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ENGLISH  
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**REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

San Salvador, 1 June 2013





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## A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date of the meeting

1. The second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in San Salvador on 1 June 2013.

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries, which had been appointed to serve as Presiding Officers: Brazil, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay.

### Chair and Rapporteur

3. The countries listed below had been elected at the thirty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to serve as Presiding Officers of the Committee:

Chair: El Salvador

Vice-Chairs: Barbados  
Brazil  
Chile  
Cuba  
Peru

Rapporteur: Uruguay

## B. AGENDA

4. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:
  1. Adoption of the agenda.
  2. Follow-up to the agreements adopted at the first meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation.
  3. Adoption of agreements.
  4. Other matters.

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<sup>1</sup> See annex.

### C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

5. The meeting was opened by Jaime Miranda, Deputy Minister for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, in his capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers.
6. He thanked the country representatives for attending and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for being receptive and flexible in organizing the meeting and taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the presence of the country representatives attending the twenty-fourth Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional cooperation in the area of border integration, organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA).
7. He stressed the strategic importance of the meeting for making progress on the issues relating to South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean and explained that, consequently, he had wanted to open and lead the discussion, despite his State responsibilities, which would, at some point in the meeting, force him to leave the meeting and go to an event commemorating the four years in government of Mauricio Funes, President of El Salvador.
8. After warmly welcoming the participants, the Chair submitted the provisional agenda for the consideration of delegations, who adopted it.
9. Agreements 1 and 2, adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting, held in Lima on 27 November 2012, were read out loud:
  1. *To request* the secretariat of the Commission to send to the member countries of the Committee on South-South Cooperation a letter including a copy of its resolution 675(XXXIV), adopted at its thirty-fourth session, and reiterating the Commission's willingness to conduct national studies on structural gaps in those countries that may require it;
  2. *To request* the secretariat to prepare a report including a time, cost and methodological analysis of measurement of structural gaps for presentation at the next meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation;
10. A representative of the ECLAC secretariat said that the letter referred to in agreement 1 had not been sent to the member countries of the Committee on South-South Cooperation because of the need to reach an agreement first among the Presiding Officers on the methodology to be applied.
11. Nevertheless, El Salvador and Costa Rica had formally expressed an interest in conducting a national study to measure the structural gaps in their respective countries.
12. A representative of the ECLAC secretariat presented a report on the methodology for measuring structural gaps to the Presiding Officers for their consideration. He said that middle-income countries, such as those in Latin America and the Caribbean, were increasingly excluded from the agenda of the international cooperation system, which was guided by the logic that per capita income was a proxy for development. ECLAC, in its document *Middle-income countries: a structural gap approach*,<sup>2</sup> had asserted that the international cooperation system should pursue a comprehensive, broad-reaching

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<sup>2</sup> LC/G.2532/Rev.1, November 2012.

response to development challenges, which, in addition to addressing the problems of low-income countries, should also consider the very different needs and vulnerabilities of middle-income countries.

13. Furthermore, development should not be associated only with income level, but should also take into account sustainable and inclusive growth processes to address the social and productive inequality characterizing the countries of the region and generate the conditions to create and establish political, economic and social systems that promoted respect, diversity, human dignity and equality. The structural gaps associated with development included those relating to per capita income, inequality, poverty, investment and savings, productivity and innovation, infrastructure, education, health, taxation, gender and environment.

14. He stressed that the secretariat's intention was not to use the report to reorder countries or to replace per capita income with the measurement of structural gaps as a new proxy for development.

15. The starting point for establishing the gap measurement methodology should be the identification, by each country, of a number of qualitative and quantitative gaps which constituted the major development challenges for the economies of the region. Thus, the countries were responsible for identifying and ranking their priorities and for determining the areas in which their development needs and challenges were concentrated.

16. The ECLAC representative proposed that the countries that wanted to be part of that process should set up national working groups, which, together with the Commission, would begin to undertake a quantitative and qualitative assessment of development gaps or challenges. The analysis of the gaps should be conducted on the basis of information provided by the national authorities and the working group should assess the ways in which international cooperation could help to overcome such challenges and gaps. Having identified their international cooperation needs, countries could submit concrete proposals and action requests to agencies in donor countries and international organizations, among other entities. Countries, together with their international cooperation partners, should then examine how best to channel that aid.

17. The Chair welcomed the presentation by the ECLAC secretariat and called on countries to participate actively in developing their own national studies. Country representatives indicated the need to establish a schedule for the work to be carried out with precise time frames and requested ECLAC to respond to country requests according to the order in which they were received. They also requested ECLAC to examine its capacity to respond to the requirements of the countries during 2013 and beyond, in line with the timetable established to that end. Some representatives also indicated the need for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to take ownership of the methodology and studies, in the context of the international debate on financing and cooperation for development.

