Updated Economic Overview

of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012

April 2013

UNITED NATIONS

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Contents

Figures

Tables

Introduction

This report updates the data and estimates set out in the *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012*[1] (released in December 2012), and provides a summary analysis of economic trends on the basis of recent information. The revised statistics and analysis confirm the major trends identified in the *Preliminary Overview* and put GDP growth in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2012 at 3.0% (the *Preliminary Overview* projection was 3.1%). In the following pages, figures and information for the entire year are used to assess the region's external context, main monetary, exchange-rate and fiscal policies and performance in terms of GDP growth, employment, inflation and wages. The report concludes with an updated account of the external environment and growth projections for the region in 2013 and an estimate that the region's GDP will expand by 3.5%.

Overview of 2012

The recession in Europe, the cooldown in China and slow growth in the United States were all factors in the slower pace of global economic expansion in 2012

As discussed in the *Preliminary Overview* for 2012, the external scenario for the region that year continued to be marked by the financial and sovereign debt crisis in some eurozone countries, an uneven economy in the United States following its financial system crisis in 2008-2009 and falling growth rates in the major economies of Asia as a result of these two factors and difficulties of their own. In 2012 the European Central Bank (ECB) shifted its policy stance, announcing its willingness to conduct direct and unlimited purchases (under certain conditions) of sovereign debt of eurozone countries so requesting. This about-face helped reduce the likelihood of a crisis in the member States of the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union and brought sovereign risk premiums down. Fiscal policy turned contractionary and this, combined with deteriorating expectations and slow lending growth, led to a 0.5% shrinkage of GDP. Global economic growth thus slowed slightly, from 2.7% in 2011 to 2.2% in 2012, owing to the recession in eurozone countries and its impact on Asia and Latin America, whose 2012 economic growth rates were down on 2011 but still higher than the global average. The upturns in the United States and Japanese economies were too small to offset the weaker performance of Europe.

Slower global economic growth acted as a drag on trade in Latin America and the Caribbean

As forecast in the *Preliminary Overview*, weaker external demand held the region's export value growth rate at just 1.6% in 2012 after a 23.9% jump in 2011. Falling prices for many export products eroded export value; unlike previous years, volume growth was the factor driving the modest increase in export value. Export prices overall slipped slightly but unevenly. International prices for several foodstuffs began to rise in the second half of 2012, whereas metal prices fluctuated on a slightly downward path and crude oil prices tended to hold steady on average, although with some variations.

The region saw its import value growth slow considerably (although not as sharply as for exports), from 22.3% in 2011 in 4.3% in 2012. Accordingly, the goods trade balance surplus for the region overall narrowed from 1.3% of regional GDP in 2011 to 0.9% in 2012.

The hydrocarbon-exporting countries, together with Mexico and the Central American and Caribbean countries (much of whose goods and services exports go to the United States), felt a smaller impact from slower global growth since many of them increased their export volume to the United States and, in some cases, to Europe and China as well. Other South American countries, which ship a larger share of their exports —especially of natural resources— to China and the European Union, were harder hit.

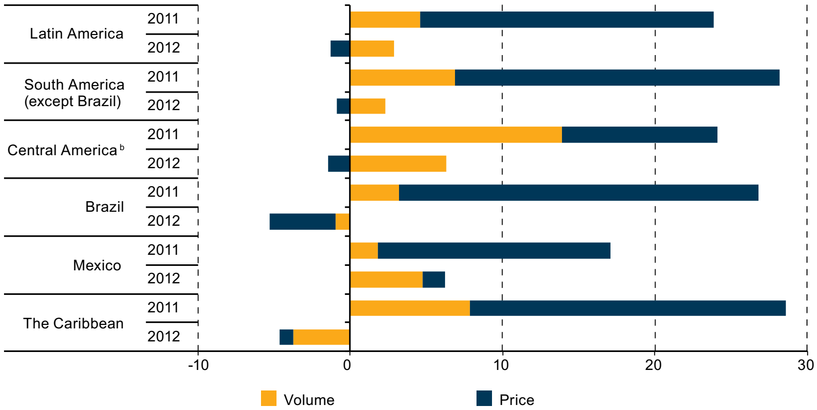
The services balance deficit remained essentially unchanged, at 1.3% of regional GDP in 2012 versus 1.2% in 2011. Tourist arrivals in the Caribbean, Central America and South America rose by 4%, 6% and 4.7% respectively but dropped 1.1% in Mexico. As expected, the surplus on the income balance edged up in 2012, to 2.3% of regional GDP, as lower prices for the region's commodity exports eroded profit remittances by foreign firms operating in the region.

[1] LC/G.2555-P.

Figure 1

Latin America and the Caribbean: estimated export value growth rates, by volume and price, 2012 [a]

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Data for 2012 for the Caribbean include Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia).
[b] Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

Current transfers, consisting mainly of remittances from workers abroad, rose slightly. Their share of regional GDP held steady at 1.1% in 2012, albeit with large variations from country to country. Some Central American countries saw increased remittances due to a relative upturn in the United States labour market, while declines in remittance flows to Colombia and Ecuador reflected the difficult employment situation in Spain.

Given the evolution of the various components of the current account, the estimated deficit for the region overall is maintained at 1.6% of GDP in 2012, from 1.3% of regional GDP in 2011.

