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Economic Commission for Latin America

CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS WITHIN THE ECLA SYSTEM

Note by the Secretariat

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/SUMMARY

SUMMARY

ECLA is carrying out an extensive programme of activities in the field of technical and economic co-operation among developing countries and regions. The programme is based on the role played by the regional commissions in this field within the United Nations system and is defined by the mandates which the member governments have given to the ECLA Secretariat during the successive sessions of the Commission. This document contains a detailed analysis of the progress of the operational activities which the Secretariat has carried out since the nineteenth session in compliance with resolutions 438 (XIX), 439 (XIX) and 440 (XIX).

The first section of this document discusses the main elements which permit a more precise definition of the concept of TCDC and ECDC within the framework of the United Nations system and stresses the complementary relationship which naturally exists between these two dimensions of co-operation among developing countries and regions.

The next two chapters provide a brief description of the TCDC and ECDC promotion and support activities which the ECLA system has conducted at the regional and interregional levels between 1981 and 1983. The activities conducted at the regional level are detailed according to the area of work; at an interregional level, the activities carried out jointly by ECLA and other regional commissions are analysed, particularly those conducted together with the Economic Commission for Africa.

The fourth chapter of this document summarizes the most important lessons which the Secretariat has learned from the practical experience it has accumulated in the field of TCDC and ECDC promotion and support in connection with both its major achievements and the obstacles which still remain.

Finally, the last chapter discusses some factors which could aid in more clearly defining the orientation of the work of the ECLA system in the near future with a view towards consolidating and reinforcing the results obtained thus far and improving its collaboration with the countries, as well as with subregional and regional bodies and organizations, in an effort to overcome the obstacles which still hinder the work of promoting and supporting TCDC and ECDC.

I. TCDC AND ECDC: CONCEPT AND MANDATES

The new approach to technical and economic co-operation among developing countries and regions is based not only on the fundamental ideas of national and collective self-sufficiency, autonomy in decision-making and reduction of the dependence of developing countries, but also on the maximum utilization of the resources, capacities and experiences of these countries.

TCDC refers essentially to the deliberate and voluntary interchange of technical resources, capacities and experiences among two or more developing countries for their mutual benefit. This form of co-operation is initiated, organized and executed by the developing countries themselves, which are its primary and direct agents. Both the financial resources and the other factors needed to put the activities of TCDC into operation are equally the prime responsibility of the said countries.

/The concept

The concept of economic co-operation among developing countries (ECDC), on the other hand, has emerged as a new mode of action at various international fora convened within the United Nations framework. At these meetings it has been recognized, among other things, that the structure of international economic relations has not favoured the aspirations of the developing countries for a sustained and balanced economic growth, with the result that these countries have taken important initiatives with a view to reformulating the conventional schemes for international co-operation, which has traditionally been supplied by the developed countries to those in process of development. In general these initiatives have gradually shaped the conceptual and operational development of ECDC, as well as the progressive identification of new priorities and modes of mutual co-operation.

Technical and economic co-operation among the developing countries and regions has several essential operational traits: a) it is a wide-ranging mode of international relationship; that is, it can take place on different levels of action (subregional, regional or interregional), between one country and a group of countries or between groups of countries, with the participation of agents both public and semipublic through which the countries and their governments function; b) it implies a factor of reciprocity, in that the countries taking part are simultaneously givers and receivers of the co-operation and not merely receivers, as in the traditional form of international co-operation; c) it is complementary to the traditional technical and economic co-operation and does not seek to replace it, except in those cases where the process of TCDC/ECDC itself gradually enables the developing countries to strengthen the elements of reciprocity in their co-operation and enlarge its scope; and d) it can be applied to any sphere or field of action that may be of interest to the countries involved in this relationship.

Although the implementation of TCDC and ECDC is the business of the countries themselves, the United Nations system plays an important role of support and promotion. In general terms, the activities of the United Nations agencies and organs directly concerned with promoting and supporting the aforesaid technical and economic co-operation take the form of the direct provision of services, as, for example, the execution of studies to identify possibilities or mechanisms of co-operation in specific areas, or the collection, processing and dissemination of basic information to help the countries to initiate, implement or evaluate TCDC and ECDC activities; institutional support for organizations of the public, private or academic sector -which, in their turn, seek to stimulate or foster co-operation among the same sectors in the developing countries- in order to help them to strengthen their own action in the horizontal co-operation field or to create and develop bonds of co-operation among themselves; support for co-operation activities among two or more developing countries, which can assume various forms, as, for example, the organization of tours of experts from one developing country to another to learn its technical advances, and the financing of missions of experts from one country to collaborate with another.

/Within the

Within the United Nations system, ECDC has generally been conceived in terms of priority economic sectors, so that this form of co-operation has a substantive content which is mainly concerned with trade matters and finance mechanisms. In this connection, UNCTAD, which is the focal point of the United Nations system for ECDC, defined from the start the range and content of ECDC, identifying priority spheres of action such as monetary and financial co-operation; the expansion of trade and a global system of trade priorities among developing countries; multinational marketing and production enterprises; the transfer and development of technology, and co-operation among State commercial organizations.

TCDC, in contrast, functions in some degree from a different angle, since it is not so much concerned with particular sectors as with modes of operation. TCDC has a much wider range of application than ECDC, which means in practice that it has no priority sectors such as those normally associated with ECDC. In the latter, the United Nations system has a field of action which is often pre-established; in the former, the system leaves it to the countries themselves to determine the priority fields of action, since what characterizes TCDC is a particular form or mode of co-operation which can be applied to any sector. Both coincide in their geographical application, since they can take place on the national level, by pairs of countries, and on the subregional, regional or interregional level.

TCDC and ECDC, therefore, are two large and mutually complementary dimensions of regional and interregional co-operation, and both assume the participation of countries which have similar needs and face analogous obstacles in their search for well-being in accordance with their particular styles of development. In this broad view of co-operation among developing countries, the institutions and entities of the public sector are designated as the leading actors in the activities of TCDC and ECDC in conformity with their national priorities. Nevertheless, when certain levels of activity are reached, which may vary according to the specific sectors involved, the active participation of entities of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions in general can certainly make a notable contribution to the full realization of TCDC and ECDC activities.

In the present context of the profound crisis affecting the international economy, which has had particularly severe repercussions on the developing countries, technical and economic co-operation among the latter becomes increasingly important as an instrument which can contribute not only to the steady growth of their bargaining power and their influence vis-à-vis the developed countries, but also to the expansion of the productive and technological capacity of the developing world, by utilizing to the full the opportunities for co-operation that it offers.

Within the United Nations system the regional commissions play an important part in the activities directly associated with co-operation among developing countries and regions, not only because of their composition or geographical location, but also because of their accumulated experience, direct and practical, of the problems and realities of the developing countries they serve, and because of the multisectoral activities in which they are engaged. Hence the regional commissions contribute at least two valuable elements to the promotion of

/co-operation among

co-operation among developing countries: the direct knowledge they have accumulated as to the real capacities and most pressing needs of the developing countries in their respective regions, and the variety of concrete experiences they have acquired over a wide range of economic and social problems affecting these countries.

