM software to disseminate and use census data. Thanks to that support, 13 Latin American countries and four Caribbean countries now offer census database processing online, using the REDATAM server.²¹ Two training workshops on REDATAM are planned for 2009 in Chile (one per semester). Work is under way to develop a self-executing version of the tools for indirect mortality estimation (REDATAM+SP EIM), indirect fertility estimation (REDATAM+SP EIF), and indicators of income concentration (REDATAM+SP GiniPlus). In 2007 a new REDATAM+SP module for the calculation of inequality and poverty indicators, such as the Gini, Theil and Atkinson indexes and other indicators, was made available to all users. This module is available in four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. Work is also ongoing on REDATAM applications to make better use of the combination of vital statistics and censuses. In addition, the use of specific census information on ethnic groups was disseminated at technical assistance and training workshops conducted for the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua (URACCAN), the Council for the Development of Ecuadorian Nationalities and Peoples and the National Institute of Statistics of Guatemala.

²¹ See Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "REDATAM informa" [online] <http://www.eclac.org/redatam/default.asp?idioma=IN>.

Use and dissemination of census data. In August 2007 a document prepared by CELADE entitled “Potencialidades y aplicaciones de los datos censales: una contribución a la explotación del Censo de Población y Vivienda de Nicaragua 2005”,²² was published. The specific objective of this document is to offer stakeholders in Nicaraguan society an operative proposal based on the multiple possibilities of broad, intensive use of data, particularly the microdata from this census. This specific purpose is part of a broader objective: the description and analysis of the potential of the census as regards public policy and social research. In the framework of a cooperation agreement between the Pan American Health organization (PAHO) and ECLAC, with the support of UNFPA, censuses and demographic and health surveys are being used to prepare a document on health and ethnic diversity in Latin America, with an emphasis on reproductive health. This study will offer a regional overview of the state of women’s and children’s health, looking at ethnic gaps and geographical inequalities and taking into account the Millennium Development Goals in this area. A first draft of the document should be available in late 2008. At the request of the Ibero-American Youth Organization and with the support of UNFPA, CELADE has begun preparing a document on indigenous and Afrodescendent youth in Latin America, socio-demographic inequities and policy challenges, based on the 2000 census round. This document is expected to be completed in December 2008. In addition, in the framework of a technical cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Health (MINSAL) of Chile and ECLAC, work is under way to prepare a socio-demographic atlas of the indigenous population in the metropolitan region, using data from the last population census. The project includes training workshops for indigenous technical personnel on the REDATAM software and the use of censuses, to be held in 2009. It has also been planned that the October 2008 edition of the *Demographic Observatory*, which is prepared by CELADE, will deal with socio-demographic information on indigenous peoples in Latin America and will carry a variety of basic tabulations and indicators for the countries of the region, mostly obtained from population censuses.

Population projections. Given the importance of different sources of information for the development of population projections, in December 2007 CELADE, in cooperation with PAHO and UNFPA, conducted an expert workshop on the use of vital statistics and their scope and limitations. The purpose of the workshop was to learn about recent experiences in the countries of the region, in order to identify and promote the use of vital statistics in the production of population estimates and in the oversight of social programmes, and to develop recommendations to help improve the coverage and quality of those programmes. CELADE has also taken part in the workshops and meetings held by the Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation. In September 2007, the Interagency Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities set up a working group on population estimates, coordinated by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, with CELADE acting as focal point. One outcome of this work was the preparation of a report on problems and practices in the use of population estimates by international organizations.²³ As agreed by the working group, CELADE is updating national population estimates and projections for the 20 Latin American countries.

System of indicators for indigenous populations and peoples. Updating of the system of indicators for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population

²² Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, “Potencialidades y aplicaciones de los datos censales: una contribución a la explotación del Censo de Población y Vivienda de Nicaragua 2005”, *Manuales series*, No. 56 (LC/L.2786-P), Santiago, Chile, August 2007. United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G 119.

