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**OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER THE PROGRAMME
OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1999-2000**

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INTRODUCTION

1. For more than five years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has been acting as technical secretariat for the biennial meetings of Directors of Statistics of the Americas.
2. At those meetings, special emphasis was placed on cooperation activities undertaken in the area of statistics by international and regional organizations and by participating member countries. As a contribution to the discussions, the Commission also submitted a number of technical documents, the most significant being the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, which outlines cooperation activities in the area of statistics, presented rigorously by subprogramme and subprogramme element, to facilitate the follow-up to work carried out in accordance with the agreements established with the Directors.
3. The following summary serves as a report on the activities carried out during the period 1999-2000 but should not be taken as an exhaustive report on the subject.
4. The Programme of International Statistical Work 1999-2000 comprises four subprogrammes: (i) Adaptation and production of basic statistics within the framework of the regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts; (ii) Statistics and indicators on the environment, science, technology and innovation; (iii) Social and poverty statistics and indicators; and (iv) Dissemination of statistical information.

Subprogramme 1: Adaptation and production of basic statistics within the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA)

Element 1.1: Providing access to technical documentation for those responsible for 1993 SNA and for producers of basic statistics in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

5. The revision and translation from English to Spanish of the System of National Accounts 1993 manual was completed under conditions of high inflation; the document was distributed to countries in print as well as in electronic format.
6. The glossary of 1993 SNA terms was translated in full and presented to the United Nations Statistical Division with a view, among other reasons, to its being used in a questionnaire on the subject which the Division will be using in Spanish-speaking countries.
7. The manual on quarterly accounts of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) was translated into Spanish with financial support from the United Nations Statistics Division. Two versions were made, a printed version published as Manual No. 9 in the ECLAC “Manuales” series, and an electronic one.

8. ECLAC has made arrangements with the United Nations Statistics Division, EUROSTAT and the World Tourism Organization for the distribution of large numbers of documents and support manuals to enhance implementation of the 1993 SNA and the production of basic statistics; following the incorporation of procedures for the electronic transfer of material, this distribution has intensified. To facilitate the dissemination of these manuals and technical publications, it was necessary for ECLAC to organize a document base.

During the reference period, ECLAC dispatched the following documents and classification lists to statistical offices and central banks:

United Nations:

- System of National Accounts, 1993
- Terminology used in the translation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA)
- Manual on national accounts under high inflation conditions
- Central Product Classification, version 1.0
- International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Rev. 3
- Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose
- International Statistical Classifications incorporated in the ECLAC Foreign Trade Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean, which contains:
 - Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)
 - Standard International Trade Classification (SITC)
 - Provisional Central Product Classification (CPC)
 - International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)

World Tourism Organization

- Technical Manual No. 3, Evaluation of the supply of tourism goods and services

EUROSTAT

- Methods of regional accounts: General government tables
- Quarterly accounts manual

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- The electronic version of the revised draft of the manual on monetary and financial statistics

9. The 1993 SNA compact disc version was prepared and reproduced and is currently being distributed.
10. The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico (INEGI) and ECLAC were commissioned to translate into Spanish the second draft of the document, Regional accounting methods: general government tables prepared by EUROSTAT, which is being printed by the INEGI printing office. The electronic version is provided on request to users by ECLAC.

11. A compact disc documenting the experience of the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina in calculating gross domestic product is being forwarded to experts on regional accounts in the area.
12. ECLAC has launched the subsite (www.eclac.cl/deype/documentos/) in the section of its Web page relating to the Statistics and Economic Projections Division, with a view to giving wider dissemination to documents generated in technical meetings and seminars. In collaboration with INEGI of Mexico, it has also continued to disseminate the Spanish version of *SNA News and Notes* (www.eclac.cl/deype/publicaciones/).

Element 1.2: Follow-up and support of the 1993 SNA implementation process and of efforts to improve the production of basic statistics

13. Consultations on the implementation of 1993 SNA, including issues relating to basic statistics, have been held with countries on an annual basis since 1994. Not only has progress been made in this area, but also survey questionnaires have been refined to improve the flow of relevant information. The questionnaires on the progress achieved in 1999 have been collected, as have the Spanish and English versions of the report on activities during the period 1998-1999.¹ The collection of information and the preparation of the preliminary report relating to 2000, which will be disseminated in early 2001.
14. The Directory of Experts on national accounts from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is updated constantly. The last version, issued in December 2000, was distributed in electronic version to all experts included in it; moreover, the document has been up-loaded to the ECLAC Web page (www.eclac.cl/deype/documents/) for dissemination together with two other new directories: that of the experts in foreign trade statistics and consumer prices.
15. Work relating to the organization of a regional programme for the improvement of statistics on the international trade in services referred to at the meeting of Directors started with the design of a proposed questionnaire and classification of primary information. This proposed questionnaire was submitted to those responsible for the preparation of the balance of payments in the countries of the region to determine the chances of its being adopted and implemented, and a number of responses have been received. Work on the Manual on statistics on the international trade in services prepared by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts was suspended following distribution of the first draft and the decision to await the final version, due in mid-2001.
16. In March 1999, the Directors of Statistics requested ECLAC to assess the situation of basic statistics for the preparation of national accounts. In response to this request, a fairly comprehensive questionnaire was designed for collecting the necessary information in statistical offices and on the basis of responses received by 30 November 2000, a first draft of the document "Los sistemas estadísticos como base para la implementación del SCN 1993" was produced.

¹ Avances en el proceso de implementación del Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales 1993 (SCN 1993) en América Latina y el Caribe, 1998-1999 (LC/L.1364, 4 February 2000), and Progress in implementing the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in Latin America and the Caribbean 1998-1999 (LC/L.1364, 20 June 2000).

Element 1.3: Sharing of experiences and training of national accounts experts and producers of basic statistics relating to 1993 SNA.