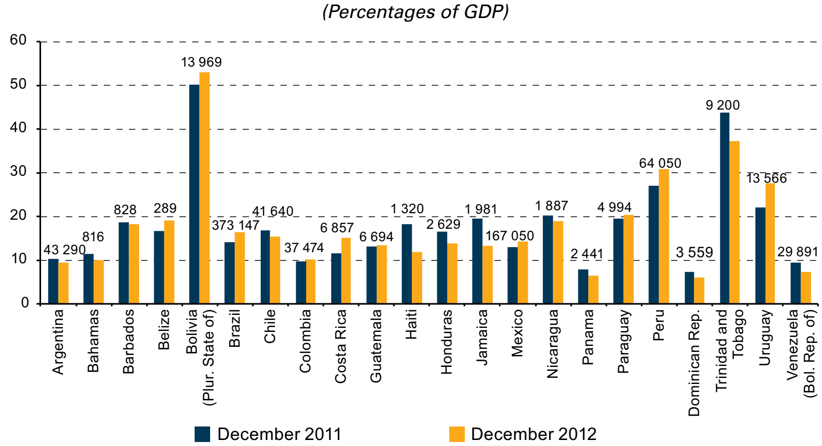
The region experienced no major difficulties in securing external financing

Despite global financial market turbulence in 2012, the region experienced no great difficulty in covering its external borrowing needs. Risk levels as measured by the Emerging Market Bond Index Global (EMBIG) trended up through May, owing in part to rising global risk perception in response to the continuing crisis in Europe and the difficulties in reaching an agreement on the public debt ceiling in the United States. In this context, financial flows into the region were initially lower than in 2011. Later in the year, however, the region's risk perception started to trend down and inflows picked up again. The region's external bond issues in 2012 far exceeded those of 2011. As noted in the *Preliminary Overview* for 2012, this combination of factors, together with a slight increase in the current account deficit to 1.6% of regional GDP, enabled most of the countries and the region overall to continue to build up international reserves (see figure 2).

Figure 2

Latin America and the Caribbean (selected countries): changes in international reserves, 2011-2012

(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

Monetary policy in 2012 was geared towards offsetting the slump in aggregate external demand

With inflationary pressures remaining modest in 2012, monetary policy rates were held steady despite burgeoning monetary aggregates. But in some cases it was necessary to resort to other monetary policy tools to avert a liquidity surge. This approach reflected efforts by monetary authorities to sustain momentum in aggregate domestic demand despite the sluggish international market.

The *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012* highlighted how most economies with explicit inflation targets managed to keep inflation within the limits established by the monetary authorities. Countries such as Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Paraguay were able to bring their monetary policy rates down without endangering inflation targets. Among the countries with variations on this path were Colombia (where inflation moved close to the middle of the target range after a monetary policy rate hike in early 2012, making it possible to lower the monetary policy rate in August) and Uruguay (where, despite a rising monetary policy rate, inflation remained above the upper limit of the target range).

In many countries of the region, the authorities took further measures to ensure macrofinancial stability by implementing reserve requirements, at times to promote the use of national currencies (Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay), avoid excessive household debt (Colombia) or keep liquidity crunches from turning into systemic crises (Costa Rica). Other measures included countercyclical provisioning to buffer interest rate change risk (Bahamas, Ecuador and Paraguay) or giving more authority to the central bank (Argentina and, to a lesser extent, Guatemala).

Despite these actions, as noted in the *Preliminary Overview*, the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean saw significant liquidity injections in 2012 that expanded the monetary base by more than 30% in Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Peru (see table A-3 in the statistical annex). The economies of Barbados and the Bahamas were an exception in that the monetary base contracted. Broader monetary aggregates (M1 and M2) also grew in most of the countries of the region, although, as in the case of the monetary base, the pace was slower than in 2011.

Real exchange rate appreciation trends persisted in many countries

The deteriorating current account and smaller capital inflows into the region meant that reserves build-up was slower than in 2011, both as a ratio of GDP and in absolute terms. This slowdown was influenced by slower build-up of reserves in Brazil from the first quarter of 2012, although the simple average of reserves in the region as a percentage of GDP rose from 15.6% to 15.8% (see figure 2).

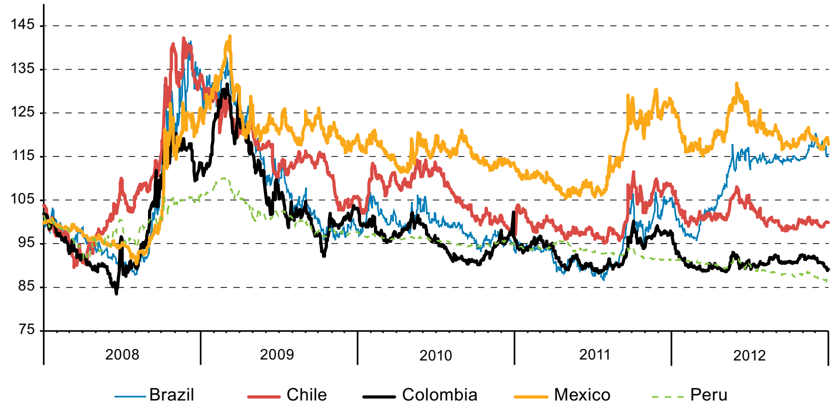
As noted in the *Preliminary Overview*, a number of central banks intervened actively in the currency markets, particularly in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru and Uruguay. In 2011, those countries that are more fully integrated in the international financial markets (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) and therefore more likely to be affected by market developments saw similar exchange rate trends, but from early 2012 there was less correlation between the movements of the Brazilian real and the currencies of other countries (see figure 3). The currencies of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru appreciated between year-end 2011 and year-end 2012, in a context of some economic growth and broad international liquidity. But Brazil recorded significant nominal depreciation against the United States dollar in response to such factors as a chilling of Brazil's domestic aggregate demand, implementation of an expansionary monetary and credit policy to stimulate aggregate domestic demand, and investor expectations as to the authorities' intention to intervene in the currency market so as to prevent further appreciation of the real.

