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FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN -
ECLAC**



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**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF
THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

(Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 25 and 26 March 2002)

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 25 and 26 March 2002.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries, which have been appointed to serve on the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil, Canada, Panama, Peru and Spain.

3. Representatives of the following countries which are not members of the Executive Committee also attended: Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay.

4. Also present was a representative of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

Chairperson

5. The meeting was chaired by Sérgio Besserman, President of the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE), in his capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

B. AGENDA

6. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Terms of reference and responsibilities of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

¹ See annex 2.

3. Progress report on the activities of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, June 2001-June 2003
4. Report of the thirty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission
5. Functioning of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC
6. Agreements and decisions of the meeting
7. Other matters

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

7. At the opening session, statements were made by Sérgio Besserman, President of the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE), in his capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and by Enrique Ordaz, Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC.

8. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee said that the position was an immense honour for him but also a great responsibility. He had every confidence that the first meeting of the Committee would mark the start of a new phase for statistical institutes in the region by enabling them to coordinate their work better and with greater efficiency. He welcomed participants and expressed his appreciation to all for attending.

9. The Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of the Commission conveyed greetings from the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, who had expressed confidence that the meeting would enhance the work of statistical institutes in Latin America and the Caribbean. He said that one of the most important priorities for the immediate future was to coordinate the efforts of national, regional and international statistical bodies. In view of the significance and wide range of statistical duties, he wished the participants success in their discussions, which would focus on the objectives established for the medium and long terms.

Terms of reference and responsibilities of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 2)

10. Bearing in mind that this was the first meeting of the Executive Committee, the ECLAC secretariat gave a brief outline of its terms of reference, responsibilities and the objectives arising from its status as a subsidiary body of ECLAC.

Progress report on the activities of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, June 2001-June 2003 (agenda item 3)

11. The Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC briefly outlined the contents of the status report, which reviewed the advances made in the implementation of the activities planned within the Programme of International Statistical Work for the period June 2001-June 2003. It

also contained a detailed account of the statistical cooperation activities in which the member States of the Conference had participated as well as regional and international organizations.²

12. The delegations that subsequently took the floor said that in general they were satisfied with the progress of activities. To supplement the report, they referred to some national initiatives that had not been included in that document. In particular, the delegation of Spain transmitted to the secretariat a note from the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of France, which contained its comments on document LC/L.1697.

13. In relation to item 19 (g) of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, June 2001-June 2003, the delegation of Spain presented the secretariat with the preliminary Spanish-language version of the European operational manual for tourism satellite accounts, prepared by EUROSTAT.

14. The secretariat representative thanked the delegations for their statements and reiterated that the progress report referred to the activities approved for inclusion in the Programme of International Statistical Work, which had been adopted at the first meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, May 2001). In addition, the representative indicated that future progress reports could include, as annexes, descriptions of bilateral and horizontal cooperation activities carried out by the member countries. Moreover, with a view to improving international coordination and cooperation, the secretariat offered to create a subsite on the web page of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division, where information on offers of cooperation and activities in progress could be posted. The availability of such information would make it possible to monitor activities in order to strengthen cooperation and focus it on priority issues.

15. The delegate from Colombia informed the participants that she was a representative for Latin America of Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) and proposed that new ways should be explored of integrating the activities of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas with the Consortium's work to strengthen statistical capacity.

Report of the thirty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (agenda item 4)

16. The representative of the secretariat gave an oral report on the main issues considered at the thirty-third session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, held in New York from 5 to 8 March 2002. He emphasized that the report was only preliminary, since the draft report had not been reviewed by the participants. Among the substantive issues discussed had been demographic and social statistics, economic statistics, statistical capacity-building, international economic classifications, definition and measurement of e-commerce, coordination for the development of indicators and the Handbook of Statistical Organization prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division. Seven of the Handbook's 13 chapters had already been translated into Spanish. The Handbook would be distributed to the countries once the translation had been completed. Special mention was made of the Programme of International Comparisons presented by the World Bank, in which the secretariat had invited all countries of the region to participate.

² Status report on the activities of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, June 2001-June 2003 (LC/L.1697), Santiago, Chile, 18 February 2002.