17. The National Statistical Institute of Guatemala and the Central Banks of Honduras and Paraguay were provided, at their request, with technical material as well as assistance for selecting experts to work on the implementation of 1993 SNA. The technical cooperation project on improving national accounts and basic statistics for Panama (PAN/93/002), which involves sharing of experiences as well as training of national experts.
18. The Central Statistical Office of the Netherlands Antilles and the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean organized a joint seminar on national accounts and classifications (Curaçao, May 1999).
19. A workshop on regional accounts was held, as scheduled, from 8 to 11 November 1999 at INEGI headquarters in Aguascalientes, Mexico. It was attended by representatives of 13 Spanish-speaking countries, Brazil and three international organizations. Twenty-seven technical documents, most of them prepared specially for that meeting, were distributed. It should be noted, in that regard, that the United Nations Statistical Commission, in addition to adopting the 1993 SNA, agreed to give top priority to specific subject areas which would guarantee its update and improvement, namely the preparation of quarterly accounts and regional accounts. EUROSTAT has conducted a useful study on the following aspects of regional accounts: (i) Gross value added and gross fixed capital formation by branch of activity; (ii) Household accounts; and (iii) General government tables. The three volumes comprising this study may be considered overall as a manual for regional accounts; at the workshop, it proved very useful as a basis for discussions and for reaching agreements on their implementation in countries of the region.
20. INEGI of Mexico conducted the Latin American course on national accounting for experts in the region who work with statistical offices, central banks and academic centres. The issues addressed included goods and services accounts and institutional sector accounts, quarterly and regional accounts and balance-of-payments statistics. The course was attended by experts and statisticians from eight countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela).
21. Owing to the heavy work programme of the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (INEI), the Regional seminar on the 2000 round of economic censuses: definitions and coverage, classifications, nomenclatures and monitoring unit, originally scheduled for 2000 under the auspices of ECLAC, was postponed to the year 2001.
22. Instead of going ahead with the meeting of experts scheduled for the second quarter of the year 2000 to analyse important issues relating to the implementation of 1993 SNA in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC and the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute organized a Latin American workshop on quarterly accounts in Rio de Janeiro from 20 to 24 November 2000. Participants analysed the content of the quarterly account manuals prepared by EUROSTAT and IMF and adopted measures to ensure that they are implemented at the regional level in accordance with standard procedures. A tentative timetable for the submission of findings was drawn up with each representative and is now being validated by the competent national offices with a view to its inclusion in the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001-2002.

23. The regional seminar which the National Institute of Statistics (Bolivia) was to have organized in association with ECLAC on the incorporation of classifications and definitions recommended by the System of National Accounts 1993 for the production of basic statistics was postponed to the second half of 2001 following a joint resolution by the two entities.
24. All the seminars, courses and workshops on the balance of payments and monetary and financial statistics announced in the report of the meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas took place as scheduled under the auspices of the Centre for Latin American Monetary Studies (CEMLA), the International Monetary Fund and the central banks of the host countries. The following table presents a detailed list of the meetings held by CEMLA:

**TRAINING IN MACROECONOMIC STATISTICS
ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY CEMLA IN 1999 AND 2000**

Year 1999

	Activity	Place	Co-sponsor	Dates
1.	International seminar on the IMF General Data Dissemination System	CEMLA, Mexico City	International Monetary Fund	17-21 May
2.	International Seminar on Balance of Payments	Bank of Spain, Madrid	Bank of Spain	7-11 June
3.	Course on balance of payments for INEGI officials	INEGI, Aguascalientes, Mexico	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico	28-30 June
4.	International course on national accounting	Office of the Comptroller-General of the Republic of Panama, Panama City	Office of the Comptroller-General of the Republic of Panama	5-16 July
5.	International seminar on IMF Special Data Dissemination Standards	CEMLA, Mexico City	International Monetary Fund	20-21 July
6.	International course on monetary and financial statistics	CEMLA, Mexico City	International Monetary Fund	15 November-3 December
7.	International seminar on a strategy for implementation of monetary and financial statistics	CEMLA, Mexico City	International Monetary Fund	8-10 December

Year 2000

Activity		Place	Co-sponsor	Dates
1.	Course/workshop on national accounts for technical staff of the Central Bank of Nicaragua	Central Bank of Nicaragua, Managua	Central Bank of Nicaragua	17 February-11 March
2.	Course on monetary and financial statistics for technical experts of the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic and other Dominican institutions	Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo	Central Bank of the Dominican Republic	27 April-14 March
3.	Course on national accounts for INEGI staff and lecturers of state universities in the Republic of Mexico	INEGI, Aguascalientes, Mexico	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico and the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico	22 May-2 June
4.	Course on balance of payments for technical experts of the Central Bank of the Bahamas	Central Bank of the Bahamas, Nassau	Central Bank of the Bahamas	12-16 June
5.	Course on monetary and financial statistics for experts in the Central Bank of Cuba and other national institutions	Central Bank of Cuba, Havana	Central Bank of Cuba	4-21 July
6.	Course on monetary and financial statistics and financial programming for technical experts at the Central Bank of Bolivia	Central Bank of Bolivia, La Paz	Central Bank of Bolivia	31 July-4 August
7.	Course/workshop on national accounts for technical experts of the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia	National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia, La Paz	National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia	8-18 August
8.	International course on monetary and financial statistics for technical experts of the central banks in the English-speaking Caribbean	Central Bank of Aruba, Oranjestad	Central Bank of Aruba and the International Monetary Fund	11-29 September

Activity		Place	Co-sponsor	Dates
9.	Course on national accounts for officials of INEGI and lecturers from state universities in the Republic of Mexico	INEGI, Aguascalientes, Mexico	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico and the National Polytechnic of Mexico	9-20 October
10.	International course on monetary and financial statistics	CEMLA, Mexico City	International Monetary Fund	13 November-3 December

25. The European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (CESD) and the National Statistical Office (INE) of Spain carried out the following joint training and technical-assistance activities in 1999 and 2000.