In accordance with the general framework and basic principles of TCDC and ECDC set out in the Action Plan of Buenos Aires (August-September 1978) and the Action Programme of Caracas (May 1981) respectively, the governments of the States members of ECLA have adopted various resolutions specifically referring to co-operation among developing countries on the subregional, regional and interregional levels. These resolutions have progressively outlined the terms of reference that govern the activities of the Secretariat in response to the expressed wish of the regional governments.

Thus, at the nineteenth session of ECLA held in Montevideo in 1981, the governments adopted the resolutions 438 (XIX) on technical-co-operation among developing countries; 439 (XIX) on economic co-operation among developing countries; and 440 (XIX) on technical and economic co-operation between the Caribbean countries and the other countries of the region.

The first of these assigned to the Secretariat a wide range of tasks, such as to identify, promote and disseminate new approaches to the stimulation of regional co-operation; to strengthen the mechanisms existing in the Secretariat for promoting and supporting TCDC and ECDC; to collaborate, at the request of the governments, in the creation of speedy links and mechanisms between the national focal points for co-operation among developing countries; to identify, at the request of the governments and groups of countries interested, TCDC and ECDC programmes and projects to be undertaken jointly with other regional commissions; to evaluate experiences and results of co-operation projects; and to adopt suitable measures for strengthening and extending co-operation and co-ordination with the other regional commissions.

In resolution 439 (XIX) the Secretariat was asked to consider the possibility of providing advisory services and of preparing studies in accordance with the results of the High-Level Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, organized by the Group of 77 (Caracas, Venezuela, 13-19 May 1981), at the conclusion of which the developing countries belonging to the Group of 77 adopted the Action Programme of Caracas, which now constitutes a broad and at the same time more detailed frame of reference for orienting the action of the countries concerned to promote ECDC at all its levels.

Finally, resolution 440 (XIX) gave the Secretariat various mandates for strengthening the links of technical and economic co-operation between the countries and groups of countries of the Caribbean and the other countries and groups of countries of the region. To this end, the Secretariat was requested to prepare a programme for the short, medium and long term to promote, at the request of the interested governments, specific projects for mobilizing and reinforcing TCDC and ECDC among the above-mentioned countries and groups of countries.

/II. ACTION

II. ACTION OF THE ECLA SYSTEM AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

At the regional level, between 1981 and 1983, ECLA has concentrated its efforts on the promotion and support of TCDC in specific fields included in its work programme. The activities embarked on during this period represent, in large measure, a continuation of the TCDC projects begun earlier or the strengthening of the components of TCDC contained in the programmes and subprogrammes of the ECLA system. The network of UNDP Resident Representatives in the region has been a valuable element of support not only in performing these activities but also in providing appropriate institutional links with the governmental centres of TCDC co-ordination at national level.

A recent example of this is the co-operation agreement signed on 27 December 1983 between ECLA, UNDP and the Government of the Argentine Republic for a total sum of 10 002 800 Argentine pesos and for an initial term of two years with a view to establishing a programme to promote and facilitate the technical and economic co-operation that the Government of the Argentine Republic wishes to offer to other developing countries within the region and outside it. The programme will concentrate on areas such as agricultural development and food systems; science and technology for development; and development of natural resources, including multipurpose water and energy resources.

On the domestic plane, the Secretariat has reinforced its co-ordination centre for the promotion and support activities of ECLA in relation to co-operation among developing countries, which remains in the charge of the Division of Operations. This has resulted in a more effective systematization and co-ordination of the numerous activities that have direct components of TCDC and ECDC promotion and support in the Secretariat's work programme.

A useful tool for stimulating the work of co-ordination and disseminating information on the TCDC and ECDC activities promoted by ECLA has been the bulletin Co-operation and Development, published quarterly since January 1981 in Spanish and English and distributed to over 1 600 and 800 recipients respectively.

A. Co-operation in transport and facilitation of international trade

Even though transport plays an important part in the expansion and reinforcement of trade relations among developing countries and in the promotion of regional integration, non-tariff barriers still persist which hamper intra-regional trade, such as excessive documentation, lack of knowledge of dispositions in force and disparity between the norms and regulations of the different countries. There is thus a clear need for co-operation to facilitate trade among countries.

/Moreover, transport

Moreover, transport equipment and systems are constantly being modified and this, while improving the handling of freight, is introducing a growing complexity into transport technology. The dearth of financial and human resources causes many countries of the region to be in danger of falling behind in the technological advances in this field, which in its turn creates concrete needs of technical or economic co-operation to help these countries to overcome this deficit and make better use of the new transport technologies already devised or adapted by other more advanced developing countries.

In view of these difficulties, and in pursuance of resolution 390 (XVIII) of the Commission, a Meeting of Experts was held at ECLA headquarters between 16 and 20 March 1981 on the subject of facilitation of trade and institutional reinforcement of international transport in South America. At this meeting, which was attended by experts from all the South American countries, approval was given to the initiation of a programme of co-operation among these countries with a view to promoting the institutional reinforcement of international transport and the facilitation of trade. In addition, specific measures were recommended in areas such as the establishment of internal freight terminals and the adoption of an agreed régime of customs transit, on the basis of the advantages that might accrue from utilizing the convention TIR II.1/

Additionally, within the framework of the project being conducted by ECLA, with the support of the Government of the Netherlands, on economic co-operation among Latin American countries for the creation of enterprises to maintain and repair containers (REMAIN), ECLA organized three technical seminars which took place respectively in Rio de Janeiro (15 to 16 April 1982), Bogotá (19 to 20 April 1982) and Santo Domingo (22 to 23 April 1982) and were attended by representatives of the public and private transport sectors of countries of the region. The programme of these seminars included the analysis of topics such as the following: a) the use of containers, their importance for the countries of the region and the economic aspects of their repair and maintenance; b) the establishment and management of an infrastructure for the repair of containers; c) special needs of the hirers of containers; d) norms governing the repair of containers; e) preparation and external painting of containers; and f) identification marks. The success of these seminars aroused the interest of the Economic Commission for Africa to hold similar seminars in its own region, for which it recently requested ECLA's collaboration.

Under the auspices of the Chilean State Railway Company a seminar was held at ECLA between 5 and 9 October 1981 on the operational and administrative information systems of the Latin American railways, organized by the joint ALAF/World Bank/ECLA project on the strengthening and unification of the railway information systems. Also within the terms of this rpoject the Second Meeting of Experts was held at ECLA from 22 to 26 November 1982 on the systems of

/operational and

operational and administrative information of the Ibero-American railways. At this meeting an analysis was made of important aspects of the use of information for taking decisions on overall railway management, since the subject is one of great interest and concern to the Latin American railway system.

Finally, ECLA and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), with the collaboration of UNDP and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), organized the First Meeting on regional maritime co-operation among South American countries, Mexico and Panama, which took place at ECLA between 17 and 21 October 1983. Twelve Latin American countries took part in the meeting, which was also attended by observers from regional entities associated with maritime transport, such as the South Pacific Permanent Commission, the Maritime Front Mixed Technical Commission and the River Plate Administrative Commission. The agenda included some topics of undoubted importance for intra-regional technical co-operation, such as the analysis of methodologies for standardizing maritime statistics and shipping documentation, the forms of regional co-operation for action in the case of heavy discharges of hydrocarbons, and regional co-operation for the training of mercantile personnel and coastguards.

