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Sixth meeting of the Executive Committee of the
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Madrid, 25 and 26 September 2006

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 participants in the first three meetings of the Conference confirmed the need for a regional intergovernmental forum to coordinate the programme of cooperation activities and the usefulness of such a forum, and attested to member States' interest in taking an active part in the design and implementation of the programme. The growing participation of multilateral cooperation agencies also demonstrates the importance of this meeting as a mechanism for the exchange of information and the coordination of programmes of work.

In its resolution 2000/7, the United Nations Economic and Social Council provided that the Executive Committee should have the following duties: to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Conference; to draw up, every two years, a biennial programme of regional and international statistical cooperation activities, to be submitted at the regular meeting of the Conference; to follow up the implementation of the agreements reached at the Conference and the tasks entrusted to it by the Conference, particularly the biennial programme of activities; and to decide on the documentation required for its meetings.

At the third meeting of the Conference, held in Santiago, Chile, in June 2005, the representatives of the member States elected the following countries to serve on the Executive Committee of the Conference: Mexico (Chair); Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Jamaica, Spain and the United States of America (members). The Committee's mandate will expire at the end of the next regular meeting of the Conference, to be held in mid-2007. The fifth meeting of the Executive Committee, held in November 2005, reviewed progress in the programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007 and adopted a number of agreements, mostly aimed at strengthening the role and activities of the working groups.

In particular, the Conference tasked the Executive Committee with drafting a new version of the strategic plan 2005-2015, taking into account the priorities and guidelines provided by delegations during the third meeting of the Conference. In accordance with that mandate, the Executive Committee at its fifth meeting considered and adopted the revised draft strategic plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas 2005-2015, and requested the Chair to prepare, with the support of the secretariat, the final version of the strategic plan to be submitted to the Conference for adoption at its fourth meeting. The Executive Committee also considered and gave preliminary approval, in the framework of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) initiative relating to regional public goods, to the following group of projects: institution-building, based on the document presented by Colombia; the census round, taking into account the expanded-MERCOSUR document; and migration and remittances, based on the proposal of the countries of Central America. Lastly, the Executive Committee requested that the secretariat prepare a summary of the substantive issues to be considered at the fourth meeting of the Conference.

In accordance with that mandate, the Executive Committee at its sixth meeting will examine the final draft strategic plan to be presented for approval at the fourth meeting of the Conference. The Committee will also analyse progress in the functioning, activities and agenda of the working groups, and in that light it will assess the strengths and weaknesses of that new working method, which was set up following the third meeting of the Conference, and its future development. The subregional bodies' reports on their activities will be considered, with particular attention to coordination, to their contribution to achieving the goals relating to the programme for 2005-2007, and to strengthening intraregional and international cooperation in statistical areas. In the framework of follow-up to the agreements reached at its fifth meeting, the Committee will consider the development of projects coming under the IDB initiative relating to regional public goods.

Lastly, in preparation for the fourth meeting of the Conference to be held in June 2007, and taking account of the purposes of the Conference and the goals of the strategic plan, the Committee at its sixth meeting will consider the provisional agenda, the guidelines for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities for 2007-2009, and the substantive matters to be discussed.

B. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Executive Committee will have before it the following provisional agenda for its adoption or modification:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Progress report on the activities of the Programme of Regional Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007
3. Report and discussion on follow-up to the agreements reached at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and at the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee
 - (a) Consideration of the final draft strategic plan 2005-2015 for final adoption by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC at its fourth meeting
 - (b) Consideration of the functioning and activities of the working groups established by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC at its third meeting
 - (c) Review and execution of the initiative on regional public goods
 - (d) Mobilization of the resources required to implement the strategic plan 2005-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and its biennial programme
 - (e) Coordination of subregional statistical activities
4. Preparations for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC
 - (a) Consideration of the substantive issues to be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

- (b) Analysis of draft guidelines for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities for 2007-2009
- (c) Consideration of the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

5. Other matters

6. Agreements and decisions

2. Progress report on the activities of the Programme of Regional Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007

At its fifth meeting, the Executive Committee took cognizance of and discussed a revised version of the programme of regional statistical work prepared by the secretariat, which took into account an agreement adopted at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. That revised version consolidates two documents presented at the third meeting of the Conference: one on the draft programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2294(CEA.2005/4)), and one on the draft regional programme of statistical work of the ECLAC system (LC/L.2316(CEA/2005/6)). The secretariat will present, for information and discussion, a progress report on the activities of the programme of regional statistical work during the period from July 2005-June 2006. These activities result from joint actions by Governments, national statistical offices, other members of national statistical systems, regional and international bodies and ECLAC, with particular emphasis on those issues and activities which correspond more directly to the objectives of the Conference.

