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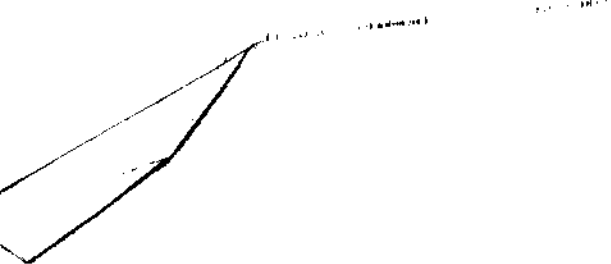
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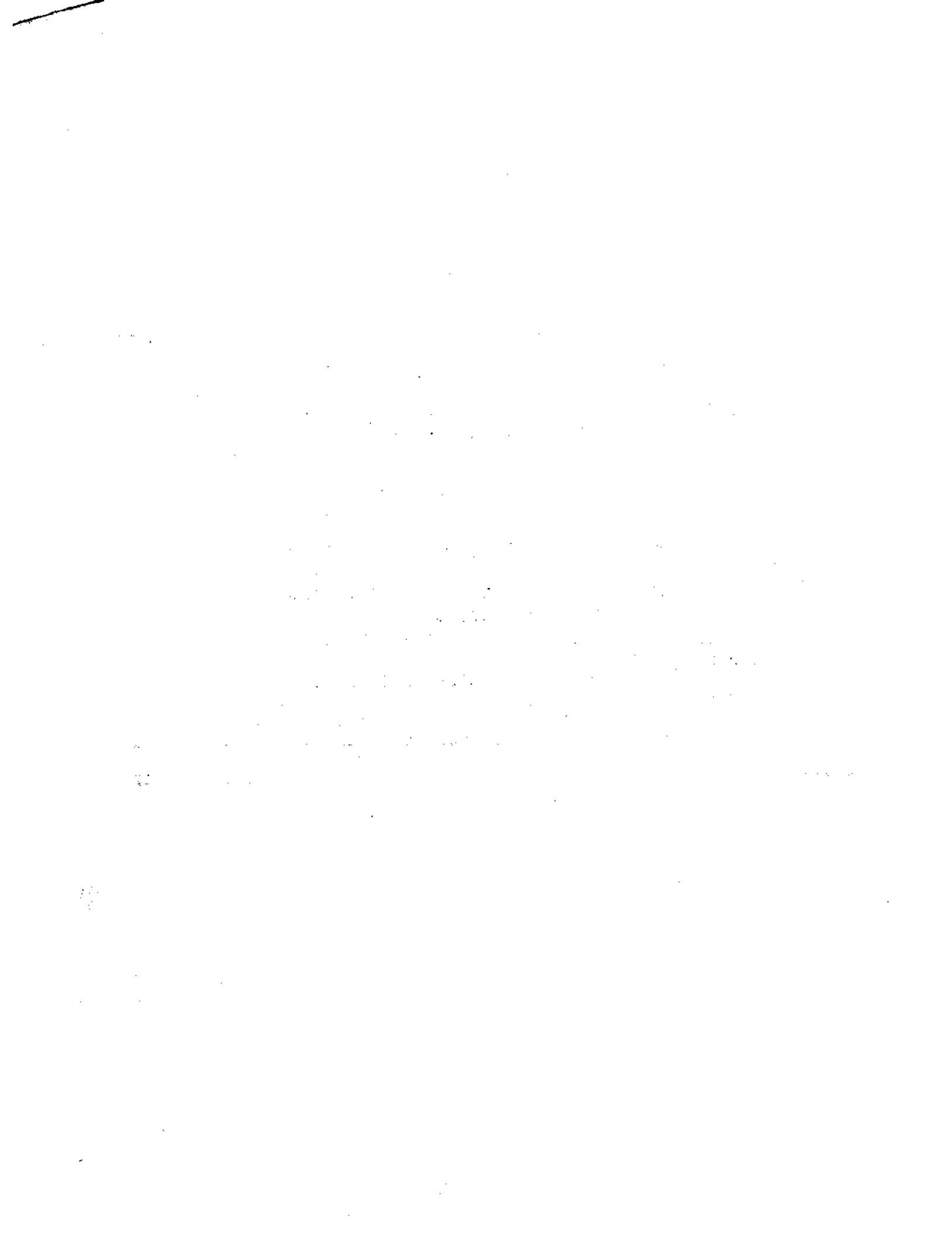


THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE ECLAC SYSTEM



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INTRODUCTION

Since the Stockholm Conference the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has been mandated by the countries of the region to gradually incorporate the environmental dimension into its activity as a means of contributing to enrich analyses, proposals, technical assistance and co-operation in relation to development.

The task has however not proved an easy one. Initially, neither all countries nor all the institution's experts were fully aware of the issue. Gradually, the confirmation provided by factual evidence, together with awareness of ECLAC directives led to the institution incorporating a theme which if not new, was not totally in line with the central concerns of its experts.

Fortunately, the issue was not incorporated in the traditional manner, involving a mere counting up of environmental damage, on the contrary efforts were centred on exploring the relationship between the predominant styles of development and the environment. In this manner, a contribution has been made to clarifying many of the causes of the serious environmental situation existing in countries. Moreover, and particularly important, ECLAC did not simply focus its attention on analysing the damage to the environment and its causes, but also concerned itself with demonstrating that the environment represents one of society's assets and that proper environmental management must constitute a means of creating resources and thereby of stimulating development.

The aim of this document is to show how ECLAC, principally on the basis of the ECLAC/UNEP project on "Styles of development and environment" and through the creation of the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, has enriched its activities.

The presentation falls into two parts: reinforcement of the specific environmental programme and analyses of the presence of the environment in the other programmes of the ECLAC system.

In turn, the first part has been broken down into two sections: the 1979-1986 period and projections into the future for coming years. The second part has been broken down into four sections: the environment in the overall concept of development, in development planning through the action of the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), in ECLAC Divisions and Units and in the Subregional Office, Subregional and National Headquarters of ECLAC.

A. REINFORCEMENT OF ECLAC'S SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME

1. Analysis of the environmental programme from 1979 to 1986

The organization of the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit influenced the creation of a specific programme dealing with the issue (Programme 270: Environment) whose legislative bases are Resolution 2043 (LXI) of ECOSOC and Resolutions 323 (XV) and 379 (XVII) of ECLAC.

This programme concerned itself with two areas: a) reinforcement of ECLAC's capacity to achieve an understanding of and to direct the relationships between society and the environment with the aim of fostering development and b) the organization of technical assistance and co-operation to bring about the incorporation of the environmental dimension into processes of planning, programmes, policies and action in the field of national development.

We shall return to the first of these objectives in greater detail later.

The second objective has been fully accomplished and the projections made suggest that there will be increasing pressure for ECLAC, through the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, to increase its co-operation and technical assistance action in the future.

The first specific environmental programme was presented at the nineteenth session of the Commission, held in Montevideo on 4-5 May 1981.^{1/} At this meeting, after a detailed analysis of the initial effort at the conceptual level which culminated with the regional Seminar on styles of development and environment,^{2/} approval was given to the new orientation designed to analyse:

"the integration of the environment into specific development policies, covering such topics as metropolitanization and urban marginality, environmental management in major infrastructure works and the expansion of the present agricultural frontier in fragile high altitude ecosystems." In addition, consideration was given to "activities regarding energy and the environment in the region's different development strategies." And it was asserted that "advisory assistance to existing inter-governmental bodies constitutes the most suitable means of incorporating the environmental dimension into development policies and plans."^{3/}

At the twentieth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America, held in Lima between 29 March and 6 April 1984, an

assessment was made of the broad success achieved by the environmental programme.4/

New contributions to strategic issues were put forward, including: the economy and the environment, incorporation of the environmental dimension into planning and styles of development, energy and the environment.

