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**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT
DURING THE PERIOD 2015-2017***

* This document is the translation of an original which did not undergo editorial revision.

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INTRODUCTION

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, serves as technical secretariat for the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in Mexico City from 6 to 9 October 2015, ECLAC has provided technical support to the countries of the region in the fulfilment of the agreements reached at that session, in particular to the Government of Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference.¹

The following is a description of the activities carried out by the secretariat between the 2015 and 2017.

A. THIRD MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION

The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean held their third meeting from 4 to 6 October 2016 at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago. It was attended by representatives of the countries serving as Presiding Officers, as well as representatives of States members of the Commission. Also present at the meeting were representatives of non-governmental organizations and other guests.

On that occasion, the technical secretariat presented a proposed format for national reports on progress towards the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The purpose of this proposal was to provide general guidance to countries on the implementation of the mandate of the second session of the Conference.

This meeting also offered an opportunity to examine the progress made in the preparation of a proposal of indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

The secretariat supported the work of three review groups which were formed to examine the chapters of the proposal of indicators contained in the progress report. Group 1 focused on the review of chapters B, D and E on "Rights, needs, responsibilities and requirements of girls, boys, adolescents and youth"; "Universal access to sexual and reproductive health services" and "Gender equality", respectively. Group 2, meanwhile, reviewed chapters G, H and I on "Territorial inequality, spatial mobility and vulnerability", "Indigenous peoples: interculturalism and rights" and "Afrodescendants: rights and combating racial discrimination", respectively. Lastly, group 3 reviewed chapters A, C and F on "Full integration of population dynamics into sustainable development with gender equality and respect for human rights", "Ageing, social protection and socioeconomic challenges" and "International migration

¹ In addition to resolution 1(I), at its second session the Regional Conference on Population and Development adopted resolution 2(II) on ageing-related matters. Paragraph 5 of that resolution welcomed the proposal of Paraguay to host the Fourth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean (which would then be called the Fourth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons) in 2017. The draft report is currently being reviewed by the member countries of the Commission.

and protection of the human rights of all migrants", respectively. The groups then presented their conclusions in plenary session, and these were fundamental inputs for the subsequent revision of the proposal of indicators by the ad hoc working group with the support of the secretariat.

B. AD HOC WORKING GROUP FOR THE PREPARATION OF A PROPOSAL ON THE INDICATORS FOR REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP OF THE MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

At its second session, held in 2015, the Regional Conference on Population and Development decided to establish an ad hoc working group for the preparation of a proposal on the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, which it stipulated would be open-ended, composed of government-appointed experts, geographically representative and coordinated by Mexico.²

The working group was initially formed by Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Chile joined later, in May 2017. The working group's purpose has been to prepare—in consultation with the members of the Regional Conference on Population and Development—a proposal of the indicators to be used for the regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus, based on a review of the indicators suggested in the *Operational guide*, as well as in the proposals for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the follow-up of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.³

In the same resolution, the Conference decided that ECLAC, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), would serve as technical secretariat of the ad hoc working group, which would include the participation of representatives of civil society and other stakeholders in its tasks, and that the ad hoc working group may take into consideration the opinions of such participants when preparing its recommendations.⁴

Accordingly, and as established by the Conference, the secretariat worked with the ad hoc working group to prepare and present a progress report at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in Santiago from 4 to 6 October 2016. At that meeting, the Presiding Officers reviewed the preliminary proposal on the indicators contained in the progress report.

Pursuant to the agreements of that meeting, the ad hoc working group proceeded to update its report based on the Presiding Officers' review of the progress report.⁵

² See para. 13 of resolution 1(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean [online] https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/c1600275_report_crpd_2.pdf.

³ Ibid, para. 13.

⁴ Ibid, para. 14.

⁵ See para 12 of the agreements [online] https://crpd.cepal.org/3m/sites/poblacion3m/files/mdp3_agreements.pdf.

1. Proposed indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development

The Government of Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development and coordinator of the ad hoc working group, requested the technical secretariat to prepare a preliminary proposal on the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in order to facilitate and provide input for the efforts of the working group.

In accordance with the calendar of activities drawn up by the Chair, this preliminary proposal was sent to the member countries of the ad hoc working group in April 2016 for their consideration, with the request that they convey any comments in writing by the end of May.

The Chair also sent this document to a number of civil society organizations which had requested to join the working group and were admitted in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, and consistently with these organizations' participation in the working group.

The criteria used by the technical secretariat to draw up the preliminary proposal on the indicators stemmed from the aforementioned resolution. In general, the indicators suggested were taken from the *Operational guide for the implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development* and from the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus reinforcing the synergy between the Montevideo Consensus and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The proposal consists basically of a table setting out the priority measures, the preliminary indicators suggested and, where appropriate, additional information on the indicators, such as background, rationale, justification and metadata.

The Government of Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers and coordinator of the ad hoc working group, convened a first workshop to review progress in the preparation of the proposed indicators for regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.⁶

The purpose of the workshop was to review progress made thus far in the preparation of the proposed indicators for the regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. It was proposed that the outcomes of the workshop would be used as inputs for the technical secretariat to prepare a first draft of the proposal, which was to be completed by July 2016.

The workshop was held in Mexico City on 8 and 9 June 2016 and was organized by the Government of Mexico through the National Population Council (CONAPO), with the support of ECLAC, in its capacity as technical secretariat, and UNFPA.

The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants, including official delegations from the member countries of the working group, representatives of academic and civil society organizations from the region, and United Nations agencies and other organizations.

⁶ See the report on the workshop to review progress in the preparation of the proposed indicators for regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (DDR/1(MDP.3)), Santiago, 2016.