B. Activities of TCDC and ECDC in the field of natural resources

One of the central factors of economic and social development in the Latin American countries is the full utilization of their natural resources, especially in view of the enormous potential of the region in this respect. For this reason, ECLA has directed its activities in this sector, on the one hand to the improvement of aspects of the operational management of those resources which have a multiple impact on regional development and integration (such as water, energy and mining resources), and on the other, to the promotion of co-operation among the countries of the region in this field.

In relation to the regulation and operational management of water resources, ECLA, with the support of the Netherlands Government, carried out a project of co-operation among the Latin American countries in connection with the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, the aims of which were: to establish guidelines for co-operation in programming the financing of projects in this field; to promote a dialogue among experts on the subject, so as to examine and analyse possibilities of co-operation in the pertinent economic and social aspects and to study suitable mechanisms for realizing this co-operation among the countries of the region. As part of this project, ECLA organized a Latin American Seminar on Horizontal Co-operation for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which was held at

/its headquarters

its headquarters from 9 to 13 March 1981, with the participation of South American countries. The meeting was able to identify in each of the countries represented a list of TCDC projects on the basis of the offers received and the concrete needs of each country in the above-mentioned field.

The Second Latin American Seminar on Horizontal Co-operation for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, this time for Central American and Caribbean countries, was held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, from 11 to 14 January 1982. Once again the seminar was organized by ECLA with a contribution from the Netherlands Government. At the meeting the experts of the said countries recounted their national experiences and the advances achieved in the coverage of water supply and environmental sanitation services and adopted various recommendations for implementing horizontal co-operation strategies on the national, subregional and regional levels. Moreover, various areas were identified which offered the immediate prospect of realizing concrete projects of mutual co-operation in the field in question.

Mining constitutes the pillar of the economy in several countries of the region, which compels a constant deployment of efforts to exploit to the full their mineral resources and improve their production and marketing systems. On the basis of studies on the evolution and prospects of certain basic minerals in Latin America, ECLA carried out a project of promotion and support for the setting up of mechanisms of intra-regional co-operation in the field of mining resources. Within the terms of this project, which had the support of the Netherlands Government and the collaboration of the Colombian Mining Enterprise (ECOMINAS) ECLA organized the Meeting for Horizontal Co-operation in the Development of the Mining Resources of Latin America, which was held in Bogotá, from 14 to 18 June 1982 and was attended by experts of the governments and public enterprises linked with the mining sector of several countries of the region. At this meeting various measures were adopted to promote a horizontal co-operation system in respect of mineral resources, prominent among which were the recommendation to create a consultative committee integrated by all the public and private bodies in Latin America associated with mining and a co-ordination secretariat charged with the promotion of co-operation among the countries of the region for the development of mineral resources.

When the First Ibero-American Workshop on Mining, organized by the General Office of Geology and Mines of Ecuador with the collaboration of TECNIBERIA (Spanish Association of Enterprises and Offices of Studies, Projects and Research) was held in Quito, from 25 to 27 January 1983, ECLA convened a panel on intra-regional mining relations, the main object of which was to examine

/possible options

possible options for the establishment of a regional organization to promote TCDC and ECDC among the mining companies of the region. This panel consisted of directors of State and private bodies of the mining sector, and representatives of the Latin American Iron and Steel Institute (ILAFA), the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Association of Medium-Scale Mineral Producers of Mexico, the Colombian Mining Company (ECOMINAS) and the General Planning Office of the Ministry of Energy and Mines of Peru.

C. Co-operation in the field of environment and development

The effects produced on the environment by the exploitation of natural resources have a positive or negative impact, according to circumstances, on the potentialities of economic and social development and on the conditions and quality of life of the population. Given that the interrelations between population, resources, environment and development should be adequately incorporated into the design and execution of development measures and policies, the incorporation of the environmental dimension into the analyses, policies and strategies of development of the countries of the region has been taken into account in some of the activities of the ECLA system. The work programme for this area of activity includes measures which favour horizontal co-operation on the basis of specific studies conducted in the countries themselves and with their participation.

With this in view, and under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), ECLA organized a series of seminars to promote horizontal co-operation in the environmental and development field.

The first of these was the Seminar on Environmental Management and Large Hydraulic Works, held in Concordia, Argentina, from 1 to 3 October 1981, with the collaboration of the Mixed Technical Commission of Salto Grande (Argentina/Uruguay). The participants included representatives of most of the great multivalent dams of the region, such as Salto Grande (Argentina/Uruguay), Río Guayas (Ecuador), Valle del San Francisco (Brazil), Tinajones (Peru), Paraná (Argentina), Colbún (Chile), and Yacyretá (Paraguay/Argentina). The case studies analysed at the meeting (Salto Grande, Tinajones and Valle del San Francisco) and the interchange of experiences on the environmental effects of the great dams manifested the possibility of setting up mechanisms of co-operation and contact among the technicians and administrators of these hydraulic works in the region.

The Regional Seminar on Expansion of the Agricultural Frontier and Environment in Latin America, which was the second of the series, was held in Brasilia from 10 to 13 November 1981. At the meeting the bases were laid for

/the strengthening

the strengthening of co-operation among the countries of the region in this field, on the premise that the region still has a vast territory that is not only sparsely populated but is also subject to a rapid agricultural expansion.

The problems of metropolitan growth and the environment were studied at a third seminar, this time in Curitiba, Brazil, from 16 to 19 November 1981. At this regional meeting reference was made to the importance of horizontal co-operation for the interchange of experiences gained at local level, in order to overcome the environmental problems created by metropolitan growth.

On 14 and 15 December 1982 a meeting of experts was held at ECLA to consider the possibilities of creating a permanent mechanism of horizontal co-operation among officials of metropolitan areas in Latin America and the Caribbean. This meeting was convened by ECLA in pursuance of the agreements reached in the aforesaid regional seminar on metropolitan growth and the environment, held in Curitiba, and was attended by representatives of metropolitan organizations of the large urban centres of various countries of the region.

Lastly, between 23 and 26 March 1982, a Regional Seminar was held in Quito on Agrarian Policies and Peasant Survival in High-Altitude Ecosystems, which received the support of the Secretariat of Integral Rural Development of the Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador. The meeting laid emphasis on the growing complexity of the patterns of rural development in the Andean countries of Latin America and recommended some follow-up action, such as the creation of a network of technical co-operation among the national institutions interested in peasant survival in the high-altitude ecosystems.

D. Co-operation activities in economic and social planning

The activities relating to development planning within the ECLA system fall within the terms of reference of the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES). Within its terms of reference, ILPES has stimulated the creation of the system of co-operation among planning organizations in the countries of the region, which has strengthened the ties between these entities and stimulated the interchange of experiences of mutual interest.

The growing employment of TCDC mechanisms and linkages among the regional planning bodies gives rise, in a sense, to a new phase in the activities of ILPES. Throughout its existence ILPES has frequently been a decisive factor in the creation and consolidation of the national planning systems both on the global and the sectoral and regional plane. Its action has helped most of

/these structures

these structures to achieve sufficient institutional maturity and technical experience to enable them today to initiate and develop activities of mutual co-operation.