Year 1999

(a) Training

Activity	Place	Date
1. Twenty-first course on sampling with applications for household surveys	Madrid, Spain	19 April-7 May
2. Seminar on screening and application of statistical data	Madrid, Spain	10-4 May
3. Twenty-first course on company surveys	Madrid, Spain	17 May-4 June
4. Twenty-first session of the course, Introduction to national accounting	Madrid, Spain	4-22 October
5. Seminar on financial accounts	Madrid, Spain	25-29 October
6. Seminar on harmonized indices of consumer prices	Lima, Peru	25-29 June
7. Seminar on social indicators	Cartagena, Colombia	26-30 April
8. Seminar on foreign trade statistics	Cartagena, Colombia	26-30 July
9. Seminar on poverty statistics	Santa Cruz, Bolivia	30 August-3 September
10. Seminar on environmental statistics	Santa Cruz, Bolivia	18-22 October
11. Seminar on science and technology statistics	Montevideo, Uruguay	13-17 December

(b) Technical assistance missions

Activity	Place	Date
1. Use of Programme E – Views for the treatment of time series	Central Bank, Dominican Republic	30 August – 10 September
2. Modernization and strengthening of statistical institutions in Chile	National Institute of Statistics, Chile	30 August – 3 September
3. Training in regional accounting methods	INEGI, Mexico	8-11 November
4. Preparation of the wage index of wage-earners	Central Bank, Paraguay	23-27 November

(c) Visits by Latin American technical experts to Madrid, Spain

Activity	Home office	Date
1. Science and technology indicators	National Office for Science and Technology of Ecuador	1-19 February
2. Science and technology indicators	National Council on Science and Technology of Guatemala	31 May – 8 June
3. Review of the Spanish national statistical system	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Argentina	23-27 November

Year: 2000**(a) Training**

Activity	Place	Date
1. Twenty-second course on company surveys	Madrid, Spain	31 January – 18 February
2. Seminar on screening and application of statistical data	Madrid, Spain	21-25 February
3. Twenty-second course on sampling for household surveys	Madrid, Spain	8-26 May
4. Seminar on social indicators	Madrid, Spain	29 May – 2 June
5. Twenty-second session of the course, Introduction to national accounting	Madrid, Spain	2-20 October
6. Seminar on financial accounts	Madrid, Spain	23-27 October
7. Seminar on regional accounts	Santiago, Chile	14-18 February
8. Seminar on the preparation of the year 2000 round of censuses	Santa Cruz, Bolivia	14-17 March
9. Workshop on regional cooperation for strengthening national statistical systems in countries of the Andean Area	Cartagena, Colombia	27-31 March
10. Workshop on regional cooperation for strengthening national statistical systems in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean	Antigua, Guatemala	15-19 May
11. Seminar on tourism statistics	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	3-7 July
12. Seminar on poverty statistics	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	28 August-1 September
13. Seminar on environmental statistics	Cartagena, Colombia	4-8 September
14. Seminar on foreign trade statistics	Quito, Ecuador	13-17 November

(b) Technical assistance missions

A mission was Venezuela to support the strengthening of the national statistical system.

(c) Visits of Latin American technical experts to Madrid, Spain

Activity	Home office	Date
1. Statistics on human resources in science and technology	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment of Cuba	8-6 May
2. Production of statistics on science and technology	National Council of Science and Technology of Peru	26 May-6 June
3. Training of statisticians	National Institute of Statistics (Chile)	19 September-3 October

European Union-Mercosur statistical harmonization

26. The Governments of States members of the European Union (EU), the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the Government of Chile have signed a proposal for technical cooperation for harmonization of their basic statistics. To this end, they have established the working groups on the following: (i) Customs and foreign trade statistics; (ii) Investment statistics; (iii) Service statistics; (iv) Macroeconomic indicators and national accounts; (v) Statistics on the competitiveness and productivity of firms; (vi) Social statistics; (vii) Classifications and nomenclatures; (viii) Dissemination policy; (ix) Main trends in statistical information systems, and (x) Transport statistics.

Representatives of ECLAC participate as observers in these working groups, all of which have met alternately in the various European and Mercosur capitals, once in 1999 and twice in 2000.

The development of training modules is also envisaged under this programme. In 1999 and 2000, the following modules were held in various European capitals and in the Mercosur countries:

Year 1999

Activity	Place of meeting	Date
1. Seminar for Directors General of Statistics of Mercosur on Working Group 9	Madrid and Rome	4-15 October
2. Seminar on policies on statistics dissemination, corresponding to Working Group 8	Madrid, Rome and Luxembourg	15-26 November

Year 2000

Activity	Place of meeting	Date
1. Seminar on macroeconomic indicators for industry and construction, corresponding to Working Group 4	Montevideo, Uruguay	12-16 June
2. Seminar on investment statistics, corresponding to Working Group 2	Buenos Aires, Argentina	20-23 June
3. Seminar on social statistics, corresponding to Working Group 6	Buenos Aires, Argentina	11-15 September

Element 1.4: Improvement and extension of the production of basic statistics for the implementation of 1993 SNA

27. ECLAC, with the collaboration of the World Bank, prepared a comparative study of prices and real GDP in the year 1996 for 10 countries in the region. Although this activity has been considered part of the International Comparison Programme (ICP), which encompasses all regions of the world, ECLAC included in the study only the 10 Latin American and Caribbean countries participating in the Programme. A report is available on the methodologies used in this research and on the conclusions drawn.
28. The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (Peru), together with the Conference of Ibero-American Authorities on Informatics (CAIBI) disseminated technical guidelines for the preparation of a selected set of information technology indicators and has transmitted them to national statistical institutes.