Nominal exchange rate trends, together with inflation dynamics in the region, pushed the extraregional real effective exchange rate of Latin America and the Caribbean down (currency appreciation) by an average 2.8% in 2012 compared with 2011. Appreciation was greater in South America (4.9%, excluding Brazil) than in Central America (2%), influenced particularly by real effective appreciation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela owing to its high inflation and fixed exchange rate. In the Caribbean, the real effective extraregional exchange rate fell by about as much as that of South America, with the main influence being real appreciation in Trinidad and Tobago.

Figure 3

Latin America (selected countries): nominal exchange rates in relation to the United States dollar, January 2008 to December 2012

(Index: January 2008=100)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

The fiscal accounts deteriorated in most of the countries, but prudential fiscal policies continued to predominate

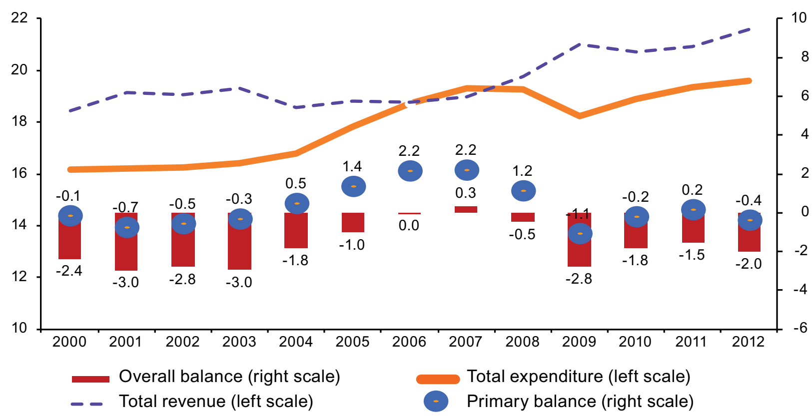
With some exceptions, the public deficit (the difference between income and expenditure) increased, with expenditure rising more (0.7 percentage points of GDP) than revenue (0.3 percentage points of GDP). *Preliminary Overview* projections were based on initial data in government budgets for 2013; the revised figures now show that in the last quarter of 2012 a number of countries saw a slowdown of budget execution as a percentage of GDP (the *Preliminary Overview* had anticipated an increase of one percentage point of GDP) because their economic performance exceeded the initial estimates. Fiscal revenue increased by less than the forecast 0.6 percentage points, both for that same reason and because the terms of trade declined for countries whose fiscal revenue depends in part on exports of natural resources.

In the countries of Latin America, the primary balance (before interest) showed a deficit of 0.4 percentage points of GDP on average, compared with the 0.2 percentage point surplus of 2011. The overall balance (including interest payments on the public debt) was a deficit equal to 2 percentage points of regional GDP (see figure 4 and the statistical annex).

Figure 4

Latin America and the Caribbean (19 countries): central government fiscal indicators, 2000-2012 [a]

(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Simple average.

Increased expenditure —especially current expenditure (which rose by 0.4 percentage points of GDP in 2012) and capital expenditure (a 0.3 percentage-point increase)— helped to maintain the momentum of domestic demand. Interest payments remained constant, at an average of 1.6 percentage points of GDP.

Overall, the countries of Latin America saw modest increases in fiscal revenue. For the mineral and metal exporting economies, falling non-tax revenue was fully or partially offset by an increase in tax revenue associated with expanding domestic demand. The countries that saw revenue rise the most were the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador and Panama. Mexico and Chile recorded a slight decrease in total fiscal revenue.

Tax measures and reforms in place since 2012 should be reflected in a higher tax burden in 2013 in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru, as explained in the ECLAC *Preliminary Overview* and *Fiscal Panorama*. Some recent reforms have been geared towards promoting growth and formal job creation. One example is Colombia, which adopted a reform in December 2012 and introduced a minimum income tax.

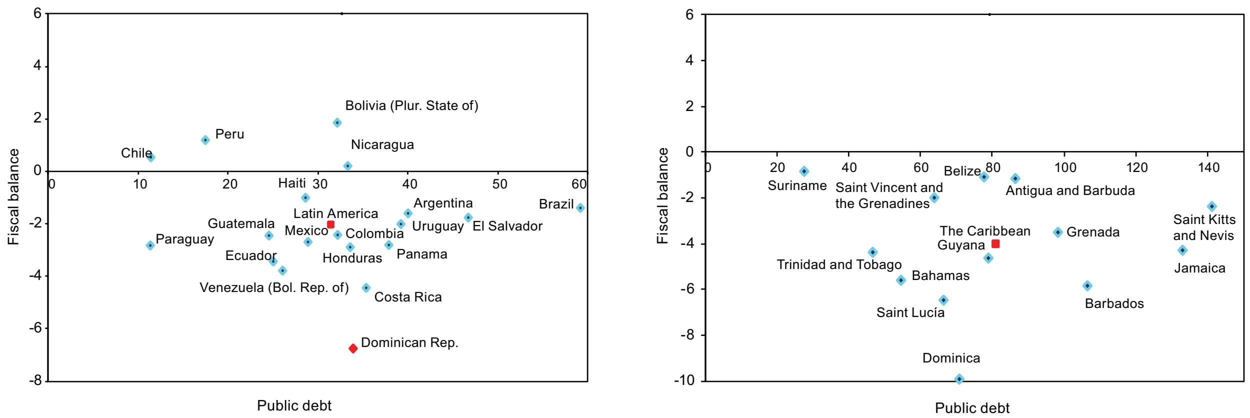
Fourteen countries of Latin America recorded fiscal deficits (see figure 5), but the average central government public debt to GDP ratio increased by just 0.7 percentage points of GDP, from 30.5% in 2011 to 31.3% in 2012. It rose by 3 percentage points or more in Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Haiti and fell by 2 percentage points in Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia and by some 1.5 percentage points in Chile, Colombia and Peru.