²³ United Nations, *Report on Issues and Practices in the Use of Population Estimates by International Organizations* (UN/POP/TTPE/2008/1), New York, 15 August 2008.

and Development (1996), which the Latin American countries signed to agree upon specific objectives for the region. The system contains comparable information for the Latin American and Caribbean countries in three priority areas: population and public policies, gender equity and health and reproductive rights. The work included the incorporation of revised and updated population estimates, the inclusion of new Caribbean countries that had information available, and the addition of new data from demography and health surveys, among others. The system's support documents and technical notes were also revised. The updated version is available on the CELADE website and can be downloaded or used for online processing.²⁴

Emerging issues in census questionnaires. In relation to the 2010 census round and emerging issues, a conceptual and methodological document²⁵ on the inclusion of ethnic identity was prepared on the basis of the experience of the 2000 census round. This document will contribute to the discussions at the meeting to be held in late November 2008 with a view to improving the identification of indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples in the 2010 census round. This meeting is being organized by CELADE, together with UNICEF, UNFPA, the Statistical Conference of the Americas census group, PAHO and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. The participants at the meeting will include representatives of national statistical institutes, indigenous and Afrodescendent organizations, experts in ethnic affairs and other relevant actors; other United Nations agencies have also expressed an interest in participating in this initiative.

System of indicators to follow up the main conferences and summits. CELADE finished developing the Regional System of Indicators on Ageing (SISE), which contains comparable information for 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries. It allows the processing of information from two census periods (1990 and 2000), which can be disaggregated by sex, age group and area of residence. The matrix of indicators holds data on population, the socio-demographic and economic traits of older persons and their households, and on housing and utilities to which they have access. The system was presented at the Second Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean: towards a society for all ages and rights-based social protection, held in December 2007, in Brasilia, and is available as a software that can be accessed online.²⁶ In the near future SISE will be updated with the incorporation of a module on population estimates, and projections and training activities will be held on the use of the system and data interpretation.

4. Implementation of the 1993 system of national accounts (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region and development of economic statistics

Working Group on National Accounts. One of this group's main activities has been the analysis of the situation in the countries of the region with respect to the adoption of 1993 SNA. With a view to this, given the uneven situation in the countries and the link between improvement of the accounts system and improvement of basic statistics, it was agreed to conduct a survey to identify the main lacks in statistical systems. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) collaborated with the work and a consultant from that organization conducted a diagnosis of the situation in the countries based on

²⁴ Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "Indigenous and Afrodescendant Peoples" [online] <http://www.eclac.cl/celade/indigenas>.

²⁵ Fabiana Del Popolo, "Los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes en las fuentes de datos: experiencias en América Latina", *project documents*, No. 197 (LC/W.197), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), June 2008.

²⁶ Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, "Ageing and Development" [online] <http://www.cepal.org/celade/envejecimiento>.

their responses to the survey.²⁷ The working group will present proposals to the Executive Committee, based on its diagnosis of basic statistical needs for building national accounts and the programme of work on industrial statistics for Latin America.²⁸

Regional plan for the implementation of 2008 SNA. One of the main challenges facing the region's countries is the implementation of 1993 SNA, as well as the incorporation of the recommendations arising from the current review process (2008 SNA). The Luxembourg Recommendations, formulated by the Statistics Division of the United Nations and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), were presented at the International conference on international outreach and coordination in national accounts for sustainable growth and development, held from 6 to 8 May 2008. The regional commissions can play a fundamental role in coordinating the efforts of international agencies, subregional agencies, donors and national institutions responsible for the preparation of the national accounts in the countries of the region to implement the methodological rules contained in the new manual. The Luxembourg Recommendations have crystallized into a draft regional plan for the implementation of 2008 SNA in the Latin American and Caribbean countries, which will be put to the consideration of the eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.²⁹

Methodological guide to the modernization of national accounts. In response to the demand from countries of the region, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC published a methodological guide for the modernization of national accounts in Latin America.³⁰ Based on a reflection on recent experiences and international best practices, the guide makes a set of recommendations to make the process of modernizing national accounting in the countries of the region more efficient.