17. The delegations congratulated the secretariat on the report. They agreed that it was important that representatives from the region should take full advantage of opportunities to participate in the sessions of the Statistical Commission.

Functioning of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 5)

18. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee presented a document entitled “Statistical Conference of the Americas: Modus Operandi”,³ which contained proposed working methods for making the work of the Conference more efficient and taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by that forum for in-depth analysis of the substantive items chosen by the countries.

19. The delegations welcomed the proposal contained in the document and, following an extensive and varied exchange of views, identified the substantive items to be considered at the second meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, to be held in the first half of 2003 (see annex 1).

³ “Statistical Conference of the Americas: Modus Operandi” (DDR/1), Santiago, Chile, 1 February 2002.

Annex 1

AGREEMENTS

At the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Rio de Janeiro on 25 and 26 March 2002, the following agreements were adopted:

1. To employ the Millennium Declaration as a frame of reference for the formulation of the upcoming international statistical programme of work, which is to be adopted at the second meeting of the Statistical Conference.

2. To undertake an in-depth examination of the following topics at the second meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in the first half of 2003:

- (a) Public credibility of national statistical institutes;
- (b) Preparation of directories and use of administrative records as a primary source of information and as a frame of reference of surveys and other statistical research projects;
- (c) Management of data quality in national statistical institutes.

3. To accept with gratitude the offers made by Canada and Spain to provide substantive documents on the topic specified in subparagraph 2(c) above.

4. To request the secretariat, when distributing the report of this meeting, to also invite the member countries to submit supporting papers on any of the three topics specified in paragraph 2 if they so wish.

5. To accept with gratitude the offer extended by the Government of Panama to host the second meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean during the first week of December, 2002.

6. To request the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to transmit to the delegations gathered at the twenty-ninth session of ECLAC (Brasilia, 6-10 May 2002) the resolution and agreements reached at the initial sessions of the Conference and its Executive Committee.

7. To thank the Government of Brazil and, in particular, the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute and its staff for their hospitality and the excellent organizational capacity they have demonstrated in preparing for this meeting.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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**A. Member States of the Commission
Estados miembros de la Comisión**

1. Member countries of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

BRAZIL

Representative/Representante:

- Sérgio Besserman, President, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- María Martha Malard Mayer, Director of Surveys, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
- Zélia Bianchini, Deputy Director of Surveys, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
- Lidia Vales de Souza, Adviser to the President, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
- Carmem Feijó, International Relations Coordinator, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)

CANADA

Representative/Representante:

- Béla Prigly, Director, International Relations Division, Statistics Canada

SPAIN

Representative/Representante:

- Carmen Alcaide, President, National Statistics Institute (INE)

Delegation members/Miembros de la delegación:

- Antonio Martínez López, Director, Statistical Coordination and Planning Office

PANAMA

Representative/Representante:

- Luis Enrique Quesada, National Director, Office of Statistics and Censuses

PERURepresentative/Representante:

- Gilberto Moncada, Chief, National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI)

2. Non-member countries of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

COLOMBIARepresentative/Representante:

- María Eulalia Arteta, Director, National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE)

CUBARepresentative/Representante:

- Teresa Lara Junco, Deputy Director General, National Statistics Office (ONE)

MEXICORepresentative/Representante:

- Francisco J. Gutiérrez Guzmán, Director General of Statistics, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI)

NICARAGUARepresentative/Representante:

- Miguel Angel Casco, Director General, National Institute of Statistics and Censuses

DOMINICAN REPUBLICRepresentative/Representante:

- Luis Hernández, National Director, National Statistics Institute

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URUGUAYRepresentative/Representante:

- Orual Andina, Director, National Statistics Institute

**B. International Organizations
Organizaciones Internacionales**

Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)

- Ernesto Azorín, Head of Cooperation for Latin America and Asia

**B. C. Secretariat
Secretaría**

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)

- Enrique Ordaz, Director, Division of Statistics and Economic Projections
- Marcelo Ortúzar, Chief, National Accounts Section, Division of Statistics and Economic Projections
- Luis Fidel Yáñez, Legal Adviser