



SIXTY YEARS WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the
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**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON NATIONAL ACCOUNTS ***

* This report was prepared by the Working Group on National Accounts, coordinated by Brazil.

2008-570

A. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Working Group on National Accounts is to contribute to the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA) in the region and to promote greater integration between the production of basic economic statistics and national accounts.

B. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

The first activity was the assessment of the current status of basic statistics in the region with a view to the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) adopting a working strategy to strengthen the capacity of national statistics offices.

A seminar on the system of national accounts in Latin America and the Caribbean was organized by the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 5 and 6 June 2007.

The status report on the activities carried out by the Working Group on National Accounts, which had been prepared by IBGE and sent out beforehand to the national statistics offices and central banks of the region's countries for their consideration, was presented at this seminar.

The country representatives concurred with the diagnosis presented in the report that perfecting the system of national accounts was closely linked to the improvement of basic economic statistics and agreed to fill out a questionnaire in which they would highlight the greatest shortcomings in this regard in their respective statistics systems.

The results of this questionnaire were presented at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.¹ The analysis was based on the responses provided by 15 countries: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

In November 2007, the Executive Committee of the Conference requested the Working Group to carry out its proposed programme of work for 2007-2009. This programme revolves around four lines of action:

- The diagnosis of relative needs, as far as basic statistics are concerned, for the preparation of national accounts. Given the complexity and heterogeneity of the countries' needs, it was proposed that the diagnosis performed in 2007 with the collaboration of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France be furthered using the countries' responses to the questionnaire circulated that year.

¹ "Informe de avance de las actividades del grupo de trabajo de cuentas nacionales. Seminario Estagio de desenvolvimento das contas nacionais na América Latina" (DDR/13).

- Seminars on the development of comparable high-quality economic statistics. It has been proposed that a seminar on the sources and methodologies applied to services in national accounts be held in the second semester of 2008.
- Training for economic statistics producers and experts. The diagnosis performed of the current situation will make it possible to identify the main weaknesses of the training provided so far.
- Other activities. Creation of an Internet portal to expand technical cooperation.

The United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with IBGE, organized a workshop on industry statistics, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 24 to 26 September 2007. This event was attended by representatives of 12 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, two experts from the United Nations Statistics Division and three international experts.²

The main goal of the workshop was to start the implementation of a programme to compare the industry statistics of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. As a first step, the industry statistics of the participating countries, including the definitions, measurements and methodologies used, were presented and discussed with a view to standardizing information on the current status of industry statistics in the region. It was also suggested that a forum be arranged for sharing experiences and knowledge in this area.

A scheme for evaluating statistics production processes was used to perform a detailed diagnosis of company boards in different countries. These evaluations constituted the basis for the second workshop on industry statistics held in Lima from 19 to 22 August 2008, which was attended by representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

C. PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

A document on the diagnosis of the needs, as far as basic statistics are concerned, for the preparation of national accounts, will be submitted for consideration at the eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. A programme of work for Latin America in the area of industry statistics will be presented jointly with the countries of the region. The objectives of this programme will be: the incorporation of the 2008 recommendations for industrial statistics and index numbers of industrial production; the harmonization of a minimum set of regional data that guarantees analyses can be performed at the maximum level of detail required at the international level; and the application of the recently revised International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC Rev.4) and the Central Product Classification system (CPC Ver.2).

Finally, a seminar on services statistics in national accounts will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 26 to 28 November 2008, with the support of the IMF, ECLAC and IBGE.

² The documents of the seminar are available at: [<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/industry/meetings/eclac2007/eclac07-3.ASP>].