Harmonization of Indices of Consumer Prices

29. The authorities of the Mercosur countries, together with Chile and Bolivia, have created a working group to address the question of harmonization of procedures and practices used to compute consumer price indices (CPI). ECLAC, which acts as Technical Secretariat, at the request of the statistical organizations participating in this working group, submitted a schedule of activities for harmonizing the CPIs in this subregion for consideration by Directors of Statistics. In addition, ECLAC:
- Prepared a document proposing a set of guidelines for advancing systematically towards harmonization of the CPIs of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and disseminated them among all the offices responsible for the preparation of these indices;
 - Prepared two proposals, one being a glossary of CPI-related terms and the other a common basket of items for consideration and discussion in the working group;
 - During the biennium, the working group on CPI of the enlarged Mercosur grouping held five meetings and carried out the following tasks:

- A detailed analysis of the baskets of items that make up the CPI in each of the countries of the subregion;
- A bilateral comparison of these baskets and identification of common problems;
- An exchange of methods and operating procedures relating to the preparation of indices and collection of prices;
- Preparation of an initial proposal of a common basket for participating countries based on the goods and services currently included in price indices;
- Preparation of an initial version of the glossary of CPI-related terms; and
- Establishment of the following set of agreements for the preparation of a preliminary version of the harmonized indices of consumer prices:
 - This will be calculated on the basis of the 1999 average;
 - Monthly series will be prepared on the basis of the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose- (COICOP) at the class level for the period 1997-2000;
 - The results will not be disseminated until the working group has verified their quality and representativeness.
- The following work schedule was agreed for the fulfillment of these objectives:
 - 4 December 2000: participating countries will submit to ECLAC a comparative table of national CPI structures, the set of selected goods and services and the Harmonized CPI of the enlarged Mercosur arrived at when various weightings are assigned;
 - 26 February 2001: participating countries will submit to ECLAC the first version of the series of harmonized indices for the period under consideration;
 - 26 March 2001, at the latest: ECLAC will provide to the members of the working group a data base with indices and weightings for the participating countries;
 - 8 April 2001: the working group will meet in La Paz, Bolivia, to analyse the advances and prepare the document with the preliminary results of the harmonized CPI, which will be presented to national Directors for their evaluation and approval;
 - It has been proposed that the working group should meet from 11 to 13 July 2001 at Mercosur headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay, to give in the preliminary version of the harmonized CPI, calculated on the basis of a more limited basket. At this meeting, criteria will be determined for the expansion of the harmonized basket and the relevant programme of work will be established.

Andean Community of Nations

30. With the cooperation of the Government of France, the countries of the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela) launched the highly successful Community Statistical Programme 2000-2004; this took effect from the eighth meeting of the Andean Statistics Committee (December 1999) and is designed to reactivate the subregional system of statistical information of the Andean Community of Nations through harmonization and development of various statistical issues emerging from the integration process in which they are engaged.

31. In the year 2000, the following activities were carried out:

Activity	Place	Date
A. Seminars		
1. 2000 round of censuses on population and housing	Secretary General of the Andean Community, Lima, Peru	27-31 March
2. Informal sector	Central Statistics and Informatics Office (OCEI), Caracas, Venezuela	28-30 June
3. 2000 census on population and housing	Quito, Ecuador	4 and 6 September
4. Quarterly accounts ^a	National Institute of Statistics, La Paz, Bolivia	27-29 September
5. Production statistics	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, Quito, Ecuador	8-10 November
6. Foreign trade	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, Lima, Peru	23-25 August
B. Pilot projects		
1. Use of the ERETES module in the preparation of national accounts	Lima, Peru, in association with Ecuador	Start-up in April (21 months)
2. Informal sector	Bogotá, Colombia, in association with Venezuela	Start-up in July, duration to be determined
C. Group of experts^b		
1. Tourism statistics	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, Lima, Peru	10-11 August
D. Technical assistance		
1. Foreign trade	Lima, Peru	1-15 July
E. Internships		
1. Two specialists from SGCA, who will analyse practical experiments on various issues of interest	Paris, Luxembourg	10-18 April
F. Meetings of Directors of Statistics belonging to the Andean Statistics Committee		
1. Ninth meeting	Quito, Ecuador	5-6 June
2. Tenth meeting	Lima, Peru	25-26 October

- ^a At this meeting, the representatives of the Andean countries adopted a harmonization programme for their quarterly national accounts and a timetable for presentation of the latter (see Programa de Trabajo Estadístico Internacional para América Latina y el Caribe, 2001-2002).
- ^b At this meeting, the group of experts adopted el Plan de Acción para las Estadísticas Básicas de Turismo, and a set of guidelines for harmonizing the preparation of tourism satellite accounts.

Element 1.5: International technical cooperation

32. ECLAC has been extremely active in providing direct technical cooperation –notwithstanding the fact that this does not appear as one of its main functions – either through representations to international organizations and countries which do provide such assistance, participation in efforts, such as the Panama project entitled “Mejoramiento de las cuentas nacionales y estadísticas básicas” or through support for statistical institutes in recruiting experts.
33. ECLAC has collaborated with the Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador in preparing a diagnostic analysis of the foreign trade classifications used by this institution, and a plan of action which provides for the adoption of all international classifications recommended by the United Nations for foreign trade statistics.
34. In this connection, the United Nations Statistical Division has collaborated with the Central American Monetary Council through support to the central banks of the countries of the subregion to enable them to bring their national accounts in line with the financial programming exercises. Similarly, it has provided assistance - and pledged to continue to do so - to Caribbean countries in the development of simplified national accounts for small economies, including tourism satellite accounts within the framework of supply and use of goods and services.
35. The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru has launched a site at its Web page for the Statistical Conference of the Americas, which contains, among other things, information in Spanish and English on meetings, agreements, technical cooperation, documentation used at its meetings and at those of its Executive Committee, convening of meetings, and links with member countries’ Web pages.