In this context, ILPES entered into an agreement with the General Co-ordination of Agroindustrial Development (CODAI) of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources of Mexico, to execute a programme of interchange of technical co-operation with countries of the region and a joint participation in concrete projects. As part of this programme, ILPES organized in Asunción, Paraguay, a five-week course on the evaluation of agroindustrial projects, with the co-operation of experts from CODAI. Within the framework of this same agreement, ILPES organized a meeting of personnel of CODAI and of the Government of Ecuador to examine possible activities of horizontal co-operation between Mexico and Ecuador in matters relating to industrial development planning.

In addition, ILPES and the Secretariat of Planning of the State of Piaui, Brazil, made an agreement of technical co-operation to strengthen planning at the State level. In this agreement the support of ILPES will take the form of promoting co-operation among the State planning superintendencies of Brazil, and between these and the planning offices of other Latin American countries.

ILPES also promoted a programme of technical co-operation between the Development Corporation of Guayas (CDG), Ecuador and the Corporation of the Valle del Cauca, Colombia; the latter will collaborate with the CDG in matters relating to regional development.

Likewise, ILPES took the initiative in promoting co-operation between Brazil and the Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana, to take advantage of the experience obtained in the Radar Amazonia project (RADAM BRASIL) in order to carry out a study on the natural resources of the Venezuelan Amazon region. The RADAM BRASIL project, in the charge of the Ministry of Mines and Energy, has created and applied for several years an integral methodology for interpreting and conducting studies on the potentiality of the natural resources of the Amazon region. Up to the present, the two countries have exchanged information missions and established the basis for a co-operation agreement on the subject.

Finally, ILPES gave its services to the Secretariat of Planning of Haiti to prepare a technical co-operation agreement between the said Secretariat and the National Planning Office of Chile (ODEPLAN). The Government of Haiti is interested in studying the conception and achievements of ODEPLAN in relation to the national system of projects, and the methodology applied in public investment programmes of national, regional (within the country) and sectoral scope.

/E. Co-operation

E. Co-operation in relation to economic and social information

Bearing in mind that economic and social information is a basic instrument in development planning, ECLA has attached great importance to the task of improving in all its aspects the store of information of interest for development, and in recent years has made significant contributions to the countries of the region in this respect.

Within the ECLA system, the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) performs the tasks relating to information and documentation for economic and social development. From the standpoint of its specific contribution to the promotion and support of TCDC, the creation of information services through networks of co-operation in which the respective national infrastructures take part is a mechanism which has been employed with success in different fields of action, such as economic and social planning and the environment.

Specifically in this field ECLA and ILPES, through CLADES, with the contribution of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and within the programme of co-operation and co-ordination among planning agencies, have organized the Information Planning System (INFOPLAN), which is a decentralized network consisting of participating centres which co-operate and co-ordinate among themselves at national, subregional and regional levels. CLADES acts as regional co-ordinating centre, while the Caribbean Documentation Centre, under the ECLA Subregional Office for the Caribbean, with headquarters in Port of Spain, functions as a subregional co-ordinating centre. The work done by CLADES in relation to INFOPLAN includes technical support for the countries, information processing, dissemination and services and the evaluation of activities carried out at the national, subregional and regional levels.

Another important effort of co-operation in this field is the Caribbean Information System for Economic and Social Planning (CARISPLAN), created by ECLA in 1979, also with the help of the IDRC. The aim of CARISPLAN, which functions through the Caribbean Documentation Centre, is to support development and co-operation activities in the subregion, providing the users with information services in which the national planning agencies, focal points of the system, take part.

Furthermore, ECLA, in conjunction with the Regional Office for Latin America of the United Nations Environment Programme, organized the Second Regional Meeting on Information Systems for Co-operation and Co-ordination in matters concerning the Environment, which was held at ECLA headquarters from 9 to 11 December 1981. The objectives of this meeting included the promotion of

/co-operation and

co-operation and co-ordination among the information systems with a view to offering the users an integrated set of services, in accordance with the priorities established by the countries of the region in relation to the environment.

The meeting was attended by representatives of various systems and networks of information that operate in the region and cover practical aspects of the environmental field and sanitary engineering (REPIDISCA, Lima, Peru); agriculture (IICA, San José, Costa Rica); population (DOCPAL/CELADE); health (BIREME, São Paulo, Brazil); human settlements (LATINAH, Bogotá, Colombia); economic and social documentation (CLADES/ECLA) and natural resources (INDERENA/INFOTERRA, Bogotá, Colombia).

F. Co-operation in trade and export financing

International trade is an essential component of economic co-operation among developing countries, both on the intra-regional and interregional level. Within the broad spectrum of subjects handled by ECLA in this field there are aspects of particular importance from the standpoint of co-operation among developing countries. An example of this is the support given to the processes of economic integration and co-operation existing in the region, to which ECLA has traditionally devoted special attention. Another important aspect of this subject is export financing; in this respect ECLA has done notable work in favour of the creation of co-operation mechanisms suited to the reality of the countries of the region, including the organization of a Round Table on the Financing of Exports of Manufactures in Latin America, which was held at the Commission's headquarters from 29 June to 1 July 1981, with the support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. At this Round Table a discussion took place on action guidelines for the promotion of regional co-operation aimed at strengthening export financing on the national, subregional and regional levels, and the mechanisms of export credit insurance.

As a result of this Round Table a second meeting was held at ECLA from 2 to 4 December 1981, which culminated in a recommendation to create the Latin American Association of Agencies for Export Credit Insurance (ALASECE). The statutes of this regional association were approved at a meeting convened by ECLA and held in the Reinsurance Institute of Brazil on 7 August 1982; among other objectives it seeks to stimulate and strengthen direct links between its members, collect and disseminate pertinent information among them, develop technical co-operation and promote training programmes, foster joint operations in the field of insurance and reinsurance, facilitate the harmonization of norms, procedures and conditions for export credit insurance among its members and provide support for the co-ordination of common positions in matters of export credit insurance at regional or international meetings.

The Secretariats of ECLA and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) were designated as advisory organs of ALASECE, while the Reinsurance Institute of Brazil was entrusted with the functions of Secretariat of this new agency of Latin American co-operation.

/G. Activities

G. Activities in other work areas

1. Transnational enterprises

The Seminar on Options of Negotiation with Foreign Investors and Transnational Enterprises in the Copper and Tin Industries, organized by ECLA with the co-operation of the Netherlands Government, was held at ECLA headquarters from 9 to 11 December 1981. It was attended by high-level officials of the public sector, representatives of academic institutions associated with tin-mining in Bolivia and Brazil and with copper-mining in Chile and Peru, and representatives of transnational enterprises and mining companies. At this meeting the need was stressed to promote the systematic interchange of information and to examine forms and means of adopting common positions vis-à-vis the consumer countries and foreign investors.

2. Energy

ECLA organized the Preparatory Regional Meeting for the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, held in Mexico City from 16 to 18 March 1981. At this meeting the countries of the region adopted the Regional Action Plan on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, which suggests many forms of regional co-operation as means of executing programmes given priority by the Plan.

The Plan envisages co-operative activities for the exploitation of new and renewable sources of energy, such as: technical advisory services; contracts with regional institutions to undertake studies, researches and laboratory experiments; permanent interchange of technical and economic data; organization of joint projects of pure and applied research; joint execution of investment projects; facilitation of transfer of technology within the region; and promotion of the use of equipment and instruments produced in Latin America.