A prominent place was given to the joint ECLAC/UNEP project on "Horizontal co-operation in Latin America in the field of development styles and the environment", and the four processes studied were analysed: environmental management and large water resource projects, expansion of the agricultural frontier, metropolitanization and peasant survival in high altitude ecosystems, all of which proved fully successful.5/

This project represented a joint ECLAC/UNEP undertaking. Its completion led to the initiation, in 1983, of a new ECLAC/UNEP project entitled "Incorporation of the environmental dimension into the processes of development planning: methodological aspects, case studies and horizontal co-operation".

Within the environmental programme analysed at this meeting, an assessment was made of the Organization's participation in several seminars such as "Environment and technologies for settlements in arid zones", "Significant agricultural processes from the environmental viewpoint" and "Human settlements and development in arid ecosystems".

In addition, the contribution made by courses on long-term planning and the environment was highlighted.

At the twenty-first session held in Mexico, from 16 to 25 April 1986, Programme 12: Environment, stressed that:

"the Unit continued to play its role of co-ordinating and promoting conceptual and operational efforts to incorporate the environmental dimension in development management."6/ In addition, at this Session it was stated that "in view of the situation of economic crisis typical of the Latin American economies in the 1980s, the Unit has brought its thinking and action to bear on restoring environmental considerations to their role as a basic tool of economic and social development".

The programme provided for two types of activities: a) studies and research and b) activities designed to promote horizontal co-operation, advisory services and training.

Among the first type of activities, emphasis was placed on those issues which covered:

"the relationships between environment and development in the context of the new international economic order and the outlook for the remain of the century and the significance of this relationship in the recent economic crisis." Another field of research covered "options and methodologies for incorporating the environmental dimension into rural development more completely".

With regard to activities to promote horizontal co-operation, advisory services and training, emphasis was placed on the significant contribution made by the ECLAC/UNEP project on "Incorporating the environmental dimension in development planning processes: methodological aspects, case studies and horizontal co-operation",^{1/} which examined the suitability of subregional or territorial planning as one of the best means of effecting the incorporation of the environmental dimension.

Analysis of the Environmental Programme also stressed the support given to initiatives at horizontal co-operation with regard to specific ecosystems: wet tropics, high altitude, cold areas, arid zones and metropolitan areas. The organization of major training activities was also considered.

2. Analysis of the environmental programme for the coming years: 1986-1987 programme and draft programme

The Unit's activities for the 1986-1987 biennium are designed to provide advisory services to bring about the practical incorporation of the environment into planning and developmental activities, in so far as possible endeavouring to harmonize the rational transformation of the environment with the objectives of short-term increases in income and employment. In this manner the Unit, with the agreement of the Regional Office of UNEP for Latin America and the Caribbean (ORPALC/UNEP) assumed responsibility for co-ordinating the programme entitled "Planning and the environment" (PR-3). The mainstay of this has been the ECLAC/UNEP project "Technical co-operation in Latin America for incorporating environmental considerations into development programmes and projects", which provides for prefeasibility studies of environmental projects in seven countries in the region.

Moreover, as part of a further joint effort with the ORPALC/UNEP Office, a study has begun into "Environmental prospects towards the year 2000", which is intended to contribute to providing a forecast of the situation in the region should present trends continue.

Parallel to this, during this biennium ECLAC will broaden

investigation into the expansion of the agricultural frontier on the basis of an ECLAC/FRG project entitled "Environmental systems and strategies to expand the agricultural frontier in Latin America".

Research of a sectoral nature, centred on the relationship between industry and the environment has also been included in view of the urgent need to assess the situation in the region and establish priorities and paths for future activities.

Work will continue on regional development within ecosystems, action being centered on the wet tropics. In addition, with regard to training the course on "Environmental management for development" will continue to be taught.

Naturally all of these activities take into account the crisis, and in its operations the Unit will continue to explore the relationship between this issue and the environment.