Subprogramme 2: Environmental statistics and indicators

36. This statistical area tends to present greater measurement difficulties than other more traditional areas of economic and social statistics. Although significant resources have been earmarked for the holding of quantitative research on the environment, the magnitude of the task is such that most countries in the region have still not gone beyond the stage of collecting primary statistics dispersed among numerous organizations or of coordinating efforts to facilitate the establishment of an information system which goes beyond that of an unstructured database.
37. Considering these limitations, the meeting of Directors decided to focus on the two following subject areas:

Element 2.1: Analysis of the status of environmental statistics and indicators in countries of the region

38. The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information of Mexico (INEGI) and ECLAC were commissioned to design a questionnaire based on a survey carried out in 1996 which would be used to update the analysis of the status of environment statistics in the countries of the region. This was to have been done in the second half of 1999, but since the United Nations Statistical Division had sent questionnaires with a wide range of questions to all countries except the members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the request for information was postponed to 2000 to avoid duplication of work. Since INEGI of Mexico advised that it was unable to carry out the survey in 2000 on account of its heavy work schedule regarding environmental statistics, which meant a further postponement, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC decided to conduct, in the interim, a survey covering some of the major issues have a better idea of the status of environmental statistics in the countries of the region. This was done in August 2000. Most of the countries responded in a timely manner and their responses were used to prepare a document for analysing the current status of environmental statistics in the relevant cases. The findings were delivered at the seminar on environmental statistics organized by the European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries (CESD) in Cartagena, Colombia, in September 2000.

Element 2.2: Transfer of international experiences, training and technical cooperation

A. Environmental statistics

39. ECLAC participated in the meeting of the Group of experts on environmental statistics and indicators, held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 27 September to 5 October 1999. The main purpose of the meeting was to consider a draft manual on environmental statistics, prepared by the United Nations Statistical Division.
40. This meeting was attended by experts from different international bodies and United Nations regional commissions (Asian Development Bank, EUROSTAT, OECD, UNEP, United Nations Statistical Division, the Economic Commission for Europe, FAO, ECLAC), representatives of some OECD member countries and of some English-speaking developing countries; the only countries of the region represented were Bahamas and Mexico. The participation of representatives from developing countries, especially from Asia, made it possible to study potential difficulties in terms of application of the Manual and to propose the necessary amendments.
41. The ECLAC representative at the meeting used the opportunity to meet officials from the World Bank, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) in order to obtain information on environmental projects being implemented by those agencies and to consider the possibility of coordinating some of them with the ECLAC programme of work in that area. The following are some of the projects under way: (i) The World Bank has worked on the development of environment indicators for the evaluation of economic policies it supports. Its Rural Development Department implements, among other things, projects relating to sustainability and land quality; of these, the most far-reaching is the joint project undertaken with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) relating to the evaluation of the potential for carbon sequestration of agricultural crop methods; mention should also be made of the project relating to habitat destruction as a result of land degradation; (ii) the Centre for Strategic Analysis of the World Resources Institute is working on the development of indicators on sustainability and biodiversity and as part of that work is carrying out research into the various existing ecosystems; (iii) lastly,

the UNDP Human Development Division focuses on the analysis of factors that have a clear impact on the course of human life. Its findings are illustrated with indicators of human life sustainability and biodiversity and are being published in the annual Human Development Report issued by UNDP. The Sustainable Energy and Environment Division of UNDP is implementing various projects, the most important being the Global Environment Facility (GEF) project on biodiversity and climate changes in Brazil, the collaborators being the World Bank (investment), UNDP (technical assistance) and UNEP (policies).

42. ECLAC also participated in the Seminar on environmental statistics, held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, under the auspices of CESD-Madrid, from 18 to 22 October 1999. The main issues addressed were the preparation of basic environment statistics and environmental accounts using 1993 SNA. Special emphasis was placed on water resources, residues and the inter-relationships between the economy and the environment. In the discussions, reference was often made to the experience acquired by the countries of the European Union in overcoming such problems. Lastly, it should be pointed out that 16 countries of the region were represented, in most cases by officials from their national statistical institutes.
43. CESD-Madrid organized another seminar on environmental statistics in Cartagena, Colombia, from 4 to 8 September 2000, which was attended by representatives of 16 countries of the region. The main purpose of the meeting was to explain general aspects of environmental statistics and of the methodology used in Spain in order to prepare their basic statistics, indicators and environmental accounts. The agenda included questions not addressed previously, such as accounts of expenditure on environmental protection and atmospheric emission accounts. ECLAC participated actively in the seminar providing a vision of the current status of environmental statistics in the countries of the region; a document had been prepared on this topic based on the results of the August 2000 survey. This study was distributed to participants. A round table was held on the main difficulties faced by countries in developing their environmental statistics in a more dynamic way. This discussion underscored the need for national statistical institutes to participate more actively in coordinating the production of environmental statistics through the creation of new systems (or the improvement of existing ones), so as to facilitate their integration into the national statistical plans of the respective countries. The country representatives undertook to transmit to the relevant authorities the concerns expressed by ECLAC on this issue.

B. Statistics on science, technology and innovation

44. The National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru, together with the Conference of Iberoamerican Authorities on Informatics (CAIBI), prepared and disseminated at the regional level, technical material for the elaboration of basic indicators on information technologies.
45. ECLAC, after studying the current status of production of statistics on science, technology and innovation, prepared two documents: *Estadísticas e indicadores de ciencia, tecnología e innovación en América Latina y el Caribe (DDA/1)* and *Recomendaciones para fortalecer el sistema de estadísticas e indicadores de ciencia, tecnología e innovación en América Latina y el Caribe (DDR/3)*.