3. Capital goods

From 26 to 28 April 1982 a Meeting of Latin America Entrepreneurial Producers of Capital Goods was held at ECLA headquarters within the terms of the project conducted by ECLA, with the backing of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on the outlook for the supply and production of capital goods. The meeting was attended by high-level directors of Latin American enterprises in the capital goods sector, who, at the end of the meeting, decided to form a Promotion Group for the Capital Goods Industry in Latin America with the view to encouraging initiatives for joint action by enterprises of the sector at national and regional levels.

As a follow-up to this meeting, ECLA and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, with the support of UNDP, called a Meeting of Experts on Capital Goods Industries, which took place at ECLA headquarters from 5 to 7 December 1983. This was attended by experts of the industrial sector and representatives of the private and public sectors in the field of capital goods industries. The subjects discussed included the national, subregional and

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regional experiences relating to the execution of programmes and projects for the development of capital goods industries; and at the same time the identification of possible forms of economic, technological and financial co-operation to stimulate the supply of capital goods produced in the region, since Latin America has an industrial capacity in this area which is not sufficiently employed.

4. Academic co-operation

With UNDP backing, ECLA is carrying out a programme of studies on Latin American international relations in collaboration with a group of research centres associated with the Programme of Joint Studies on Latin American Relations (RIAL). The central aim of RIAL is to contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of the Latin American academic community to analyse the international relations of the countries of the region and to encourage academic links among these institutions and also between these and the research centres of other developing regions that are working in similar fields.

Within the framework of this joint UNDP/ECLA programme, between 1981 and 1983 ECLA promoted and supported, through RIAL, a series of joint studies and also organized seminars and work sessions in a number of countries in the region which made it possible to raise subjects of importance for regional co-operation within the context of the sweeping changes occurring at the international level. One example is the High-Level Seminar on the Current International Situation and its Impact on Latin America, which was held at Buenos Aires on 23-25 September 1982, shortly before the preparatory meetings for the sixth session of UNCTAD.

Another activity which ECLA has conducted through RIAL, and which clearly involves a TCDC/ECDC dimension, is the project concerning new forms and agents of co-operation, whose purpose is to heighten the participation of sectoral associations of Latin American companies in the integration and regional co-operation processes. To that end, ECLA and RIAL, with the co-sponsorship of SELA and of the Latin American Association of Finance and Development Institutions (ALIDE), organized the Second Meeting of Sectoral Associations of Latin American Companies, which took place at Lima on 5-8 December 1982. At that time the executive secretaries of the participating organizations agreed to establish a liaison mechanism which would make a greater co-ordination and exchange of experiences possible among the sectoral associations of Latin American companies and which would support horizontal co-operation activities in such areas as those of shipowners (LASA), railways (ALAF), the food industry (ALICA), banking (FELABAN), the metalworking industry (ILAFA), and the sector of development financing (ALIDE).

5. Co-operation in the field of macroeconomic statistics

The comparability of the national accounts and economic balances systems, which are the two major methods used in the region of collecting and presenting macroeconomic statistics, was the subject of a project carried out by ECLA, with the participation of the Mexico Office, to support horizontal co-operation in these areas. The Government of Soain contributed to this project through the Institute of Ibero-American Co-operation (ICI). The various studies prepared in

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the course of this project were analysed at the Regional Seminar of Experts on Comparisons of the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy in Latin America, which was held at Havana on 6-11 May 1982.

6. Some subregional co-operation activities

Through its offices in the region, ECLA has conducted a series of activities to promote and support TCDC and ECDC in fields which are intrinsically of a subregional scope. This is the case, for example, with some of the activities conducted by the ECLA Office in Brasilia under the agreement signed between ECLA and IPEA, such as the study on economic co-operation and industrial complementation between Brazil and the Andean Group, as well as the study on Brazil's experience with engineering and advisory services in some areas of interest to the countries of the Andean Group.

The ECLA Subregional Office for the Caribbean at Port of Spain is conducting numerous activities designed to support economic integration and co-operation among the countries of the Caribbean. These activities encompass a large variety of sectors in which attempts are made to respond to the specific needs of the countries of the subregion, such as information, training in planning, transport and telecommunications, and the development and conservation of energy and natural resources. Moreover, the Port of Spain Office has been called upon to play a prominent role in the activities aimed at preparing a programme for co-operation between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, which are discussed further on in this document.

The ECLA Office in Mexico shares responsibilities within the ECLA system for carrying out activities to promote and support co-operation at the subregional level. In this regard, special mention should be made of the project on integration and interconnection of electricity in Central America which is being conducted by the Mexico Office on the basis of the results of the regional study on electrical interconnection, which was completed in 1980. The purpose of the project is to transfer the electricity planning methodology developed in that study to the countries and to support institutional co-operation in promoting the integration of the subregional electricity sector.

H. Inter-institutional co-operation

In accordance with resolution 438 (XIX) of the Commission, the secretariat made a special effort to strengthen inter-institutional co-operation agreements at the regional and subregional levels, such as: the inter-agency agreement among ECLA and the subregional bodies responsible for promoting the integration process in Central America; the agreement between the Institute for Applied Socio-Economic Research of Brazil (IPEA) and ECLA, through its Brasilia Office; and the co-operation agreement between ECLA and the Secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association (ALIDE).

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Some outstanding examples of the ongoing co-operation between ECLA and the subregional bodies responsible for promoting the integration process in Central America are the activities carried out by the ECLA Office in Mexico and the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (CABEI) relating to the interconnection of the Central American countries' electricity networks and the activities undertaken in conjunction with the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) regarding the establishment of a new common tariff and the development of the transport and energy sectors.

In response to the needs and problems presented by the economic and social development of the subregion, the countries of Central America, through the Central American Economic Co-operation Committee (CCE) -an intergovernmental subsidiary body of ECLA- have held a series of meetings at the ministerial level and meetings of experts with the collaboration of the Mexico Office of ECLA at which it was agreed to form a Co-operative Group for the Economic and Social Development of the Central American Isthmus. The institutional machinery for this Group is comprised of an Intergovernmental Co-ordinating Committee, whose functions include identifying opportunities for furthering co-operation among the countries of the subregion. The governments of the subregion have requested ECLA to perform the duties of a technical secretariat for that Committee through its Mexico Office.

The ECLA Office in Montevideo has continued to carry out a series of specific activities in accordance with the provisions of the co-operation agreement signed by ECLA and the secretariat of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). Thus, for example, the Montevideo Office has taken part in the study of possible methods of achieving bilateral and multilateral co-operation on the short term among the member countries of ALADI. In addition, it is conducting a study based on the negotiations concerning the establishment of a regional preferential tariff among the member countries of ALADI.

Pursuant to the agreement signed between the Institute for Applied Socio-economic Research of Brazil (IPEA) and ECLA, the ECLA Office in Brasilia has included various activities in its programme of work which are designed to promote economic co-operation between Brazil and other Latin American countries. In this connection, a study has been conducted on the iron and steel sector in the region, with special emphasis on the collaboration and integration which could be brought about in this area between Brazil and the other countries. It is now carrying out a study concerning the obstacles to transport between Brazil and other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Lastly, it has prepared a study on technical advisory services within the framework of economic co-operation between Brazil and the other countries of the region.