18. The ECLAC representative said that the international debate under way was still open and that the document *Middle-income countries: a structural gap approach* contributed to the discussion in terms of both theory and methodology and could be used as an input for establishing the region's goals for a post-2015 development agenda.

19. Subsequently, the Deputy Minister for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador had to leave the meeting and was replaced in his role as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation by the Coordinator of the South-South Bilateral Cooperation Unit of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

20. The incoming Chair of the Presiding Officers read out agreement 3 adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting:

3. *To request* the secretariat to present at the next meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation a proposal for a general *quantitative* and qualitative assessment of South South-cooperation, based on the activities listed in the Ibero-American Secretariat's *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2012*, encompassing the Latin American countries and including data on the Caribbean, the outcome of which should be an indication of the economic value of all the activities reported on in the above-mentioned document; to note that Uruguay will take the initiative of resuming discussion on the generation of statistics under the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation;

21. A representative of the ECLAC secretariat said that, with a view to establishing indicators to evaluate South-South Cooperation, he had looked at how the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2012*, prepared by the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), had addressed the identification, measurement, characterization and evaluation of cooperation. The workshops held in Quito (September 2011) and Montevideo (March 2012) as part of the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation had been fundamental to the realization of this task by SEGIB in 2011 and 2012.

22. Any process of constructing indicators began by asking why something should be measured (establishing the aim) and what exactly should be measured (establishing the means). In reality, measurement of indicators was restricted by the limitations on generating and recording primary data that systematically and unambiguously fed into calculations. To avoid any ambiguities, each indicator should include a definition, a formula and metadata in order to make it easier to understand and therefore to use on a wider scale. Obtaining indicators was limited by their feasibility, which was related to the fulfilment of certain requirements, including those concerning their intrinsic characteristics (specific, explicit, relevant, clear and easy to understand) and ways of generating the information on which they were dependent, which included aspects such as the stability of the sources and how regularly data was gathered. Failure to meet those requirements limited the potential use and interpretation of an indicator, preventing an analysis of the changes over time and ruling out its comparability.

23. Under the approach taken by SEGIB, the "why?" question had been confined to issues relating to the management of South-South cooperation and, more specifically, to the process of planning and monitoring, to the analysis and evaluation of results and to raising the profile of such cooperation. While that last point had been limited to presenting only one of the various viewpoints on South-South cooperation, the management issues (relating to the question on what should be measured) were diverse and ranged from identifying strategic and national development priorities to the availability of human, material and financial resources, as well as recognizing the institutional strengths of the technical units working in the field of South-South cooperation. The assessment was not so much focused on the outcomes as on the processes leading to them. Therefore, in addition to characteristics such as efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, SEGIB had sought to verify compliance with other criteria such as horizontal cooperation, equity, reciprocity and shared responsibility. In that connection, the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation had developed metadata in order to answer the question on how data should be collected and indicators were constructed that could potentially lead to the achievement of the sought-after objectives. Meeting those aims, however, remained subject to the definition, recording and flow of primary data for calculating the indicators, which in turn depended on the realities of gathering data in the different countries and the level of cooperation between national information systems. That was one of the reasons for the low coverage of the responses to the questionnaire used by SEGIB (see p. 71 of the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2012*), which had made it impossible to



conduct a comprehensive analysis of South-South cooperation and to quantify the value —or at least the direct costs— of the programmes, projects and actions carried out in 2011, in the geographical area covered by the study.

24. According to the ECLAC secretariat, evaluating South-South cooperation from a quantitative perspective called for a continuation of the joint efforts that had been led by SEGIB and the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation, which, with support from other agencies, had been able to make progress towards the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of South-South cooperation programmes and actions.

25. For the ECLAC secretariat the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the assessment still needed to be consolidated: the programmes and activities for South-South cooperation required consensus to be reached on how to address controversial topics relating to how to quantify the value of components that did not necessarily have a market price. National cooperation agencies did not have the technical capacity to take advantage of methodological tools such as the System of National Accounts to assess total costs, assuming that such an approach were to be adopted by all the countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). In order to be able to answer such questions systematically, regional statistical systems needed to be set up, which required human and financial investment and resources. Specifically, it was necessary to promote the improvement of systems for recording and reporting data on costs and the valuation of all the constituent elements of South-South cooperation projects and activities.

26. The country representatives welcomed the presentation by the ECLAC secretariat and acknowledged the accuracy of the analysis, indicating that the Commission had the experience and support in the region to move towards the improved measurement of South-South cooperation that would include the group of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean. Consequently, they urged ECLAC to continue innovating and developing the methodology for measuring South-South cooperation.