Subprogramme 3: Social and poverty statistics and indicators

46. Statistics on social development are attracting growing attention from Governments and, at the same time, international finance agencies are showing greater willingness to support activities in this area. These factors, together with the commitment of ECLAC in this field have facilitated the implementation of the programme of work of the Statistical and Economic Projections Division.
47. The following is a brief description of the activities carried out under Subprogramme 3: Social and poverty statistics and indicators, following the layout for the presentation in table form on page 61 of the final report of the meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas (Santiago, Chile, 24-26 March 1999).

Element 3.1: Improvement of household surveys

48. As part of the Programme for the Improvement of Surveys and for the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI), sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank and ECLAC, four regional workshops were held in the period 1999-2000 for discussion and analysis (third to sixth in the series of eight planned under the current phase of the programme). The first, held in the biennium (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 24-28 May 1999) was devoted to measuring expenditure on household surveys and several of the outstanding technical documents presented there have since been published in a compendium, CEPAL LC/R.1914, of 2 September 1999. That workshop was attended by 35 representatives of 17 Latin American countries and 13 officials from IDB, the World Bank and ECLAC. The second workshop studied poverty measurement: the poverty line method (Buenos Aires, 16-19 November 1999). The ECLAC document, LC/R.1985, published 14 January 2000, contains the main technical contributions presented at the workshop. The latter was attended by 53 representatives from 19 countries and 12 officials from IDB, World Bank and ECLAC.
49. As an integral part of the technical treatment of the different subject areas covered under the MECOVI programme, two regional workshops were organized in the year 2000. At the first of these, dealing with methods and applications of poverty measurement (Aguascalientes, Mexico, 6-8 June 2000), further in-depth work was carried out on the issues addressed at the last workshop of 1999. The participants included 39 technical officers from 16 countries and 20 officials from international organizations that were co-sponsors of the programme and from UNDP. The technical working documents were assembled in the ECLAC publication (LC/R.2026, dated 12 September 2000. Lastly, the second workshop of that year (Buenos Aires, 15-17 November 2000) was devoted to social development indicators. It was attended by 52 technical officers from 20 countries and 15 officials from IDB, World Bank and ECLAC, in addition to representatives of specialized agencies within the United Nations system. The technical inputs will be published in a document currently under preparation.
50. In recent years, progress has been made under the MECOVI programme towards the organization of a data bank from household surveys of Latin American countries. In particular, ECLAC prepared special master files using the data from 56 surveys conducted between 1995 and 1998 in 14 countries in the region. These surveys have been duly standardized in terms of format and documented on the basis of available methodologies and information from the respective original files. They are stored on compact disc (one for each year) and have been distributed to all countries in the region with a view to generating feedback on the proposed database design and method of

information processing, and providing national statistical offices with valuable material for methodological and analytical purposes. Highly qualified external users, notably academic and research institutes, have also been granted controlled access to this information.

51. With respect to the regional training courses planned under the MECOVI programme, four three-week courses were held in the biennium 1999-2000. The focus of these activities was the design, implementation and analysis of household surveys. With the co-sponsorship of INEGI of Mexico, three courses were held in Aguascalientes (1-17 March 1999; 30 August-17 September 1999; 4-2 September 2000). The other course took place in Buenos Aires (29 March-18 April 2000) with the collaboration of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Argentina (INDEC). These four courses were attended by 140 household survey producers and users from most of the countries in the region.
52. Towards the end of 2000, the countries participating in the MECOVI programme which were conducting national projects through their national statistical offices were Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru. The technical assistance granted by the Programme to these institutions helped to improve the thematic and geographic coverage of the household surveys. With respect to the former, in some, if not all, beneficiary countries, new modules were incorporated into the traditional questionnaires to cover factors such as child nutrition (anthropometry), remittances from family members, agricultural activity, use of time of household members, capital stock, access to social programmes, citizen security and management of adverse shocks suffered by the households. The geographical coverage of the surveys has been expanded and, for the first time, in some countries (Paraguay and Bolivia), coverage has been extended to rural areas, which show a higher incidence and severity of poverty. In addition, in the last quarter of 2000, a technical and institutional evaluation of the findings of the MECOVI programme in El Salvador, Paraguay and Peru was done by an international expert to identify the achievements recorded in these countries following three years of implementation and to make recommendations for the fulfillment of the stated objectives.
53. In the area of technical assistance, MECOVI collaborated with participating countries, through consultancy work by national and international experts in household surveys, in the following areas: (i) update of mapping and sample design; (ii) development of digital mapping; (iii) organization of field work; (iv) decentralized organization of data entry; (v) formulation of the main criteria for consistency and quality control in the field; (vi) organization of databases; and (vii) information processing and analysis.
54. In connection with technical assistance relating to MECOVI, ECLAC also carried out a mission in La Paz, Bolivia in October 1999 to evaluate various technical and operational aspects of the implementation of the MECOVI project in that country, which was incorporated into the Programme in May 1999; it also collaborated on a second mission, in July 2000 to execute the project by planning activities for on-going household surveys. Both technical assistance activities are part of the on-going support provided for the project by ECLAC, which also acts as the technical body responsible for the UNDP financial contribution in Bolivia.
55. ECLAC also provided direct technical assistance to countries in the design and implementation of household surveys and the analysis and use of information deriving therefrom. In particular, it collaborated with the Government of Brazil (Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute and Institute of Applied Economic Research) on the computation of new poverty lines, with the

Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay to improve the design of household surveys in rural areas; and with the Government of Mexico on the application of methods for estimating and updating poverty lines (INEGI) and the evaluation of social programmes already underway (Secretariat of Social Development).