I. Technical and economic co-operation between the Caribbean countries and the other countries of the region

Pursuant to the mandate laid down by the Commission with respect to strengthening the links of technical and economic co-operation between the countries and groups of countries of the Caribbean and the other countries and groups of countries of the region,2/ ECLA prepared a study aimed at furthering specific co-operation activities and projects among interested governments which will be submitted to the consideration of the next regular meeting of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC). The ECLA offices at Port of Spain, Mexico, Bogotá and Brasilia actively contributed to the preparation of this study.

The ECLA Office in Mexico prepared a document on the economic relations between Central America and Mexico, on the one hand, and the Caribbean, on the other, which contains a detailed analysis of the present status of trade between the Caribbean and Central American countries. The ECLA Office in Brasilia drew up another paper concerning economic relations between Brazil and the Caribbean, and the ECLA Office in Bogotá drafted one treatise on co-operation between the Caribbean countries and Venezuela, and another on co-operation between the Caribbean countries and Colombia. The ECLA Subregional Office for the Caribbean at Port of Spain, in consultation and co-ordination with the Secretariat of CARICOM, assigned two consultants to prepare a report on co-operation between the Caribbean and the rest of the region from the perspective of the Caribbean countries. Lastly, the secretariat prepared a document on co-operation in the sphere of trade between the Caribbean and Latin America.

III. ACTIVITIES AT THE INTERREGIONAL LEVEL

The basic tool for the promotion and support of TCDC and ECDC at the interregional level has been a greater use of links of co-operation, co-ordination, consultation and joint programme planning between ECLA and the other regional commissions.

In recent years, technical and economic co-operation among developing countries of different geographical areas has been dealt with in a number of resolutions which have expressed the interest of the Commission in this particularly significant dimension of TCDC and ECDC. More recently, at its nineteenth session the Commission adopted resolution 438 (XIX), which requests the Executive Secretary "to take appropriate measures to strengthen and expand co-operation and co-ordination with the other regional commissions for the continuous exchange of information and experience and for promoting the initiation or strengthening of links between subregional and regional organizations of different geographical areas which have common interests and complementary capacities".3/

Moreover, the serious situation at present in the world economy, which has had very obvious repercussions on the developing countries, has brought out the potential of TCDC and ECDC as tools for ameliorating some of the negative effects of that crisis. In this connection, the regional commissions prepared a joint

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document defining their possible contribution to the promotion of interregional economic and technical co-operation programmes,4/ which was submitted for consideration by the Economic and Social Council at its regular session in June 1983.

In addition to welcoming the views of the regional commissions and underlining the importance of their role in promoting TCDC and ECDC at its various levels, particularly in the interregional sphere, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1983/66 regarding the promotion of interregional TCDC and ECDC. In that resolution, the Council urges the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, while bearing in mind the responsibility which devolves upon the regional commissions to concern themselves with the guidance of joint efforts at the regional level, to organize periodic consultations between their respective commissions and the United Nations organizations and entities and specialized agencies which carry out activities at the regional and interregional levels, with a view to ensuring the effective co-ordination of projects and programmes conducted to promote co-operation among developing countries.

In response to this mandate of the Economic and Social Council, the secretariats of the regional commissions have already initiated a process of consultations among one another for the purpose of organizing the first of the consultative meetings provided for in that resolution. These meetings are intended to lead to a major mobilization of initiatives and resources which, in co-ordination, could have a significant multiplier effect in encouraging and strengthening TCDC and ECDC activities at both the regional and interregional levels.

A. The promotion of technical and economic co-operation between Africa and Latin America

As part of the interregional co-operation project executed by ECLA and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with the support of UNDP, the secretariats of the two regional commissions prepared a number of reports on activities in their respective regions which deal with the following topics: a) the promotion of technical and economic co-operation between Africa and Latin America in the field of science and technology; b) co-operation between Latin America and Africa in the field of foreign trade; and c) prospects for technical co-operation between Africa and Latin America with respect to human resource development. In the light of these reports, ECLA and ECA drew up a joint document containing some suggestions for encouraging co-operation between Latin America and Africa in these areas.

As a result of these joint efforts, a joint meeting was held on 1-4 June 1982 at ECA headquarters at Addis Ababa of governmental experts from Africa and Latin America which was convoked by ECLA and ECA to study ways of promoting technical and economic co-operation between the countries of the two regions in the above-mentioned areas.

A group of action proposals were adopted at this interregional meeting which are aimed at collectively developing the capabilities and infrastructure essential for the development of the countries of both regions in the three areas considered at the joint meeting.

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With respect to trade between the two regions, some of the proposals refer to the following aspects: i) strengthening existing institutions and organizations specializing in the marketing and standardization of export and import products; ii) organizing periodic meetings among the chambers of commerce and export promotion organizations of Africa and Latin America in order to exchange information and to reduce promotion costs; iii) organizing trade fairs under the joint auspices of institutions of both regions; iv) exploring and utilizing the potential for both bilateral and multilateral economic co-operation in the field of trade, based on the principles underlying the global system of trade preferences among developing countries; v) lessening the obstacles to financing, trade and insurance; vi) studying the possibilities of establishing multilateral agreements under the auspices of regional or subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries in Africa, and the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the Andean Group in Latin America; vii) feasibility studies on the establishment of international maritime enterprises and air cargo services in which countries of both regions would participate; viii) studying the possibility of establishing machinery and instruments for financing trade by means of mutual agreements among regional payments systems and clearing houses in both regions.

With respect to science and technology, the action proposals relate, inter alia to the following areas: i) the identification of spheres of co-operation among countries and institutions of both regions in order to intensify efforts to apply science and technology effectively to socioeconomic development at the national, subregional and regional levels, with special reference to rural development and the production, processing and marketing of foodstuffs, energy and water resources, mineral resources and raw materials, housing, the improvement of livestock, the leather and leather products industry, arid and semi-arid zones, the basic petrochemical industry and communications; ii) the organization of technical meetings, study tours, fairs and exhibitions in order to exchange information on technological progress in the above-mentioned spheres; iii) the compilation of directories of national, subregional and regional technological institutions in Africa and Latin America; iv) the promotion of fellowship programmes and carrying out programmes for the exchange of experts and joint research.

In relation to the development and utilization of human resources, the action proposals refer to such aspects as: i) preparing a directory of national, subregional and regional educational and training institutions and organizations, and of organizations concerned with human resource development planning; ii) granting more fellowships for training and research in the fields of science, technology, industry, agriculture and human resource planning; iii) compiling information on the Latin American and African specialists working in industrialized countries for the purpose of assisting the countries of both regions in their efforts to recover these skilled manpower resources; iv) promoting the development and training of women at all levels so as to make the fullest use of their capacity; v) initiating co-operative activities for the purpose of developing and effectively sharing the existing experience in mass literacy teaching and in the planning of non-formal basic education programmes outside of the established educational systems; vi) fostering the joint production of teaching materials and instructional equipment for training and special education on both continents; vii) taking preliminary steps in compiling glossaries and directories of academic degrees in order to improve the

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use of human resources in both regions; viii) fostering the exchange of experience in human resource development in the spheres of pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education with respect to the attempts made to relate education and training to the requirements of the productive sectors.5/

B. Joint ECLA/ECA activities in the sector of mineral resources

As a result of the above-mentioned meeting of African and Latin American experts, ECLA co-operated with the Economic Commission for Africa in organizing a tour of African specialists in the development of mineral resources to a number of Latin American countries which have particularly valuable experience in this field. The group was composed of high-level executives of governmental agencies and companies in the mining sector from Angola, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda and Upper Volta; the Director of the Eastern and Southern Africa Mineral Resources Development Centre, a subregional intergovernmental body headquartered in Tanzania, also participated. The tour was conducted in October 1982 and included Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. During their visit, the African specialists compiled data and made bilateral contacts with national institutions in those Latin American countries for the purpose of initiating co-operation programmes and projects in this important sector.