Expert seminars. Since June 2007, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC has organized two regional seminars on national accounts, in Santiago, in October 2007 and October 2008. The first seminar served to discuss substantive aspects of key issues arising in the review of the system of national accounts, such as the treatment of goods for processing, armament as part of capital formation and pension fund systems, among others, which have direct implications for national accounting in the countries of the region. In addition, the programme of the regional seminar on national accounts to be held on 16 and 17 October 2008 will deal with the technical analysis of the proposed regional plan for the implementation of 2008 SNA.³¹ In this same line of work, in July 2008 ECLAC organized, together with the Central Bank of Chile, a workshop on the application of statistical methods to national accounts, at which practices in the analysis and management of time series were presented. Participating in the workshop were representatives of several national and international agencies that produce this type of information. The presentations were given by international experts in research and development of methodologies and techniques for time series analysis.³²

²⁷ See Contribution to the interpretation of the survey conducted in Rio de Janeiro by the Working Group on National Accounts of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (CE.8/DDR/1).

²⁸ See Report on the activities of the working group on national accounts (LC/L.2941(CE.8/11)).

²⁹ See *Proposed regional plan for the implementation of the Luxembourg Recommendations* (LC/L.2942(CE.8/12)).

³⁰ Michel Sérurier, "Las cuentas nacionales: lineamientos conceptuales, metodológicos y prácticos", *Manuales series*, No. 54 (LC/L.2765-P/E), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.101.

³¹ See report on the Latin American seminar on national accounts [online] http://www.eclac.cl/deype/noticias/noticias/6/30146/2007_10_SemCN_informe.pdf.

³² See programme of the workshop on application of statistical methods to national accounts [online] <http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-in/getprod.asp?xml=/deype/noticias/noticias/5/33615/P33615.xml&xsl=/deype/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/deype/tpl/top-bottom.xsl>.

Satellite accounts. As regards satellite accounts, and in response to requests from different sectors and from a wide range of users of satellite accounts in national accounting, a number of meetings and regional seminars have been held, including the ninth Ibero-American meeting on measurement and analysis of tourism.³³ At these meetings, which are organized jointly by ECLAC and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Institute of Tourism Studies of Spain, delegates analyse the progress of statistics, satellite accounts and derived economic indicators in the countries of the region.³⁴ In the area of health, ECLAC hosted two technical consultations on the harmonization of statistics on public and private health financing and expenditure. A subregional training workshop was also organized on the use of economic statistics in the health sector for public policy decision-making, in December 2007. These meetings were organized jointly with PAHO.³⁵

Economic indicators on tourism. Together with UNWTO, ECLAC has continued to develop a scheme of economic indicators for tourism as a tool for macroeconomic analysis in this sector, not only for the countries of the region but at the global level, and as an instrument to complement the tourism satellite account. This initiative and the results for the Latin American and Caribbean countries are posted on the Commission's website.³⁶

Classifiers. In the sphere of economic and social classifiers, ECLAC participated in the organization of the United Nations Workshop on International Economic and Social Classifications, which was held in Panama City from 4 to 8 June 2007. The purpose of the workshop was to analyse current revisions of economic and social classifications and the representatives reviewed the implementation and use of national classifications of activities and products and how they related to the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CCP).³⁷ Since national technical personnel also need detailed tables of correspondence in order to prepare the national accounts, the ECLAC Statistics and Economic Projections Division is updating the *Cuaderno estadístico* on "Clasificaciones estadísticas internacionales incorporadas en el banco de datos del comercio exterior de América Latina y el Caribe de la CEPAL (Revision 3)", which incorporates the fourth amendment to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS), and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) Rev. 4. ECLAC will continue to provide support for the countries of the region in the process of adopting and adapting these key statistical instruments, through the dissemination of methodological documents and the organization of workshops and expert meetings, in order to learn about and discuss the use of the latest advances in this area.