The revised data for the countries of the Caribbean show that fiscal deterioration was greater than in the rest of the region. The overall deficit went from 3.5% of GDP in 2011 to 4% of GDP in 2012, reflecting above all the slump in revenue in the raw materials-dependent countries of the Caribbean, such as Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago owing to the drop in prices of raw materials in the energy sector. In Barbados and Jamaica public debt stood at 106% of GDP and 132.9% per cent of GDP, respectively, with a substantial external component that makes these economies especially vulnerable.

Figure 5

Latin America and the Caribbean: fiscal balance and central government public debt stock, 2012

(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

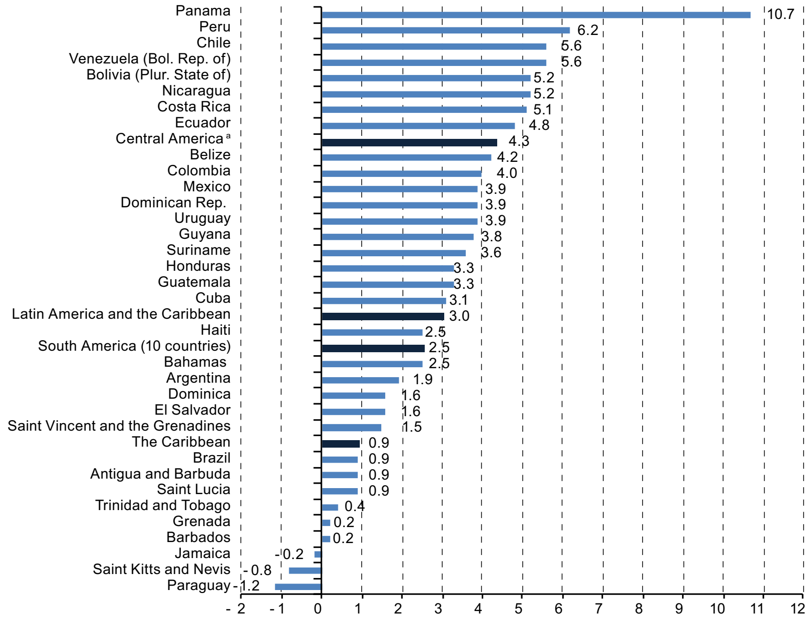
Final data for the year confirm slower regional GDP growth in 2012, as projected in the *Preliminary Overview*

Regional GDP expanded by 3.0%, versus the 3.1% projected in December 2012. Growth in Argentina (1.9%), Brazil (0.9%) and Colombia (4%) was somewhat slower than estimated. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (5.6%), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (5.2%), El Salvador (1.6%) and Nicaragua (5.2% per cent) posted growth slightly above the initial projections. The final data also confirm uneven performance among countries (see figure 6). The slower pace of expansion region-wide was due to weaker growth in Argentina and Brazil; excluding those two countries, the other economies as a whole expanded by 4.3% (similar to the regional figure for 2011).

Figure 6

Latin America and the Caribbean: GDP growth rates, 2012

(Percentages based on dollars at constant 2005 prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Including Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

By subregions, South America posted 2.5% growth and Central America, including Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti, was up 4.3% (initial projections were for increases of 2.7% and 4.2%, respectively). GDP expansion in the Caribbean (0.9%) outpaced 2010 and 2011, making the trend in this subregion unlike the trend in Latin America.

Domestic demand continued to soar

The revised data confirm that domestic demand continued to surge and helped drive regional growth, sustained by solid labour market indicators and the expansion of lending to families, as well as (in the case of Central America —including Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti— and the Caribbean) rising emigrant remittances. Public consumption grew at a similar rate, boosted to a large extent by an increase in employment in this sector. Regional gross fixed capital formation rose 4%, although the pattern was uneven. As projected in *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012*, investment slid in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay and surged in Nicaragua, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, Chile and Ecuador, chiefly on the strength of a booming construction sector.

The rise in gross fixed capital formation pushed the regional investment ratio up again, to 22.9% of GDP —the highest since 1981. Buoyant domestic demand was reflected in a 4.7% increase in real regional imports of goods and services, although the rise was smaller than in 2011. Real exports of goods and services were up 3.7%.

The sectors posting the strongest growth were commerce, construction and financial and business services

The boom in service activities was widespread, confirming the analysis set out in the *Preliminary Overview*. Activity in the trade, restaurants and hotels sector was boosted by a surge in tourism, as explained above. Agricultural sector activity fell in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay —in the latter four countries as a result of a severe drought in early 2012, and in Trinidad and Tobago owing to bad weather. Overall, mining sector performance was lacklustre, except for substantial gains in Colombia, Guyana and Panama. The manufacturing industry expanded the most in Costa Rica, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Mexico and sagged in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago. The highest regional growth was in the construction sector, which was up sharply in Panama, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Peru and Ecuador although it contracted in Argentina.

Gross national disposable income increased at a rate that nearly matched GDP; regional external saving increased

The revised data also confirm initial estimates as to national income and saving patterns in 2012. Despite the general raw materials price downtrend throughout the year, the price of oil, gold, soybeans and meat (which account for a large part of the export basket for a number of countries in the region) rose and put terms-of-trade gains in positive territory. As a result, gross national disposable income measured in constant 2005 dollars grew at a pace similar to GDP. This growth was significantly slower than in 2003-2008 and 2010-2011 and reflected a slower build-up of savings.