Element 3.2: Use of information generated by household surveys

56. The priority task for ECLAC in this area has been the update of its Household Survey Data Bank. This activity is contingent on the availability of data and on timely cooperation, in this regard, by national statistical institutes. At present, survey data for 1998 and 1999 are being incorporated, which implies that the use of information is now more relevant than in the first half of the 1990s. Discussions were started with the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port-of-Spain in August 2000 on the feasibility of providing technical support for the project, *Development of Social Statistical Data Bases and a Methodological Approach for a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) for Small Island Developing States*, which includes strengthening household surveys in the subregion, with a view to extending the geographical coverage of the databank to the Caribbean countries.
57. The data generated by the household surveys served as valuable inputs in a number of ECLAC studies published in the biennium 1999-2000, in particular, *the Social Panorama of Latin America*, editions 1998 and 1999-2000. This is a report that is of great analytical value in that it addresses, among other issues, the extent and developments in terms of poverty, the effects of employment on the income of poor social strata, income distribution and stratification and social vulnerability. It is interesting to note also other research on issues such as poverty in Chile in 1998; the use of household surveys in countries of Latin America for the calculation of gender indicators and poverty trends in Mexico.
58. In addition, a study was completed, under the technical cooperation project between the Government of the Netherlands and ECLAC, on the simultaneous analysis of poverty alleviation and income distribution improvement objectives in three Latin American countries using household survey data covering various years in the 1990s and a set of specially designed indicators. As part of this study, methodological documents were prepared presenting guidelines for the simultaneous analysis of the improvement in income distribution of poverty alleviation and recommendations for optimizing data collection, with the overall objective of helping countries in the region to monitor poverty and income distribution trends.
59. With respect to social indicators, progress was made in compiling and analysing the indicators included in the national information systems and in the regular statistical publications of United Nations specialized agencies. The aim of this exercise is to assess the reliability, comparability, relevance, coverage and timeliness of these systems with a view to identifying, not only the contribution to household surveys in this area, but above all the challenges for improving them. In addition, documents presenting guidelines for the selection and design of a set of basic social indicators were prepared and considered at the sixth regional workshop of the MECOVI programme.

Element 3.3: Implementation of population and household censuses

60. The Population Division of ECLAC (CELADE) (until 1998, the Latin American Demographic Centre), helped countries of the region with their preparations for the 2000 Round of Censuses through direct technical assistance, the organization of, and participation in, seminars and workshops, and the provision of technical material. In this context, various technical assistance activities were carried out in 1999 and 2000, in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. Experts from ECLAC-CELADE also participated in various seminars and workshops, four of which were devoted to coordinating preparations for census-taking in the Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) together with Bolivia and Chile. In addition to the on-going work of updating and improving the system for retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer (REDATAM) (mainly for the purposes of the 2000 round of censuses), some 15 training workshops were held on REDATAM for Windows and attended by 200 professionals from the region. At those workshops, which took place at ECLAC headquarters and elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, work was also done on the creation of databases and their use for obtaining socio-demographic indicators and presenting them graphically, on maps and in their relationship to Geographic Information Systems. Following the seminar “Census 2000: conceptual design and issues for research in Latin America” (Santiago, Chile, 13-16 October 1998), sponsored jointly by ECLAC and the National Institute of Statistics of Chile, the papers presented were used as the basis for a document entitled “América Latina: aspectos conceptuales de los censos del 2000 (CEPAL, serie Manuales. No.1 (LC/L.1204-P)), which will undoubtedly be of considerable value in the preparation of these censuses.

61. In support of the agreements adopted at the meeting of Directors and the steps taken by the Chairman of the meeting, CELADE carried out a mission to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington to secure financing for the preparation and execution of the 2000 round of censuses. During the period, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela started applications, or established contacts, with a view to requesting loans from IDB. A technical officer from ECLAC also attended a workshop conducted by IDB on 9 and 10 December 1999 for representatives of the Andean Group; the purpose of this meeting was to enhance the profile of loan applications to simplify the procedure. Experts from ECLAC-CELADE have supported IDB in the preparatory activities for the loan projects intended for the implementation of censuses of the 2000 round in various countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname).

62. With financial support from the University of Minnesota (which conducts a project funded by the National Scientific Foundation of the United States), ECLAC-CELADE started work in 2000 to salvage and conserve its bank of population and household census data dating back to the 1960s; some of the information has already been recovered (mainly samples from the 1960 and 1970 censuses) and will be made available to countries.

Element 3.4: Project on statistical cooperation between the European Union and the Mercosur countries.

63. The European Union and countries of Mercosur signed an agreement for a project entitled “Cooperación estadística con los países del Mercosur” (ASR96/87-311/96/165), whose main

objective is the methodological approach in the area of statistics with a view to harmonizing the statistical data of both blocs. To that end, 10 working groups have been set up and have met three times in the last two years. With specific reference to Working Group 6: Social statistics (employment and education) (see paragraph 26), consideration has been given, among other things, to issues such as: (i) the experience of the European Union with the harmonization of employment and education statistics; (ii) experience of the Mercosur countries; (iii) criteria for the methodological harmonization and generation of comparable indicators; (iv) prioritization of items under employment and education statistics; and (v) proposal and execution of the relevant training course. To date, significant progress has been made in terms of harmonization of the concepts of occupation, coverage (urban-rural) of household surveys, age brackets of the economically active population (EAP) and classifications by activity, occupation and education. As a result of this work, a set of harmonized statistical tables will shortly be prepared and disseminated together with the relevant methodological notes. Meanwhile, in accordance with the programme established in this regard, two professionals from the National Statistical Office of Spain provided tuition for the relevant training module between 11 and 15 September 2000.

