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Third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, Chile, 1-3 June 2005

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

A. BACKGROUND

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is a subsidiary body of ECLAC established pursuant to resolution 2000/7 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which assigned the Conference the following objectives: to promote the development and improvement of national statistics and work to ensure that they are comparable internationally, bearing in mind the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations; to promote international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and international and regional agencies; and to draw up 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.

The current Executive Committee was elected at the second meeting of the Conference (held in Santiago, Chile, in June 2003) and is chaired by Chile. It held two meetings in 2004: one in Santiago, Chile, on 24 and 25 May, and the other in Dallas, United States, on 30 November and 1 December. The Executive Committee decided on the place and date of the third meeting of the Conference and decided that the Conference should focus in depth on the following substantive issues:

- (a) Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision
- (b) Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices
- (c) Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems

At the third meeting of the Statistical Conference, the member States are to adopt strategic guidelines for statistical development in the region and a programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007. They will also elect the Executive Committee for the period 2005-2007.

B. CHAIRPERSON OF THE CONFERENCE

In accordance with resolution 2000/7 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Chile, in its capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee, will preside over the third meeting of the Statistical Conference.

C. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC will have before it the following provisional agenda (LC/L.2291(CEA.2005/1)) for its adoption or modification:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC
2. Report on the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005
3. Presentation of the proposed strategic guidelines for regional statistical development in Latin America and the Caribbean
 - (a) Strategic goals
 - (b) Operational modalities, mechanisms for follow-up and coordination
4. Discussion of the proposed programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007
 - (a) Lines of work and activities
 - (b) Inter-agency, subregional and bilateral coordination
 - (c) Formation of working groups
5. Presentation and discussion of substantive issues
 - (a) Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision
 - (b) Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices
 - (c) Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems
6. Report of the Rapporteur
7. Adoption of agreements
8. Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the 2005-2007 term

2. Report on the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005

The ECLAC secretariat has prepared a progress report on the statistical cooperation activities carried out by the Commission, the countries and international and regional agencies under the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005.¹

Instead of providing an exhaustive review of the statistical cooperation activities conducted in the region, the report briefly outlines the activities carried out during the period under consideration to supplement the information made available to member countries through the multilateral projects database (BADEPRO) found on the Conference's website. This database, which contains information supplied by participating agencies on projects under way, serves as a support mechanism for the States

¹ LC/L.2113/Rev.2.

members of the Conference. The information encompasses the projects' definition, activities, main themes, execution period, objectives and expected outputs.

An advance report was submitted to the Executive Committee at the meetings it held in 2004.

3. Presentation of the proposed strategic guidelines for regional statistical development in Latin America and the Caribbean

The work of the Executive Committee in 2003-2005 was directed towards building on the progress made at the first two meetings of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, in order to give it new impetus and consolidate it as the intergovernmental body responsible for guiding and directing the development of statistics in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

To this end, the Executive Committee identified the need for a broader technical and institutional approach and for a strategic plan to serve as a frame of reference for the region's statistical work.²

(a) Strategic goals

At its fourth meeting, the Executive Committee agreed that the main objective of the proposed plan and strategic guidelines should be to build the institutional and operational capacity of national statistical offices and national statistical systems. To meet this objective, the countries should draw up a road map with long-term targets, devise a strategy for achieving them and identify the actions and resources needed in this regard.

The proposed strategy includes modernizing the legal framework to strengthen national statistical systems and facilitate their work, defining the role of national statistical offices and other public and private institutions that generate statistical information and providing them with the budgetary, professional and information technology resources they need in order to produce, process, analyse and disseminate basic and summary statistics.

The strategic plan drawn up by the Statistical Conference of the Americas will also enable multilateral and subregional agencies to better coordinate their activities in the region, in accordance with objectives and activities that reflect national and regional priorities in the area of statistical development.

(b) Operational modalities, mechanisms for follow-up and coordination

The Executive Committee recommended that a proposal should be submitted at the third meeting of the Conference with a view to setting up working groups composed of representatives of the member countries and of multilateral agencies to work on issues of common interest and formulate proposals and recommendations for coordinated action.

Accordingly, it is proposed that working groups be set up in the following areas:

(i) Institution-building

This encompasses legal and institutional issues, including questions of financing and budgeting, as well as the coordination of national statistical systems; modernization of the management of national

² LC/L.2293(CEA.2005/3).

statistical offices in order to make the best possible use of resources; and relationships between producers and users of statistics in general.

(ii) Human resources and human resources development

This is related to policies for human resources training and management, including technical, academic and managerial issues, with a view to guaranteeing the excellence of technical staff.

(iii) Development of statistical capacity

This involves the definition of long-term goals relating to the production, quality and dissemination of statistics and the steps to be taken in order to achieve them.

(iv) Strengthening of international cooperation

This refers to the identification of practical arrangements for promoting international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and international and regional agencies, in accordance with the primary aim of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

The Executive Committee is responsible for coordinating the plan of action with subregional work programmes. The secretariat will support the Committee by preparing a follow-up report on the plan, outlining the status of the groups' work.

4. Discussion of the proposed programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, the Executive Committee, in conjunction with the secretariat, has prepared a proposed programme of work for 2005-2007, which will be submitted to the delegations.³ The programme is aimed at deepening the integration of activities at the subregional level and of activities carried out in the regional by multilateral agencies. The following issues will be submitted to the Conference for its consideration:

(a) Lines of work and activities

In accordance with the recommendations adopted at the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee, guidelines reflecting the orientation of the working groups will be presented.

(b) Inter-agency, subregional and bilateral coordination

Comments and cooperation proposals from international agencies will be sought concerning the lines of work established by the Conference.

(c) Formation of working groups for 2005-2007

Thematic working groups composed of representatives of the member countries and of multilateral agencies will be set up.

³ LC/L.2294(CEA.2005/4).

5. Presentation and discussion of substantive issues

At its fourth meeting held in Dallas on 30 November and 1 December 2004, the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC agreed that the Statistical Conference should, at its third meeting, focus in depth on the following substantive issues:

- (a) Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision
- (b) Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices
- (c) Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems

In accordance with the decisions of the Executive Committee, the secretariat and member States have prepared documents on these issues and will distribute them to all participating delegations.

6. Report of the Rapporteur

One of the members of the Executive Committee, acting as Rapporteur, will give an oral summary of the proceedings and the main agreements adopted. The report of the meeting will be drafted by the secretariat and sent out to participating delegations so that they may submit their observations.

7. Adoption of agreements

The Conference will adopt such agreements as it may deem appropriate.

8. Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the 2005-2007 term

In accordance with resolution 2000/7 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Conference will elect an Executive Committee consisting of a Chairperson and six members, and will pay special attention to ensuring that all the subregions are represented.

The members of the Executive Committee may be re-elected for three successive terms. The Chairperson may not be re-elected in that office for a second consecutive term, but may be elected as a member of the Committee. Anyone who has been a member of the Committee for three successive terms may be elected again after two years have elapsed since the end of that person's last term of office.