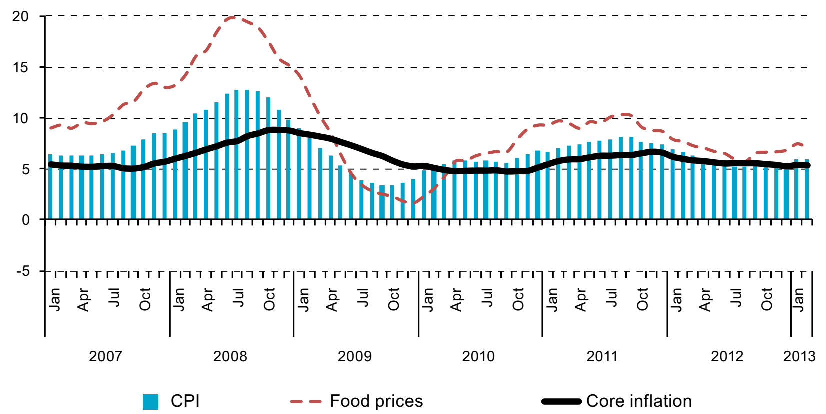
Inflation eased

The cumulative weighted average inflation rate for the region for the 12 months to December 2012 stood at 5.6%, compared with 6.8% in 2011. Inflation eased off the most in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (from 29% in 2011 to 19.5% 2012), followed by Suriname and Barbados. Exceptions to the general downtrend in inflation in 2012 were Argentina, Dominica, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay and Trinidad and Tobago, mainly because of larger food price increases. The regional average core inflation rate held relatively stable. Food prices were the component with the strongest impact on consumer price trends (see figure 7).

Figure 7

Latin America: consumer price index (CPI), food prices and core inflation, simple average, January 2007-January 2013

(Cumulative 12-month inflation)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

The unemployment rate decreased slightly, particularly among women; formal sector wages rose

As noted in *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012*, at the regional level the favourable labour trends that marked much of the last decade continued. The urban employment rate increased from 55.8% of the working-age population to 56.2%, reflecting the generation of approximately 5.5 million jobs in urban areas (see table 1) and maintaining the strong uptrend in the level of employment that had begun in 2003 and was interrupted only 2009.

The labour supply surged, with the participation rate in urban areas rising from 59.9% in 2011 to 60.2% in 2012 as more women entered the labour market.

Strong job creation coupled with a sharp increase in the labour market participation rate drove the urban open unemployment rate down again, from 6.7% to 6.4% (in absolute terms, that is 400,000 fewer unemployed persons). Open urban unemployment thus fell to a 20-year low. But some 15 million people are still seeking employment in the urban areas of the region. As projected in the *Preliminary Overview*, the open unemployment rate declined slightly more for women than for men, thanks to the creation of jobs in the tertiary sector.

Table 1

Latin America and the Caribbean: labour market indicators, 2003-2012

(Percentages)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 [a]
Urban unemployment rate [b c]										
Weighted average	11.2	10.3	9.0	8.6	7.9	7.3	8.1	7.3	6.7	6.4
Urban participation rate [c d]										
Weighted average	59.2	59.3	59.0	59.3	59.4	59.4	59.4	59.7	59.9	60.2
National participation rate [d e]										
Simple average	60.9	61.0	60.4	60.8	61.0	61.0	61.0	60.9	61.0	61.1
Women	47.1	47.8	47.6	48.0	48.3	48.6	48.9	48.9	49.1	49.4
Men	74.8	74.8	73.8	74.3	74.5	74.2	74.0	73.7	73.8	73.7
Urban employment rate [c d]										
Weighted average	52.4	53.1	53.6	54.1	54.6	55.0	54.6	55.3	55.8	56.2
Time-related underemployment [f]										
Simple average	10.7	10.2	9.6	8.3	8.1	7.7	8.6	8.4	7.9	7.8
Formal employment indicators [g h]										
Simple average	101.0	105.2	110.7	116.9	124.1	130.8	131.3	136.5	143.3	148.9
Real average wages [h]										
Median	101.5	102.5	103.0	105.1	106.4	105.2	108.6	111.2	112.1	115.0
Real minimum wage [h]										
Median	103.0	103.6	105.6	109.2	110.9	110.1	115.9	118.1	119.6	123.0

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

[a] Preliminary figures.

[b] 23 countries.

[c] Series adjusted for changes in methodology in Mexico (2005).

[d] 17 countries.

[e] For countries for which no nationally adjusted series is available, the urban series is included.

[f] 13 countries.

[g] Generally, workers covered by social security. 11 countries.

[h] Index: 2000=100.

There is usually a strong positive correlation between economic growth and wage job generation; for other occupation categories (especially own-account employment) this link is blurrier. With economic growth at 3% in 2012, wage employment growth continued to outpace self-employment at a rate similar to that of the previous year, largely due to relatively strong wage employment generation in Brazil despite lacklustre economic growth.

At the regional level, the generation of formal employment (covered by social security systems) remained strong, owing both to the creation of new jobs and to the formalization of existing ones. For a simple average of 12 countries, formal employment increased by about 4%, slightly more slowly than in 2011. In line with economic growth trends, Argentina and Brazil saw a significant slowdown in formal job generation. In other countries (Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua) formal employment generation rates held steady or ticked up.