The programme proposed for the 1988-1989 biennium not only continues tasks from the 1986-1987 period but also reinforces them,

"seeking to formulate possible contributions to be made by the environmental dimension in relation to the challenges now confronting the region". "The programme views the environment as a social asset whose future must be dealt with on the basis of inter-generational considerations. The purpose of the study suggested is to analyse practical ways and means of considering the ecological heritage of society and the currents of change whereby this heritage is transformed quantitatively and qualitatively. An understanding of the way in which these two elements interact is of great value for bringing short-term decisions into harmony with medium- and long-term objectives and ultimately for designing action in line with the social aims of individual countries." "The studies carried out will provide concrete support for offsetting the current preeminence in Latin America and the Caribbean of short-term approaches, since the real surmounting of the present crisis calls for vigorous efforts articulated in the international context. The research conducted for the programme will therefore focus on development prospects and strategies for the next decade".8/

In addition to the pursual of the most important action undertaken during the 1986-1987 biennium, during this period efforts will be made to establish methodologies and national programmes to prepare systems of inventories and accounts of the national and cultural heritage. In addition, the efforts to incorporate new and improved methodologies for assessing the environmental impact and cost-benefit analyses coherent with the

decision-making methods and development programmes should also be considered. Sectoral efforts will deepen examination of the problems of industrial and agricultural development, and in the case of the latter will continue the process of expanding the agricultural frontier.

To sum up, during the present biennium (1986-1987) and particularly the following one (1988-1989) an increase in activities is planned as a result of the interest shown by many countries in the region. These activities will have to express themselves through technical assistance programmes, training and ways of promoting horizontal co-operation between countries and, moreover, within countries.

B. THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE OTHER PROGRAMMES OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM

ECLAC's capacity to understand and orientate relationships between society and the environment with the aim of promoting development has gradually been reinforced following the initiation of the ECLAC/UNEP project on "Styles of development and the environment in Latin America". We shall now examine the main achievements of this reinforcement.

1. The environment within the global conception of development

In recent years the need for the changes implicit in the development of our countries to be sustainable over the medium- and long-term, both with regard to the social and economic structures and the preservation of the environment, has been reinforced by the consideration given to the environmental dimension.

At the nineteenth session of the Commission, held in Montevideo in May 1981, the Regional Programme of Action for Latin America in the 1980s incorporated this issue.^{9/} The proposal for the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade on the basis of Latin America's objectives and specific conditions set the following aims, among others:

"to conserve the quality and increase the potential use of the environment, including measures to correct wasteful practices, so as to improve living conditions and lay the bases for a type of development which can be maintained in the long term".

This meeting represented a major milestone in the incorporation of the concept of the sustainable nature of the environment.

The crisis affecting the region, and particularly the consequences and prospects of the external debt were given priority in the agendas of the Eleventh session of the Committee of High-Level Government Experts and the twenty-first session of ECLAC. It would seem that the high priority given to these issues led to other issues being left in the background.

Nevertheless, although the environment is dealt with only explicitly in its own programme, it is an integral part of the very concept of development and appears in other analyses produced by the session.^{10/} For example, the report of the Committee on Water attached:

"the utmost importance to activities carried out by the countries with regard to control of extreme phenomena and integrated management of watersheds for purposes of development and in order to control erosion and pollution. Attention was drawn to the need to offset the latter through the application of national conservation programmes".

In spite of these observations, the crisis and the external debt are likely to postpone any concern with other matters. Consequently, the challenge is to clarify how proper management of the environment offers, within the short term, an innovative means of responding to the immediate demands arising from the development crisis.

2. The environment in development planning through the action of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES)

The Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit has worked in close collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) in order to open up paths for incorporating the environmental dimension into development planning in the ECLAC/UNEP project on "Incorporation of the environmental dimension into the process of development planning in Latin America: methodological aspects, case studies and horizontal co-operation".