5. Statistics on information and communications technologies (ICT)

Working group on information and communications technologies. Through the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC), this working group contributed to the organization of the fourth workshop on information society measurement in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in February 2008 in San Salvador. At this fourth workshop, the group

³³ On gender and health satellite accounts, see later in this document.

³⁴ See documentation of Ibero-American meeting on tourism measurement and analysis [online] <http://www.eclac.cl/id.asp?ID=32590>.

³⁵ See documents of the consultation and workshop [online] http://163.247.51.38/desarrollo/css/csspublica/taller_consulta_cepal.htm y http://163.247.51.38/desarrollo/css/csspublica/taller_consulta_cepal2.htm.

³⁶ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Indicadores económicos del turismo", *Cuadernos estadísticos*, No. 34 (LC/G.2329-P), Santiago, Chile. United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.83.

³⁷ See Statistics Division of the United Nations [online] <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/intercop/training/default.asp>.

presented a report on its activities as well as a document containing a proposed set of indicators of ICT use in education, which was prepared by the national statistical office of the Dominican Republic. At the workshop four subgroups were created to work on and follow up the matter of harmonized measurement in surveys of households and individuals, business, education and government. Working simultaneously, these subgroups will review methodological aspects of surveys, conduct interviews and produce the indicators agreed, as well as developing the new indicators required to continually monitor all the dimensions of the digital divide and economic and social progress achieved through ICTs. The subgroups will submit a document with the results of their agreements and discussions at the fifth workshop on information society measurement in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in March 2009.³⁸

6. Environmental statistics

Creation of the Initiative Group of the Working Group on environmental statistics. The creation of an initiative group was approved at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of ECLAC, which was held in Bogota on 29 and 30 November 2007. The initiative group will set out the terms of reference and the mandate of a future working group on environmental statistics, to be reviewed and approved at the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Thus, the Initiative Group of the Working Group on environmental statistics was created in February 2008, composed of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the secretariat of ECLAC, the United Nations Environment Programme and the following countries: Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico and Panama.³⁹ The initiative group's first activity was a videoconference held on 6 February 2008 to define the agenda of work and the responsibilities of each participant, and it was agreed to prepare terms of reference and a programme of work. ECLAC created a virtual forum to facilitate the participatory work. The initiative group presented draft versions of the terms of reference and the programme of work at an expert meeting on environmental statistics organized by ECLAC and held in Havana, from 19 to 21 May 2008. The experts examined the documents and made recommendations to improve them, after which they were reviewed and approved by the initiative group. This resulted in the preparation of terms of reference indicating the group's mandate, objectives, members and operating modality. The draft plan of work is included as an annex to the terms of reference. One of the main considerations is that the national teams involved in the new initiative group should consist of national statistical offices and ministries or secretariats of the environment or other official departments responsible for the environment, given the issue's cross-cutting nature and the fact that in most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, national statistical offices, together with ministries of the environment, are responsible for compiling and disseminating environmental information, be it statistics, indicators or environmental accounts.

7. Statistics on migration and remittances

Project on migration and trends in remittances in Central America and the Caribbean. This project is being carried out in the framework of the Regional Public Goods Program of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which is in its final phase of implementation. The third and final meeting is programmed for the second week of October 2008, at which the results and experience of the Central America and Caribbean countries will be presented. This meeting will also offer an opportunity for the

³⁸ See Activities report of the initiative Group of the Working Group on Working group on information and communications technologies (LC/L.2943(CE.8/13)).