As highlighted in the *Preliminary Overview*, average wages in the formal sector continued to grow. For the region as a whole, the real median increase was 2.6%. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay recorded increases in excess of 3%. Gains were more modest (less than 2%) in Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

Outlook for 2013

The outlook for 2013 is one of slow global economic growth and continued uncertainty

The eurozone crisis eased somewhat after the European Central Bank (ECB) announced adoption of a policy geared towards greater support for sovereign debt liquidity. The period of calm lasted through the first quarter of 2013; uncertainty returned after general elections in Italy failed to yield a conclusive outcome as to the course of action for addressing the crisis and difficulties arose in designing a bank rescue for Cyprus.

The most likely scenario is continued weak growth in 2013 and even a recession in some cases, as in 2012. According to the most recent projections, the eurozone GDP will shrink (see table 2). The crisis in the eurozone will still be one of the main risk factors for the global economy, as well as for Latin America and the Caribbean. The lack of consensus on whether the way out of the crisis lies in fiscal austerity programmes and structural reform, or in policies for kick-starting growth, likely means that efforts will be geared towards tackling specific situations by providing the liquidity and financial assistance needed get through critical episodes and promoting very gradual structural adjustments.

Table 2
GDP growth by region, 2011-2013
(Percentages)

	GDP growth according to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations		GDP growth projections for 2013			
	2011	2012	Conference Board	Deutsche Bank	IMF (WEO)	RGE
World	2.7	2.2	3.0	3.1	3.3	...
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.3	3.1	3.0	3.5	3.4	3.4
Developing countries	5.7	4.7	5.0	5.5	5.3	...
Eurozone	1.5	-0.5	0.1	-0.6	-0.3	-0.7
United States	1.8	2.1	1.6	2.3	1.9	1.7
Germany	...	...	...	0.3	0.6	0.8
Japan	-0.7	1.5	0.8	1.2	1.6	1.9
China	9.2	7.7	7.5	8.2	8.0	7.6

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations and Conference Board, Deutsche Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and *RGE Monitor* estimates.

As forecast in *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012*, the fiscal accord reached in the United States was only partial. Although the cap on public borrowing has been staved off for the moment, failure to agree on long-term solutions triggered the automatic spending cuts (the "sequester") set during the 2011 budget process. These cuts are not expected to be large enough to significantly impact GDP growth in the United States, but rather will slow it only slightly. It is further estimated that in the course of the year there will be an agreement on containing these adjustments and raising the public debt ceiling, so that growth will remain positive but slow. The monetary authority confirmed its intention to maintain an expansionary monetary policy. Performance indicators for both employment and housing were positive. As a result, growth projections for 2013 were recently revised up, from the 1.7% forecast in the *Preliminary Overview* to a range of 1.7% to 2.3% (see table 2).

In China, the authorities have resolved to continue a moderate fiscal stimulus, although they are expected to start to tighten credit expansion during the year in order to ward off inflationary pressures. Doing so would make it possible to avoid drastic cutbacks in investment. Consumption is expected to pick up somewhat, so growth could speed up in 2013 or at least not weaken much compared with 2012 (when it rose 7.7%). Nevertheless, projections vary significantly (see table 2). Failure to reach a fiscal accord in the United States and the potential for further deterioration of the economic situation in Europe with respect to 2012 could have a negative impact because these economies are so important for Chinese exports.

The most substantial change since the growth projections in *Preliminary Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean 2012* has to do with the measures adopted by the new government of Japan. It decided to dramatically shift macroeconomic policy by introducing a strong fiscal stimulus, taking an expansionary monetary policy stance and allowing the yen to depreciate. As a result, the projections have been revised upwards and now put expected growth for 2013 between 1.5% and 1.9%.

In summary, as anticipated, the external scenario during 2013 will continue to be characterized by very slow growth in the eurozone, with episodes of uncertainty in the global financial markets owing to the difficulties in agreeing on a solution for the eurozone crisis, slightly higher growth in the United States and Japan, and continued strong growth in China. Once again, the developing countries will lead global growth in 2013.

The outlook for exports is not bright, but the financial risk for the region is easing

In 2013, persistent uncertainty in the external environment, along with slow growth, will be a drag on external demand. As a result, demand for the region's key export commodities is expected to slacken, leading to less favourable terms of trade than in prior years: a 1.4% deterioration for the region in 2013, which is slightly more than forecast in the *Preliminary Overview*. Among the contributing factors are new expectations of a further decline in the price of the region's food commodity exports (mainly in South American countries) and a smaller increase in mineral and metal prices. A moderate drop in the price of oil is forecast for 2013; earlier expectations were for a slight increase.

As for the region's trade flows in 2013, differences among countries stemming from dissimilar export products and destination markets will persist. The food exporting countries of the region, whose principal market is the European Union, will be impacted by the decline in food prices and slow growth (and even recession in some cases) expected for European countries in 2013. Prospects are somewhat brighter for countries that export mining and metal products mainly to the Asian market, thanks to continuing strong growth of the Chinese economy and an expected uptick in economic activity in Japan.

Lower energy product prices in 2013 will dull the prospects for hydrocarbon export value growth in several countries of the region, while the net food importing countries (mainly those of Central America and the Caribbean) will benefit from falling food product prices. The outlook for Mexico —the largest exporter in the region— will continue to be buttressed by the performance of the United States economy in 2013 (where GDP will continue to grow, albeit at a moderate pace) because most Mexican exports (around 80%) are for the United States market.

So far in 2013, the trends identified in the *Preliminary Overview* have held. Risk levels continue to trend down for most of the countries. The exception within the group of countries of the region included in the EMBIG is Argentina, where the uptrend in perceived risk reflects, on the one hand, the impact of exchange rate measures aimed at preventing a drop in international reserves and, on the other hand, uncertainty surrounding the ongoing legal dispute in the United States over payments demanded by bondholders who did not participate in the debt swaps. Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, whose risk is lower than for the set of emerging countries worldwide, continued to see gradual improvement (and increasing convergence) in their indicators.