On that occasion, the participants drew a distinction between the national review and follow-up (including national reporting) to be carried out at the special meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, in 2017, bearing in mind the agreements of the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, and the regional review, which would take place in 2018, but emphasized that the two were complementary.

The ideas and suggestions put forward at the workshop were used as input for the preparation of the first draft of the proposed indicators, which was presented to the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development at their third meeting.

The third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago in October 2016, was devoted to reviewing and discussing the draft proposal of indicators contained in the progress report of the working group. As described in the section above, the review was carried out under a new work modality, through review groups, the results of which were reflected in the reports of the three groups that met at the third meeting and presented their conclusions at the plenary session. The conclusions were fundamental inputs that allowed the ad hoc working group, with the support of the secretariat, to finish refining the proposal of indicators and focus on preparing a revised version of the progress report.

In December 2016, the technical secretariat submitted this revised version of the progress report with the proposed indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus, which included the outcomes of the third meeting of the Presiding Officers, to the members of the working group for their consideration.

In addition, and at the request of the Chair, the technical secretariat worked on the development of proposed metadata for the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus, which are presented in a reference document for the special meeting of the Presiding Officers.

In its capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development and coordinator of the ad hoc working group, the Government of Mexico then convened a second workshop to review the progress in the preparation of the proposed indicators for regional follow-up to the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, with the support of the technical secretariat and UNFPA, which was held in Mexico City on 30 and 31 May 2017.

The purpose of the workshop was to review progress made in the preparation of the proposed indicators for the regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus and the related metadata. It was attended by around 70 people, including official delegations of the member countries of the working group, and representatives of regional civil society organizations and other organizations.

On that occasion, the countries expressed their general views on the proposed indicators and metadata and highlighted the integrated nature of the proposal and the need for a cross-cutting approach.

Over June and July, the technical secretariat sent revised versions of the progress report on the proposed indicators and the document with the metadata for the indicators, incorporating the outcomes of the second workshop in Mexico, to the members of the working group and of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, respectively, for their consideration.

2. Proposed metadata sheets for the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development

The proposed indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus, which are contained in the final report of the ad hoc working group, are informed by the preliminary proposal of indicators that was discussed at the first workshop to review progress in the preparation of the proposed indicators for regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, held in Mexico City, on 8 and 9 June 2016, as well as the review carried out at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, held in Santiago from 4 to 6 October 2016, and at the second workshop to review progress in the preparation of the proposed indicators for regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus, held in Mexico City on 30 and 31 May 2017.

The technical secretariat prepared the proposed indicators presented in the working document of the special meeting of the Presiding Officers, on the basis of the input from that last review.

With the support of the technical secretariat, the working group also developed proposed metadata sheets for the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, which are presented in the reference document for the special meeting. The purpose of the metadata is to provide countries with methodological guidelines enabling them to calculate the indicators in a similar way.

At a minimum, the metadata comprise the definitions, indications, sources and procedures needed to calculate the indicators for the regional monitoring of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development in a way that is comparable through time and across countries. The metadata are synthetic and precise and draw attention to any measurement difficulties. They are intended to provide the user with a short, simple explanation of how the data for each indicator are calculated.

The technical secretariat was assisted in the preparation of both documents, by the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The contributions of civil society organizations were also incorporated.

C. NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In resolution 1(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the countries asked the secretariat to propose a format for the national progress reports on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, to be presented at the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development.⁷ Accordingly, the secretariat prepared a proposal, which was duly reviewed and adopted by the Presiding Officers at their third meeting.⁸

⁷ Paragraph 11 of resolution 1(II): “Urges each country to prepare a progress report on implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, using a format to be circulated in due course, which shall be presented at the third session of the Regional Conference in 2017, and commissions the secretariat, in coordination with the United Nations Population Fund, to prepare that format for consideration and adoption by the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference at their third meeting in 2016.”

⁸ Paragraph 9 of the agreements of the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 4-6 October 2016.

The proposal is intended to provide countries with general guidelines as they take decisions on how to fulfil the mandate of the second session of the Regional Conference.

Bearing in mind the many different formats used to prepare reports on compliance with international instruments—from indices or general instructions to highly detailed guides—the secretariat felt it was apt to focus on general guidelines and give examples of specific criteria that could be used to prepare national reports, and suggest a methodology to guide the process.

The document was prepared as a complement to the *Operational guide for implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development* (LC/L.4061(CRPD.2/3)/Rev.1), published in 2015.⁹

Since then, the secretariat has been providing support and guidance to countries—both online and at face-to-face meetings—in the preparation of their respective national reports.

D. SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Until August 2017, the technical secretariat was engaged in the preparation of the third session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, which was to be held in San Salvador from 6 to 9 November 2017. In that context, on 24 and 25 January 2017, a mission of the secretariat was in El Salvador to coordinate organizational aspects of the event with government officials from the ministries of foreign affairs and public health, respectively.

Following the decision to postpone the third session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development until 2018, the secretariat has embarked on the organization of the special meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference, to be held in Santiago from 7 to 9 November 2017.

The organizational tasks include the preparation of the meeting documentation (provisional agenda, annotated provisional agenda, letters of invitation, preliminary programme, general information, and so forth), the preparation of working and reference documents, substantive presentations, the organization of work, orders of the day, website, online registration systems and meeting report, among others.

E. OUTLOOK FOR 2017-2018

Next year, the technical secretariat will continue to support the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, specifically in relation to the organization of the third session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 2018, as well as follow-up on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014. In that context, the secretariat will prepare the regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

⁹ At the second session of the Regional Conference in 2015, the *Operational guide for implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development* was welcomed as a voluntary technical tool for assisting countries in the implementation of the priority measures of the Consensus and the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.