27. Agreement 4, adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting, was read out loud:

4. *To request* the Government of Uruguay to prepare and distribute by the end of the year a schedule of international activities for 2013 including provision for discussions on South-South cooperation within the framework of Ibero-American activities;

28. Uruguay pledged to circulate a schedule of activities for the second half of 2013 and first half of 2014.

29. The country representatives reiterated the importance of having up-to-date, timely information owing to the weighty regional agenda on the issue, and the need to prioritize or add events in order to make the most efficient use of the time and financial resources available. El Salvador offered to help by sharing some information with Uruguay that could be added to the activity calendar.

30. Agreement 5, adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting, was read out loud:

5. *To request* the Government of Chile, in its capacity as Chair pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and with support from the Government of Cuba (in its capacity as the incoming Chair pro tempore), to send notes-verbales to Latin American and Caribbean regional and subregional integration mechanisms and organizations, as well as to the organizations within the United Nations system, inviting them to advise the Commission of the activities or meetings on South-South cooperation scheduled for 2013;

31. The representative of Chile apologized for not having completed this task because of internal procedural matters: the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had been waiting for a formal notification from the Presiding Officers to proceed. The countries agreed to coordinate better in order to ensure the efficient fulfilment of the commitments undertaken and requested Cuba, as Chair pro tempore of CELAC, to send notes to the regional and subregional integration mechanisms and bodies in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to the agencies of the United Nations system, requesting them to report on the activities or meetings they had scheduled in relation to South-South cooperation in the second half of 2013 and first half of 2014.
32. Agreement 6, adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting, was read out loud:
6. *To request* the Government of Uruguay, with support from the other countries, to promote inclusion of a chapter on gender within the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2012* within the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation;
33. The representative of Uruguay acknowledged the commitment and said that he would send information to the Presiding Officers on whether the chapter would be included in the 2013 or 2014 report.
34. Agreement 7, adopted by the Presiding Officers at their first meeting, was read out loud:
7. *To request* the Commission to report to the next meeting of the Presiding Officers on the advances in implementing paragraph 5 of resolution 675(XXXIV) on South-South cooperation within the context of the Quito Consensus;
35. The ECLAC representative said that South-South cooperation on gender was a key element of the technical cooperation that it provided to countries, promoting the exchange of experiences, both between machineries for the advancement of women (ministries for women's affairs) and among other government agencies, especially in relation to statistics and indicators. That was one aspect of the work of the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, which focused on women's physical autonomy, economic autonomy and autonomy in decision-making in relation to public policy.
36. The ECLAC representative undertook to submit for consideration by the member countries a draft road map on gender cooperation at the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Santo Domingo from 14 to 18 October 2013. The Conference was the appropriate forum for identifying the needs of women at the regional level, making recommendations and assessing the activities carried out in fulfilment of the regional and international agreements and plans on the subject. In that regard, the Conference would provide an ideal opportunity to identify, together with the countries, the main elements to be included in the road map requested by the Committee on South-South Cooperation.
37. The representatives of the countries welcomed the ECLAC report and endorsed the proposal to discuss the road map at the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### D. AGREEMENTS ADOPTED

38. At their meeting in San Salvador on 1 June 2013, the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation adopted the following agreements:

1. *To request* the secretariat of the Commission to send to the member countries of the Committee on South-South Cooperation a technical note on the methodology for calculating structural gaps and its schedule for working with the countries in the period 2013-2014;
2. *To request* the secretariat of the Commission to submit a technical note to the members of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, on the basis of the information available, on the feasibility of constructing indicators on South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean;
3. *To request* El Salvador, as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, to discuss with the Chair pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) the possibility of presenting the technical note referred to in agreement 2 at the first meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperation of CELAC, to be held in September 2013 in Buenos Aires;
4. *To request* Uruguay, with support from El Salvador, to draw up and distribute during the month of June 2013 a schedule of international activities for the period 2013-2014 addressing the subject of South-South cooperation, within the framework of Ibero-American activities;
5. *To request* Cuba, as Chair pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), to send notes to the regional and subregional integration mechanisms and bodies in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to the agencies of the United Nations system, requesting them to report on the activities or meetings they have planned in relation to South-South cooperation in 2013 and 2014;
6. *To request* Uruguay to report to the Presiding Officers in June 2013 on whether *the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America*, prepared under the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation, will contain a chapter on gender;
7. *To request* the secretariat of the Commission to prepare a road map on South-South cooperation in relation to gender and present it for discussion at the twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Santo Domingo from 14 to 18 October 2013;
8. *To review*, at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, to be held in the framework of the first meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), scheduled for September 2013 in Buenos Aires, the fulfilment of these mandates and to agree on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to be held within the framework of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission, to be held in Lima in April 2014.



## Annex

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