During the first two months of 2013, external bond issues continued at a strong pace similar to the one seen in 2012 and totalled US$ 19.714 billion. There have been no major changes in the region's international reserves since year-end 2012. The exception is Jamaica, where efforts to avoid rapid depreciation were a substantial draw on reserves.

A partial recovery of growth is expected in 2013

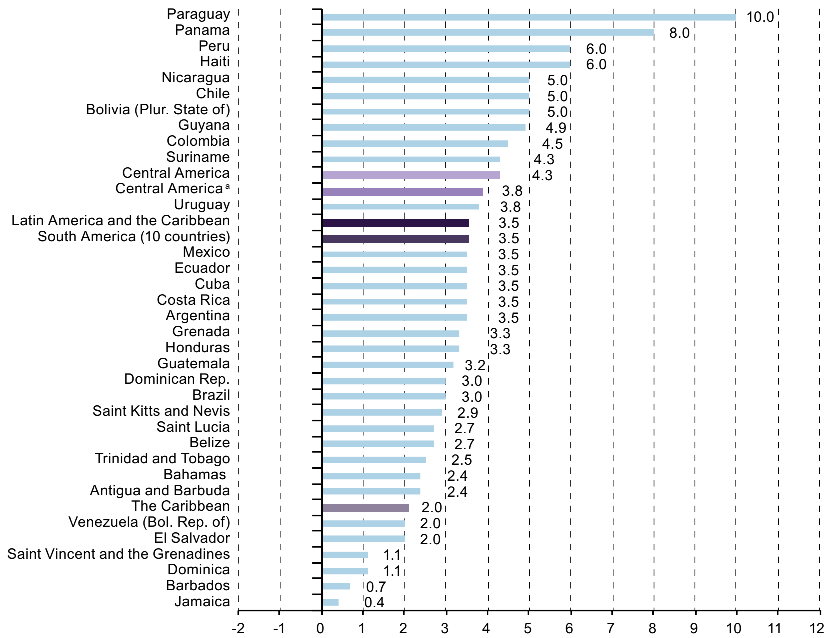
Regional GDP growth is expected to gather speed in 2013 and expand by some 3.5% (see figure 8). One of the reasons is higher expected growth in Argentina and Brazil as agriculture and investment recover from their 2012 slump and domestic demand continues to surge. Other factors include continued growth of consumer demand and, to a lesser extent, investment, thanks to improved labour market indicators and a rise in bank lending to the private sector, as well as continuing high raw materials prices. Although these prices are expected to be lower than in 2012, they will still be high and have a positive impact on national income for countries that export raw materials. Persistent uncertainty as to the future course of the international economy, combined with sluggish developed economies, will mean that external demand will not contribute much to economic growth in 2013.

Against this backdrop, Mexico (where growth is projected to be 3.5%) and the Central American economies (forecast to grow by 3.8%) should benefit from an economic upturn in the United States and stronger performance of the agricultural sector (in the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Nicaragua) and construction (in Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras). Continued expansion of the Asian economies is expected to boost growth of the raw material producing and exporting economies of South America (which are forecast to gain 3.5%), with a positive impact on income levels and export performance. Burgeoning consumption and economic activity in most of the countries will be matched by service sector growth. As a result, it is estimated that at the subregional level growth rates will be less dissimilar. With an improving economic picture in the United States, the pace of growth in the Caribbean will continue to speed up, thanks to a strong showing by commodity producing and exporting economies (mainly, Guyana and Suriname) and the recovery of economies more specialized in exporting tourism services.

Figure 8

Latin America and the Caribbean: GDP growth, 2013

(Percentages based on dollars at constant 2005 prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

[a] Including Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Annex

Table A-1

Latin America and the Caribbean: exports and imports of goods, f.o.b.

(Millions of dollars)

	Exports of goods			Imports of goods		
	2010	2011	2012 [a]	2010	2011	2012 [a]
Latin America and the Caribbean	884 067	1 096 476	1 111 548	853 779	1 044 205	1 085 829
Latin America	866 450	1 073 774	1 090 416	832 982	1 018 027	1 061 298
Argentina	68 134	83 950	81 205	56 793	73 937	68 514
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	6 966	9 114	11 589	5 604	7 673	8 180
Brazil	201 915	256 040	242 580	181 768	226 246	223 149
Chile	71 109	81 455	78 277	55 474	70 911	74 855
Colombia	39 713	56 915	60 208	40 486	54 233	58 088
Costa Rica	9 448	10 408	11 453	13 570	16 220	17 578
Dominican Republic	6 754	8 612	9 079	13 025	14 536	14 966
Ecuador	17 490	22 322	23 848	20 591	24 286	25 197
El Salvador	4 499	5 308	5 339	8 416	9 965	10 270
Guatemala	8 466	10 401	10 126	13 836	16 613	16 992
Haiti	560	768	785	2 810	2 985	2 641
Honduras	6 111	7 800	7 931	8 907	10 994	11 179
Mexico	298 473	349 375	370 915	301 482	350 843	370 752
Nicaragua	3 128	4 016	4 581	4 173	5 204	5 851
Panama	11 116	14 781	15 714	17 084	22 781	24 311
Paraguay	4 534	5 517	5 056	9 400	11 502	10 690
Peru	35 565	46 268	45 639	28 815	36 967	41 113
Uruguay	6 724	7 912	8 743	8 622	10 726	11 614
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	65 745	92 811	97 349	42 127	51 408	65 360
The Caribbean	17 617	22 702	21 132 [b]	20 797	26 178	24 531 [b]
Antigua and Barbuda	45	53	45	454	440	447
Bahamas	702	834	889	2 590	2 965	3 439
Barbados	422	448	…	1 562	1 703	…
Belize	476	604	637	650	778	824
Dominica	36	34	…	198	204	…
Grenada	30	33	…	284	285	…
Guyana	885	1 129	1 232	1 419	1 771	1 939
Jamaica	1 370	1 663	1 732	4 629	5 923	5 600
Saint Kitts and Nevis	79	88	57	236	238	228
Saint Lucia	239	240	209	575	581	638
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	45	42	…	298	307	…
Suriname	2 084	2 467	2 096	1 398	1 679	1 368
Trinidad and Tobago	11 204	15 067	14 235	6 504	9 304	10 048

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Preliminary figures.
[b] Estimate.