³⁹ See Activities report of the initiative Group of the Working Group on environmental statistics (LC/L.2948(CE.8/18)).

countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC to join the working group on migration and trends in remittances, in order to define and harmonize a conceptual framework for the study issues involved in preparing a research proposal in this area.⁴⁰

Creation of a working group on migration and trends in remittances. Giving continuity to the IDB Regional Public Goods Program mentioned in the preceding paragraph, at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, held in Santiago from 25 to 27 July 2007, it was agreed to create a working group of migration and trends in remittances in the member countries of the Conference. Honduras was appointed coordinator of the group's activities. In pursuit of the activities entrusted to it, the group prepared a draft plan of work which was approved at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, held in Bogota on 29 and 30 November 2007.

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

Subregional statistical cooperation. In 2002, the Central American and Panamanian statistical offices initiated a process to consolidate a regional agency known as the Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System, which is intended to support a process of strengthening of the statistical systems of each of the member countries in an ordered and systematized manner, leading to the generation of standardized regional statistics in order to carry out comparative analyses of social, economic and political issues in the region. Honduras, which is acting as pro tempore secretariat of the Central American Integration System and of the Statistical Commission from June 2008 to the end of the year, has requested the President of the Republic of Honduras to support the inclusion of the Statistical Commission's official creation on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of ministers for foreign affairs and the meeting of Presidents and Heads of State of the Central American Integration System. Honduras has also formally approached the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration with a request to create the Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System. Also, taking advantage of the fact that the Central American ministers for foreign affairs are meeting with representatives of the European Union to negotiate an association agreement, the pro tempore secretariat has requested, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras, that such an agreement should consider the provision of assistance for setting up the Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System.

Integrated programme of statistical activities. At the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, it was agreed to promote the preparation of an inventory of the statistical activities and projects carried out by international agencies operating in the region. It was proposed to create a systematic record of those activities, which could be turned into an integrated programme of the region's statistical activities, like that of the Conference of European Statisticians.⁴¹ In response to this proposal, it was agreed at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee to create an initiative group, which will present a progress report and a draft programme of work at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.⁴² Thus far, the initiative group has been set up under the coordination of ECLAC, and comprises PAHO, UNESCO and IDB, which has suggested conducting a pilot experience using the

⁴⁰ See Activities report of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances (LC/L.2937(CE.8/7)).

⁴¹ See Database on International Statistical Activities (Integrated Presentation) (DISA/IP) [online] <http://unece.org/stats/ces.html>.

⁴² See Report of the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (LC/L.2870), Santiago, Chile, February 2008.

Conference of European Statisticians as a model.⁴³ On behalf of the initiative group, the secretariat will present a report to the Executive Committee on the progress of this experience.

International Comparison Programme (ICP). ECLAC and Statistics Canada acted as coordinating agencies for the 10 countries of South America and were able to fully incorporate the results of the 2005 census round into the global calculations concluded in February 2008 by the ICP Global Office.⁴⁴ The proposed scheme includes possible implementation of the next phase of ICP in 2011, for which efforts would be needed to extend coverage to more countries of the region, update the calculations of purchasing power parities and have more precise measurements of per capita GDP in order to carry out international comparisons and calculate regional macroeconomic aggregates. If implementation of the next ICP round (2011) is to go ahead, activities for the biennium 2007-2009 must include raising awareness of the need for the programme and seeking financial resources to do so. In order to move ahead with integration between the Central American countries, Panama and the Dominican Republic, ECLAC, together with the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Monetary Council and with the proactive participation of central banks and national statistical institutes of the subregion, is conducting a project to harmonize ICP and estimates of purchasing power parity (PPP). The project's purpose is to combine ICP harmonization efforts with measurements of PPP indices within the universe defined by ICP. The participating countries are Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The expected outcomes include: support for the improvement and convergence of conceptual and methodological aspects of ICP methodologies; methodological studies and technical work aimed at advancing with ICP harmonization in the participating countries; estimation of PPP based on parities in household consumption spending, government consumption spending and investment in machinery and equipment; and horizontal cooperation among national ICP working groups in the participating countries to transfer working methodologies used in their harmonized consumer price and PPP indices, including a tool designed by the international price comparison programme to be used by all the countries participating in ICP.