The contacts made during that tour led ECLA and ECA to hold consultations in July 1983 in order to prepare a joint project aimed at identifying specific opportunities for interregional co-operation based on the action proposals made at the technical meetings on mineral resource development held in Africa (Arusha, 1981) and Latin America (Bogota, 1982). The project which was recently submitted to UNDP, will culminate in an interregional meeting to analyse specific technical and economic co-operation projects among mining companies and agencies of the public and private sectors of both African and Latin American countries.

C. Co-operation between ECLA and ESCAP

In November 1981, consultations were held with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in order to study the possibility of carrying out an interregional project on the promotion of TCDC and ECDC between Latin America and the Southeast Asian countries in the fields of international trade, technology and investments. The possibility was also explored of initiating some specific activities in the area of interregional trade, such as semi-public enterprises, medium- and long-term commercial (supply) contracts and the formation of links among the export promotion centres of interested countries in Latin America and Asia.

ECLA and ESCAP collaborated with the Government of Argentina in organizing a tour of Argentine businessmen to India and Indonesia for the purpose of interesting Argentine firms in the opportunities which exist in these Asian markets and of examining the possibility of carrying out joint efforts in other markets. The mission was primarily made up of representatives of Argentine firms in the metal-working industry, who visited India from 7 to 19 February 1983 and Indonesia from 20 to 28 February.

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This important initiative, which was aimed at encouraging technical and economic co-operation among developing countries of different regions, was a direct outgrowth of the path opened up by the meeting of experts of India and Latin America, held at New Dehli in June 1979 and organized by the Government of India in co-operation with ECLA and ESCAP in order to identify opportunities for interregional co-operation in particular sectors.

As a result of the tour, the foundations were laid for mutual co-operation between the private sectors of Argentina, on the one hand, and India and Indonesia, on the other in specific areas relating to the railway and the iron and steel industries, the development of port facilities, stock-raising research and appropriate technology for tropical zones.

At the request of ESCAP, in mid-1983 ECLA initiated contacts with Latin American shipping organizations for the purpose of collaborating in the preparation of a tour to Latin America by a group of executives from national shipping organizations of the Asian region, to be carried out under the auspices of ESCAP. Visits to certain regional bodies are planned during this tour -whose date has not yet been determined- including the Latin American Federation of Councils of International Transport Users (FELACUTI), headquartered at Bogotá, Colombia.

D. Co-operation between countries of Latin America and the Middle East

In co-operation with the Inter-American Development Bank, and in accordance with the conclusions reached at the First Ibero-American Conference on Economic Co-operation, held at Madrid in November 1981, ECLA has gathered background material for the possible preparation of a study on financial relations between the Middle Eastern and Latin American countries. In due course, ECLA will contact the Economic Commission for Western Asia in order to co-ordinate the preparation of that study within the framework of the co-operation between the two regional commissions. The purpose of the study would be to examine the problems facing the capital-exporting Arab countries and the Latin American countries as a result of the sweeping changes which have taken place since the 1970s, both as regards the adjustments in international oil prices and the recessionary crisis which continues to persist in the world economy. There are also plans to study possible forms of co-operation between the two groups of countries with a view toward promoting and strengthening investment and financial links in general.

E. CELADE course on population

The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) of ECLA, in co-ordination with the Economic Commission for Africa and the offices of the UNDP resident representatives in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking African countries, made available a limited number of vacancies for African students in the regional intensive course on population conducted at the CELADE offices in San José, Costa Rica from August to December 1982. Two students from São Tome enrolled in the regional course.

IV. TCDC AND ECDC PROMOTION AND SUPPORT: THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

Some lessons which should be borne in mind in formulating programmes related to technical and economical co-operation among developing countries and regions can be learned from the experience acquired in recent years by the ECLA system in activities to promote and support these forms of co-operation.

Firstly, it has been observed that the usual distinction between TCDC and ECDC is becoming increasingly blurred, especially as such activities become more specific and practical. When this stage is reached, the difficulty of undertaking an ECDC programme without including some mechanism or link for technical co-operation becomes more evident. In turn, the TCDC activities which do not entail some element of economic co-operation, even if only on the long term, sometimes tend to become isolated activities which generally do not make a lasting mark. This occurs because, in practice, these forms of co-operation intermix, forming one integrated and harmonious whole.

In this regard, it should be remembered that TCDC and ECDC promotion and support activities occupy different institutional spheres within the system of United Nations organizations for development. At the global level, for example, UNDP is the central body for TCDC promotion, whereas it is UNCTAD's role to serve as a global focal point as far as ECDC is concerned. This institutional specialization at the international level is oftentimes repeated in the national sphere, where TCDC and ECDC activities are generally under the jurisdiction of different government agencies. The same situation does not exist in ECLA, which addresses both dimensions without making a distinction between them. The experience acquired by ECLA through this functional duality indicates not only that it is possible for these two forms of co-operation to complement one another at a practical level, but that it would also be more beneficial for the TCDC and ECDC co-ordination centres at the national and global levels to work in close co-ordination with one another, both as regards conducting specific co-operation activities among developing countries and regions and as regards the promotion and support of activities in the two spheres.

Secondly, since TCDC is basically operational in nature, there is a tendency to judge it by the immediate effects which may be achieved with the support of organizations of the United Nations system; the fact is often overlooked that the final objective of this type of co-operation is, in the final analysis, to achieve a real and effective exchange of know-how and experience among developing countries by means of human resource training, technology transfer, the supply of equipment or other methods. In the case of TCDC, this transfer or exchange of know-how takes place among the developing countries themselves, it being borne in mind that the similarity of the problems and challenges that they are facing or have faced in their search for development and economic and social well-being means that their respective experiences may potentially be the most appropriate ones for solving similar problems in other developing countries of the same region.

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At the interregional level, the experience of recent years indicates that this sphere offers significant prospects for exchange among developing countries of different geographical areas, in view of the possible complementarity between offers of and needs for co-operation. The strengthening of ties among countries, organizations and agencies of different regions has proven to be an effective method of identifying such prospects and of taking advantage of opportunities for interregional co-operation, especially in view of the present international economic crisis. In any case, ECLA's recent experience indicates that one basic consideration in creating and strengthening links of co-operation at the interregional level is that there should be a real and effective benefit on the long term for all the countries participating in the co-operation activities.

In this respect, when activities designed to encourage this type of co-operation are being programmed, a special effort should be made to identify, in a balanced manner, not only offers of co-operation but also those areas in which there might be a potential demand for input from other regions. The interest awakened, for example, by the joint ECLA/ECA project mentioned in the preceding chapter was a result of the painstaking care which was taken with regard to the reciprocal benefits which both regions could receive.