The importance which ILPES has attached to the issue is apparent from an analysis of the Conferences of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean. At the 1980 Conference, top priority was given to the issue of "Planning and environment".^{11/}

In Buenos Aires, in May 1983 the issue was analysed in depth; it was:

"pointed out that after progress had been made on the research into this matter and specifically on the processes which link the management of natural resources and the environment with development, it had been concluded that the next step would be planning. In that respect, it was said that a number of points should be made. It was of course common for studies to contain an analysis of the influence of environmental development on the conservation of resources, but in addition it was important to consider the positive aspects of the latter, i.e., the use of science and technology for deriving benefits from the resource endowment and managing it appropriately. In the second place, resources should be considered from the ecological point of view if any benefit was to be derived from the way in which they were interrelated. Thirdly, owing to the financial crisis, the environment had dropped in the order of priorities although environmental management and development management were clearly related. It was pointed out that there was a need to distinguish between short- and long-term policies so that the former, which were aimed, inter alia, at fiscal equilibrium, were tied in with questions of population and health and other topics viewed in a broader perspective. There was need to seek effective ways of linking planning related to the management of economic policies more explicitly to whole series of long-term variables".^{12/}

At the next conference, held in Mexico, between 15-17 April 1985, the preoccupation with incorporating the issue of planning into development, and, consequently, integrating it into the Institution's permanent activities was ratified.^{13/} At this meeting:

"emphasis was laid on the need to change the present approach of planning in order to incorporate the following aspects: a) the medium- and long-term administration of the natural environment and the built-up resources of society; b) the creation, management and reproduction of natural resources and of the infrastructure in the environmental field and c) the study of positive external economies and productive opportunities resulting from the transformation of the natural environment. Attention was also drawn to the close ties between regional planning, decentralization and the environment".

As mentioned above, ILPES' concern with the environment has found concrete expression in its training activities. Between 1980 and 1981, in conjunction with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit and CIFCA, three regional courses on planning and the environment were organized. In 1984 and 1985, with a contribution from the Andean Development Corporation, two similar courses were held for the Andean

subregion. In 1986, with a contribution from the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, a course on "Environmental management development" was held. The issue has been introduced into the core course of ILPES both at the global level and at that of regional planning. On various occasions, ILPES technical assistance missions were supplemented by contributions from experts on development and the environment; the issue thereby came to occupy the place it deserved.

3. The environment in the Divisions and Units of ECLAC

The gradual interiorization of the environment into ECLAC's activities has influenced the incorporation of this aspect into the specific programmes of each Division and Unit. In spite of the progress made, there is still room for improvement in this respect, as a number of units have not yet fully incorporated this dimension.

a) The environment in CELADE

The incorporation of environmental issues into the Latin American Demographic Centre is an integral part of its activities. Particularly noteworthy is the joint initiative taken by this Centre and the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit to set up the Network for the Exchange of Information and Experiences between the metropolises of Latin America and the Caribbean, whose secretariat was assumed by the Prefecture of the Municipal Council of Sao Paulo.

b) The environment in the Joint ECLAC/FAO Agriculture Division

Agriculture is intimately linked to the possibility of transforming the ecosystem and suitably altering its natural state. Consequently, there are very close links between agricultural problems and the environment, a factor which has always been taken into account by this Division.

Of particular note in this field are the activities linked with the problems of peasant survival. One of the most outstanding achievements was the effort carried out in collaboration with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit with regard to "Agricultural policies and peasant survival in high altitude ecosystems".

The above Division has co-ordinated its activities with the Unit in order to assist it with an in-depth study into the question of the expansion of the agricultural frontier.

c) The environment in the Natural Resources Division

Clearly, environmental issues are thoroughly integrated into the activities of this Division. In the field of mining, studies

have been carried out into the problem of pollution by waste from mining.

Particular mention should be made of the programmes of the Water Resources Unit. Between 1980 and 1982, by common agreement with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit, this Unit carried out the study into "Environmental management and large water resource projects". The most recent programmes regarding the management of watersheds have fully integrated environmental issues. Also worthy of note are the conceptual innovations made by this Unit with regard to environmental transactions in the field of watershed management.

d) The environment in the Social Development Division

Environmental considerations have also made their entry into the activities of this Division, particularly with regard to the orientation of certain of its tasks and advisory activities in the field of human environment.

This Division made a major contribution to the study into agrarian policies and survival in high altitude ecosystems. In addition, consideration has been given to environmental aspects in dealing with the issue of housing.

e) The environment in the Transport Division

A major environmental contribution was made by this Division through its study into the impact of the massive use of automobiles in the region. These studies were used in the debates and conclusions of the study into the process of metropolitanization.

f) The environment in the Joint ECLAC/UNCHS Human Settlements Unit

Since it was set up this Unit has constantly laboured to incorporate the environmental dimension into its activities both directly and indirectly.