Business opinion surveys. In the framework of the activities of the statistical component of phase II of the Macroeconomic Dialogue Network project (REDIMA II), which was financed by the European Commission during 2007, ECLAC completed the document "Indicadores líderes compuestos. Resumen de metodologías de referencia para construir un indicador regional en América Latina".⁴⁵ This document discusses the methodology for constructing a combined indicator of economic activity for Latin America based on the results of business opinion surveys conducted in the region. This methodology was used to build a combined indicator for the region, and the implementation and results were published in the document "Un sistema de indicadores líderes compuestos para la región de América Latina".⁴⁶ As part of the technical material prepared for the seventh Seminar on business opinion surveys, organized jointly with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Central Bank of the

⁴³ See Propuesta preliminar para la construcción de una presentación integrada de las actividades estadísticas internacionales en América Latina y el Caribe (LC/L.2950(CE.8/20)).

⁴⁴ See Regional Coordinators for South America, "Final results of the International Comparison Program for South America-June 2007", *project documents*, N° 138 (LC/W.138), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

⁴⁵ Mauricio Gallardo and Michael Pedersen, "Indicadores líderes compuestos. Resumen de metodologías de referencia para construir un indicador regional en América Latina", *Estudios estadísticos y prospectivos series*, No. 49 (LC/L.2707-P), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.55.

⁴⁶ Mauricio Gallardo and Michael Pedersen, "Un sistema de indicadores líderes compuestos para la región de América Latina", *Estudios estadísticos y prospectivos series*, No. 51 (LC/L.2728-P), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). United Nations publication, Sales No. S.07.II.G.66.

Dominican Republic, held in Santo Domingo, on 13 and 14 September 2007, ECLAC prepared the document entitled “Encuestas de opinión empresarial del sector industrial en América Latina”.⁴⁷ The purpose of this document was to evaluate the harmonization of surveys conducted in the region. The main conclusion was that although the harmonization process has been uneven, owing basically to the different objectives pursued by surveys in each country, the degree of harmonization has been satisfactory insofar as it enables comparisons of economic trends in the countries. In 2008, the Commission’s work as regards business opinion surveys has consisted of preparations for the twenty-ninth biennial meeting of the Centre for International Research on Economic Tendency Surveys, which is being held for the first time in Latin America, and whose theme on this occasion is business opinion surveys in Latin America. The meeting will be held at the ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, from 8 to 11 October 2008.

Programme of technological cooperation for census taking. In follow-up to an agreement of the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee Brazil, Colombia and Mexico presented a report on progress made regarding the proposal on technological and methodological cooperation for the free use of electronic devices and software for data capture, in which the countries were urged to continue their efforts to bring this important initiative to fruition. In this framework, in February 2008 Brazil, Colombia and Mexico met with IDB under the auspices of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, to report to IDB on the proposal for technological and methodological cooperation for the free use of electronic devices and software for data capture and to request financial support to implement the proposal. The IDB authorities gave a positive response and it was agreed to hold an international seminar on the subject to exchange opinions and set out a programme of work. Accordingly, an international seminar was held on technology for censuses: towards the optimization of technology for compiling and processing statistical data, in Washington, D.C., on 14 and 15 July 2008.⁴⁸ At the end of the meeting in Washington, D.C. a number of agreements were reached to analyse legal, technological, informatic and financial aspects of the proposal in greater depth.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ A. Schuschny, J. Durán and C. de Miguel, “Encuestas de opinión empresarial del sector industrial en América Latina”, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), unpublished.

⁴⁸ See seminar programme [online] <http://www.iadb.org/res/events/semagenda/smengagenda194.pdf>.

⁴⁹ See Report on technological and methodological cooperation for the free use of electronic devices and data capture software (LC/L.2946(CE.8/16)).