Element 3.5: Regional and national training activities

64. With the joint sponsorship of ECLAC and INEGI of Mexico, the ninth and tenth international workshops on definitions, concepts and methodology for measuring poverty were held in Aguascalientes, Mexico (19-30 July 1999 and 7-18 August 2000). These eminently practical workshops focused on issues ranging from the basic concepts of social well-being, equity and poverty, the methodology and sources of information for measuring poverty and procedures for the design of a basic basket for calculating poverty lines, to the more complex issues of income distribution and the statistical analysis of measurements and estimation models. The last two of these workshops were attended by more than 50 experts from 15 countries in the region. Owing to the degree of consolidation of this activity, the positive evaluation given by the participants and their usefulness in human resources training at the national statistical offices in Latin America and the Caribbean concerned with these issues, the sponsors have expressed a willingness to continue them in the future.
65. Furthermore, ECLAC is willing to continue to collaborate with countries in holding national workshops on the improvement of household surveys. One of the most recent activities in this regard was its participation in the workshop on the measurement of income and expenditure in a system of household surveys organized by INDEC of Argentina, with cooperation from the Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI) (Buenos Aires, 4-6 October 2000).

Element 3.6: Participation in working and study groups on issues of regional interest

66. The third meeting of the Rio Group on poverty statistics was held in Lisbon from 22 to 24 November 1999. This meeting, at which ECLAC acted as technical secretariat, was sponsored by the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute and the National Institute of Statistics of Portugal. The main issues discussed at this meeting were as follows: (i) Consumption patterns and measurement of absolute poverty; (ii) income and poverty measurements; (iii) the experience of the European region; (iv) use of poverty statistics in designing and monitoring policies for poverty alleviation; and (v) poverty characteristics in Asia and the Pacific. As on previous occasions, the documents presented and conclusions drawn from the meeting were compiled in an ECLAC publication and distributed to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; they were also

entered on the Rio Group's Web page, administered by the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute. A new meeting of the Group is being planned for the second half of 2001.

67. ECLAC representatives participated in the third and fourth meetings of the Canberra group on household income statistics held in Ottawa, Canada from 7 to 9 June 1999, and in Differdange, Luxembourg, from 14 to 17 May 2000. At the Ottawa meeting, which was attended by 31 experts from 17 countries and various international organizations, ECLAC presented a document entitled *Income Distribution Data for Latin American Countries: Robustness Assessment Report*, based on the responses to special questionnaires on the quality of data from household surveys in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico. A presentation was also made on the situation in Latin America and on updating income measurements. At the 2000 meeting, ECLAC presented an update on the situation in Latin America in this area and this will be taken into account by the Group in its current work on the formulation of recommendations for income measurement. The material generated is available on the Internet and much of it has already been distributed by ECLAC to countries in the region.
68. ECLAC representatives have also participated in meetings of the SIENA Group on social indicators and in the deliberations of the Delhi Group on the informal sector. In both cases, ECLAC has made every effort to keep the region informed of the progress achieved by these two groups by disseminating the relevant information.

Subprogramme 4: Dissemination of statistical information

69. In recent years, Internet-based technology has been the channel most used for the electronic dissemination of information. Thus, the priority activities of ECLAC in this area are closely linked to this high technology, which offers enormous potential for the electronic diffusion and exchange of information and statistical data, particularly among and with national statistical institutes, specialized agencies within the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations.

Element 4.1: Data searches, exchange, dissemination and retrieval in an HTML environment via static and dynamic interactive media.

70. ECLAC has established a regular channel for the exchange of short-term data with 11 member countries of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), except Cuba, through the Internet. For national accounts, electronic mail is being used. In the foreseeable future, the same technological media will probably be used for this and other types of data exchanges between the above-mentioned agencies and institutes.
71. At the third meeting of the Santa Cruz Working Group (Rio de Janeiro, October 1999), a project was presented for launching Internet search engines for servers using data from the national statistical institutes of the Mercosur countries, in addition to Bolivia and Chile. This system has been subjected to a number of tests with very good results from the technical and organizational points of view. The final project proposal, which includes the creation and maintenance of a statistical portal has already been approved by the directors of the statistical institutes of the six countries in question.

72. At the time of writing of this summary, no technical document had been prepared containing proposals on electronic data processing designed to maintain statistical secrecy and guarantee the confidentiality of information in terms of controlled access to data not intended for general use. Neither ECLAC nor the National Statistical Institute of Chile was in a position to include this activity in its programme of work for the year 2000, but both have pledged to address the issue in the second half of 2001.
73. The seminar-workshop on meta-data systems and advanced diffusion via Internet which ECLAC had planned to organize during this period with the assistance of CESD-Madrid and the National Statistical Institute of Spain was postponed owing to time constraints and to the heavy schedule of joint regional activities envisaged by the national statistical institutes. Given the importance and relevance of this seminar-workshop, it should be included in the Programme of Work for 2001-2002.

Element 4.2: Electronic commerce in the field of data and statistical information.

74. Various setbacks arising from United Nations policies in this area have forced ECLAC to postpone the implementation of a pilot project for the commercial diffusion of statistical data and publications. At the first meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, ECLAC will present a status report on the policies, procedures and modes of implementation being defined by United Nations for the sale of data and publications through information technology, especially the Internet.
75. In May 1999, ECLAC organized a seminar/workshop on electronic commerce and statistical information at its headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The meeting was of a very high calibre thanks to the participation of an expert from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Geneva. The same expert has pledged to provide assistance to ECLAC and countries interested in initiating pilot projects in this field, subject to the adoption of specific agreements in each case and appropriate coordination between ITU and ECLAC. The meeting was attended by seven representatives from five countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Uruguay), three experts from international organizations and five ECLAC experts.
76. Towards the end of November 2000, the National Statistical Institute of Chile held the fourth meeting of the Santa Cruz Working Group on the Statistical Portal of Mercosur, including Chile and Bolivia. In keeping with the established plan and timetable, the Web site will be functional in the first quarter of 2001 and thereafter, the pages will be prepared and updated on a monthly basis.