The elimination of pollution in human settlements has been one of its concerns in recent years.

Special mention should be made of the conceptual tasks carried out with regard to the urban crisis, which have explicitly adopted an environmental approach.

g) The environment in the Latin American Economic and Social Documentation Centre (CLADES)

CLADES has carried out a broad range of activities linked to the environment. It has designed a reference system for major

investment projects and provided technical assistance in this respect.

CLADES has collaborated with UNEP/ORPALG in creating regional information systems in support of environmental management, acting as the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Group of Information Systems.

It has also participated in and provided technical assistance to the working group on the Environmental Training Network and has prepared surveys and taken part in the collection of data on Latin American training institutions.

In relation to the UNEP/INFOTERRA system it has organized and carried out a regional course for focal points.

The institution has achieved broad recognition for its preparation of the Directory on the Environments in Latin America and the Caribbean and for the publication of the Environmental Thesaurus.

In relation to planning, CLADES has been responsible for planning and the environment in the summaries of the INFOPLAN system.

4. The environment in the subregional headquarters, subregional and national offices of ECLAC

Special mention should be made of the action undertaken by the various territorial units of the ECLAC system which have played the role of catalysts and co-ordinators with regard to environmental issues.

The Mexico subregional office has been deeply involved in action carried out on the territory it covers. The presence of the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico has facilitated exchange and co-ordination of the respective programmes together with their co-ordination with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit.

The Mexico subregional office has contributed to studies into metropolitanization, as well as helping to get underway the Mexican case as part of the ECLAC/UNEP project on "Incorporation of the environment into processes of development planning: methodological aspects, case studies and horizontal co-operation", and has also carried out a case study into tourism in the Caribbean.

ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain has carried out a project entitled "Tourism and the environment in the Greater Caribbean region", in collaboration with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit.

The environment has been a constant concern of the Brasilia office. The office provided efficient contributions to studies of metropolitanization and environmental management in large water resource projects.

Special mention should be made of the studies into appropriate technology for human settlements in the wet tropics, an issue with which this office has been concerned since 1982.

As regards the expansion of the agricultural frontier, the Brasilia office has contributed to several studies which culminated in a regional seminar in Brasilia. It has also co-ordinated the preliminary studies for an analysis of prospects for the occupation of new territories over the next 20 years.

The execution of the project "Environmental systems and strategies for expanding the agricultural frontier in Latin America" opens up new potential for collaboration in this area which has already begun.

The Bogotá office has helped to channel national concern with this issue and to organize technical assistance missions related to the development of frontier zones and support for regional corporations.

The Montevideo office has played a similar role, its activities being centred on providing support for diagnoses of the environmental situation in Uruguay.

Finally, the Buenos Aires office has been intensely active in this area. Its studies into the development of regions of Argentina have incorporated the environmental dimension. The office has co-operated with the Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit in the study of the processes of environmental management in major water resource projects and in metropolitanization. It has co-ordinated technical assistance provided to various governmental and provincial organisms.

At the present time, and by common agreement with the Joint Unit, the office has provided vigorous support for the missions designed to provide advice on the establishment of the new under-secretariat for special environmental programmes, depending on the President of the Republic.

Notes

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3/ ECLAC, Economic and Social Council, op.cit., p. 138.

4/ ECLAC, Economic and Social Council, Official Records 1984, Supplement No.12, LC/G.1310.

5/ See also reports of the regional seminars on: Environmental management in major water resource projects, E/CEPAL/L.262; Expansion of the agricultural frontier, E/CEPAL/L.261; Metropolitanization and environment, E/CEPAL/L.266; and Agrarian policies and peasant survival in high altitude ecosystems, E/CEPAL/L.273.

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11/ ILPES, Report of the Third Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean, E/CEPAL/ILPES/R.33, 29 April 1981.

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