Thirdly, it is important to clarify and specify which activities actually constitute TCDC or ECDC, bearing in mind their particular characteristics and purposes. Frequently, there are two opposing tendencies which lead to confusion in this respect. On the one hand, there is a tendency to interpret the concept of TCDC and ECDC very broadly and to include within the widest possible spectrum certain activities or forms of co-operation which do not have a horizontal orientation and which, therefore, have little or nothing to do with co-operation among developing countries, or which only support this type of co-operation very indirectly. On the other hand, there is a tendency to ignore other activities which definitely bear a direct relationship to the initiation or strengthening of links of either technical or economic co-operation among developing countries. Of the two, the former tendency appears to predominate; this is the tendency which leads to an exaggerated concept of what should be understood as south-south co-operation activities or, in other words, activities which have the definite purpose of creating, encouraging and strengthening links of co-operation among valid agents or actors of the developing countries of one region or of different developing regions.

Fourthly, it is considered important not only that the specific TCDC activities carried out in recent years should maintain their initial momentum, but also that the channels should remain open for further increasing the transfer of know-how among the countries of the region and between them and the countries of other developing areas. An activity which might, for example, appear to be successful in the short run due to the immediate interest which it arouses, might prove to be fruitless if the final step is not taken between the country offering co-operation and the country which would have received it. This suggests that the follow-up mechanism is equally or more important than the mechanism through which the initial contact was made between the respective agents of co-operation of the countries concerned.

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In this regard, ECLA's experience points to the need for organizing and holding meetings which establish contact among the potential parties to TCDC and ECDC in the corresponding substantive field as an initial -or follow-up- step in mutual co-operation activities. Bringing the parties together at meetings of this sort does not necessarily mean that significant results will be achieved in initiating or strengthening TCDC or ECDC. There is no doubt, however, that such meetings greatly aid in giving this type of co-operation a realistic chance of success, especially if certain requirements are borne in mind during their planning, such as the following: a) the clear and explicit intention of the meeting should be to encourage and promote links of co-operation; b) the preparatory activities for the meeting should permit the prior identification and linkage of the national agents of co-operation which are best suited to play a part in creating such links; c) the meeting agenda should, in particular, include an examination of the operational elements needed to sustain the initial momentum created in the preparatory activities and the meeting itself; and d) any co-operation mechanisms designed at the meeting should be modest in their financial implications and extensive as regards their capacity as a convening force, and should make the fullest use of the networks and systems for subregional, regional or interregional co-operation which exist in the substantive field concerned.

The careful weighting of each one of these requirements has been a constant concern of ECLA in preparing and organizing the many technical meetings mentioned in the preceding chapter, which it has convoked in order to promote and support technical and economic co-operation at the sub-regional, regional and interregional levels. The fulfillment of these requirements, however, in no case serves as a substitute for the factor which is regarded as being decisive for the continuity and success of these tasks. This factor is the willingness and determination of the agents of co-operation -governmental as well as intergovernmental, non-governmental and of the private and academic sectors- to sustain and increase the momentum of this process.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the work carried out in recent years and the experience acquired by the ECLA system in the course of its activities to promote and support technical and economic co-operation among developing countries and regions, some brief remarks might be useful in delineating the ends toward which the work of the secretariat should be directed in the immediate future at the regional and interregional levels.

The identification of those elements of TCDC and ECDC which are implicit in the secretariat's programme of work should be an ongoing process, since it has been demonstrated that working "from within" the programme elements and the projects of the various substantive units has made it possible to concentrate a significant amount of the technical resources of the ECLA system on furthering and promoting these forms of co-operation. In parallel with this, it will be necessary to redouble the efforts made

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thus far to support the national agents of co-operation among developing countries, at the request of interested governments, in establishing or consolidating national co-ordination centres (or "focal points") for TCDC and ECDC, in close co-operation with the offices of the UNDP resident representatives.

In addition, one of ECLA's priorities should be the consolidation of machinery and practical methods for carrying out the TCDC and ECDC activities established in certain sectors as a result of the specific projects executed by ECLA which were mentioned in chapter III.

It is also important for ECLA to continue collaborating in the improvement of national, subregional and regional information networks for development, in view of their basic and instrumental role in strengthening the centres which provide support for technical and economic co-operation among developing countries and regions.

It will also be necessary to pursue and strengthen the contacts already made with other regional commissions for the purpose of establishing co-ordination machinery among them to ensure that action-oriented proposals are implemented, especially the proposals formulated at the meeting of governmental experts held at Addis Ababa in June 1982. In this regard, the possibility should be explored with ECA, in consultation with the interested governments of the respective regions, of organizing and holding other meetings which would allow the further strengthening of the interregional links initiated between the countries of Africa and Latin America at the above-mentioned meeting. As an example, the objective of one such meeting might be to assess the achievements of the Addis Ababa meeting and to identify a few priority projects on interregional co-operation which would be feasible on the short term. Another meeting could be devoted to identifying the most expeditious operational procedures for making the support of the regional commissions increasingly effective. At this meeting the current and potential possibilities could also be explored of mobilizing resources to tighten the bonds of co-operation among the different developing geographical areas.

Concurrently, the consultations among the regional commissions and pertinent bodies of the United Nations system for development should be intensified in the immediate future for the purpose of preparing joint programmes to strengthen TCDC and ECDC on the short and medium term among the countries of different developing geographical areas, pursuant to resolution 1983/66 of the Economic and Social Council. ECLA's role in this joint effort would include performing the necessary tasks to consolidate the pioneering work already done with respect to co-operation between Latin American and African countries, promoting the formalization of the links of co-operation which are being formed with the Asian countries, in conjunction with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and exploring the opportunities for co-operation with the Arab countries in areas of mutual interest, in conjunction with the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA).

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Finally, in general terms, it is essential to continue to co-operate very closely with the developing countries in progressively putting into operation the TCDC and ECDC activities envisaged in the global frameworks which orient the promotion and support work of the United Nations system. In this regard, it should be reaffirmed once again that the decentralization of United Nations economic and social activities in the regional commissions -which is taking place, albeit slowly, and which enhances the regional commissions' leading role in economic and social development tasks- is an indispensable tool for further strengthening their role as the logical instrument for promoting economic and technical co-operation at the subregional, regional and interregional levels.

Notes

1/ In September 1983, with a contribution from the Netherlands, ECLA published the Manual para la aplicación del convenio aduanero relativo al transporte internacional de mercancías al amparo de los cuadernos TIR (Convenio TIR) (E/CEPAL/L.284). The TIR Convention is a customs transit convention under which the customs operations of the signatory countries may be co-ordinated in order to expedite the operational and documentation aspects of the movement of merchandise in road transport vehicles or containers.

2/ See resolution 440 (XIX) of 15 May 1981.

3/ See operative paragraph (f) of resolution 438 (XIX) of 15 May 1981.

4/ See document E/1983/70, The promotion of programmes of interregional economic and technical co-operation among developing countries by the regional commissions, Report of the Secretary General, Economic and Social Council, 7 June 1983.

5/ The various documents and reports prepared by the ECLA and ECA secretariats in the course of this project, including the action-oriented proposals adopted at the meeting in Addis Ababa, were compiled in a book which was published jointly by the two regional commissions. The Spanish version of this book, entitled Africa y América Latina: Perspectivas de cooperación interregional (E/CEPAL/G.1198), was prepared by ECLA and has been in circulation since October 1983. The English and French versions are being prepared by ECA and are expected to become available by March 1984.