3. Report and discussion on follow-up to the agreements reached at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and at the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee

(a) Consideration of the final draft strategic plan 2005-2015 for final adoption by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC at its fourth meeting

Pursuant to the agreement reached at the third meeting of the Conference, and the third agreement adopted at the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee, the Chair will submit for consideration by the Committee the proposed final version of the strategic plan 2005-2015, to be presented and discussed at the fourth meeting of the Conference for final adoption. The Executive Committee will review and approve the formulation of the four strategic goals of the plan and the specific goals arising out of them, and will exchange views on the guidelines for action which will guide international, regional and bilateral cooperation between statistical offices and international and regional bodies with a view to achieving the objectives of the Conference.

Working documents

- Strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2293(CEA.2005/3))
- Revised draft strategic plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC 2005-2015 (LC/L.2388)
- Final draft strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2575)

(b) Consideration of the functioning and activities of the working groups established by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC at its third meeting

The working groups established by the Conference at its third meeting have an important commitment in the context of the activities needed in order to achieve the goals set out by the Conference in its strategic plan 2005-2015. One of these activities is the preparation and execution of projects and programmes which contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The creation of these working groups responds to the desire expressed by the Conference to involve the countries more actively in implementing the programme of regional statistical activities. Working groups may serve as operational means of encouraging the sharing of experience between countries, promoting joint activities and initiatives and, in short, furthering the development of those topics which are, at a particular time, considered to be very important and worthy of priority treatment.

The secretariat will coordinate with the working groups the preparation and presentation of progress reports on their functioning, activities and programme of work. On that basis, the Executive Committee will assess the strengths and weaknesses of this new way of organizing the work of the Conference and its future development. The Committee will analyse the progress reports, with the particular goal of suggesting measures to strengthen the current initiatives of those working groups which are working well and of adopting measures and actions to overcome delays or lack of progress that may affect some groups, and to avoid any duplication of effort with other activities and bodies.

(c) Review and execution of the initiative on regional public goods

The Executive Committee will consider the progress of the projects which received preliminary approval at the previous meeting of the Executive Committee in the context of the initiative on regional public goods, and which were submitted to IDB for the allocation of resources. The Committee will also analyse the status of the remaining project proposals in order to adopt the necessary measures for timely and appropriate implementation of the overall financing of the aforementioned IDB programme.

(d) Mobilization of the resources required to implement the strategic plan 2005-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and its biennial programme

As mentioned during the discussions at the third meeting of the Conference, the achievement of its objectives depends to a great extent on its capacity to mobilize the technical and financial resources needed for its activities. The Executive Committee agreed at its fifth meeting to request the secretariat, supported by the working groups and the members of the Committee, to investigate international sources of financing which could help to achieve the goals contained in the strategic plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and its biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities. The Committee will consider a report on this subject, to be prepared by the secretariat and the Chair.

(e) Coordination of subregional statistical activities

To emphasize the importance of efforts towards regional harmonization and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Conference at its third meeting decided that participants should be kept informed of the initiatives agreed on in various areas at the subregional level in order to avoid duplication

of work and to support such initiatives and promote their consistency with the regional goals set out in the strategic plan 2005-2015.

The Executive Committee will consider the report prepared by the member countries chosen to represent their geographical areas, the statistical development priorities in their respective subregions and the main projects under way which relate to the objectives and activities of the programme of regional statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007.

4. Preparations for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

(a) Consideration of the substantive issues to be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

At its fifth meeting, the Executive Committee requested the secretariat to prepare a summary of the substantive issues to be dealt with at the fourth meeting of the Conference, and the secretariat prepared a list of substantive issues which could be of interest. The list was transmitted to the members of the Conference so that they could indicate their preferences and decide who would be responsible for the different topics. For purposes of analysis, the Executive Committee will be provided with a report by the secretariat, based on countries' responses to the questionnaire and the suggestions arising out of informal consultations. Lastly, it will evaluate progress in the preparation of substantive topics by the countries responsible.

(b) Analysis of draft guidelines for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities for 2007-2009

The Executive Committee is required to consider and produce proposed basic guidelines for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities for 2007-2009. In its discussions, it will take particular account of the fact that the programme is a key element in defining the objectives of the Conference. The programme summarizes the specific aims for a two-year period; those aims must be consistent with one or more of the four strategic goals, and must contribute to their achievement. In accordance with the specific goals, the programme must contain clear guidelines to direct and promote the concrete actions of countries, international and subregional organizations, and the various coordination and cooperation entities created for these purposes, such as working groups and expert committees.

To that end, the secretariat will present the central elements and objectives of the programme of work, focusing on the main challenges and responsibilities facing national statistical systems and the countries' statistical offices. Particular attention will be given to technical challenges and responsibilities, and those relating to institution-building and human resources education and training, mainly arising out of the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, the 2010 round of censuses, and the updating of the System of National Accounts (SNA), which is planned to begin in 2008.

(c) Consideration of the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

The Committee will take note of and consider the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Conference.

5. Other matters

Under this item, the delegations will consider any other issues they may wish to raise.

6. Agreements and decisions

The Executive Committee will take decisions as appropriate and will determine the place and date of the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.