Table A-2

Latin America and the Caribbean: risk spreads according to the EMBIG [a]

(Basis points, average values for the period)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012			
						Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4
Latin America and the Caribbean (15 countries)	537	728	433	451	538	519	554	547	534
Argentina	871	1 174	696	701	1 007	854	1 095	1 012	1 066
Belize	827	1 421	818	1 011	1 968	1 656	1 706	2 195	2 317
Brazil	293	300	209	195	184	200	213	175	149
Chile	216	206	131	140	150	157	171	148	124
Colombia	301	320	194	166	150	171	172	136	119
Dominican Republic	680	…	373	453	459	535	511	439	349
Ecuador	1 398	2 016	954	819	827	810	877	795	826
El Salvador	419	488	322	383	450	470	486	442	400
Jamaica	545	845	492	485	656	624	634	662	702
Mexico	251	298	191	188	190	208	213	178	163
Panama	299	304	181	172	165	182	188	155	133
Peru	276	282	179	194	158	191	185	138	118
Trinidad and Tobago	378	868	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Uruguay	417	412	219	200	176	200	213	156	134
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	877	1 254	1 107	1 213	996	1 003	1 088	1 019	875

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of figures from JP Morgan.

[a] EMBIG: Emerging Markets Bonds Index Global.

Table A-3

Latin America and the Caribbean: monetary base

(Percentage variation with respect to the year-earlier period)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Latin America					
Argentina	19.1	5.4	25.1	37.1	34.9
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	53.8	19.6	32.4	11.6	18.2
Brazil	12.5	8.0	17.5	11.0	9.4
Chile	10.3	11.8	17.7	14.7	14.6
Colombia	14.3	10.3	12.4	15.1	9.5
Costa Rica	25.7	6.3	10.0	11.7	12.1
Dominican Republic	12.3	3.4	6.4	5.8	9.0
Ecuador	16.4	18.1	24.1	9.9	16.2
El Salvador	8.1	10.8	0.4	-1.3	1.8
Guatemala	4.1	6.6	8.0	10.1	5.8
Haiti	16.1	14.2	34.1	18.1	9.0
Honduras	24.8	11.6	-13.8	10.7	11.3
Mexico	12.6	15.9	9.7	9.5	13.9
Nicaragua	15.2	0.7	24.0	20.5	18.3
Panama	17.7	11.2	7.5	27.1	12.7
Paraguay	27.6	30.7	5.2	5.0	11.8
Peru	38.2	2.1	24.2	31.3	31.2
Uruguay	28.6	6.1	12.9	23.1	21.8
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	39.5	18.3	24.5	27.0	40.8
The Caribbean					
Antigua and Barbuda	2.0	-10.5	0.9	20.1	29.4
Bahamas	6.4	2.0	2.5	26.8	-7.8
Barbados	9.2	-13.9	3.4	7.7	-1.1
Belize	11.5	11.9	-1.2	8.2	17.5
Dominica	-0.1	-4.6	9.7	8.5	17.8
Grenada	3.5	-8.5	6.0	7.2	4.7
Guyana	16.5	10.6	17.7	17.4	15.2
Jamaica	9.5	22.8	5.5	5.3	6.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	7.3	48.3	-3.2	36.1	13.7
Saint Lucia	10.2	8.5	3.6	16.3	4.2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	2.0	-3.2	11.9	0.8	11.8
Suriname	30.2	22.1	13.0	3.2	27.0
Trinidad and Tobago	32.3	37.6	24.7	14.1	15.4

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

Table A-4
Latin America and the Caribbean: monetary policy rate
(Average rates)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Latin America					
Argentina	11.3	14.0	12.3	11.8	12.8
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	9.0	7.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
Brazil	12.4	10.1	9.9	11.8	8.6
Chile	7.2	1.8	1.5	4.8	5.0
Colombia	9.8	5.8	3.2	4.0	5.0
Costa Rica	8.0	9.6	8.1	5.6	5.0
Dominican Republic	9.0	5.1	4.2	6.4	5.9
Guatemala	6.9	5.5	4.5	4.9	5.3
Haiti	6.9	6.2	5.0	3.2	3.0
Honduras	8.4	4.9	4.5	4.8	6.6
Mexico	7.8	5.7	4.5	4.5	4.5
Paraguay	5.9	2.1	2.2	8.0	6.0
Peru	5.9	3.3	2.1	4.0	4.3
Uruguay	7.4	8.5	6.3	7.5	8.8
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	12.3	8.1	6.3	6.4	6.4
The Caribbean					
Antigua and Barbuda	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Bahamas	5.3	5.3	5.3	4.8	4.5
Barbados	11.8	7.9	7.0	7.0	7.0
Belize	18.0	18.0	18.0	11.0	11.0
Dominica	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Grenada	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Guyana	6.6	6.9	6.4	5.4	5.4
Jamaica	14.1	14.8	9.0	6.6	6.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Saint Lucia	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Trinidad and Tobago	8.4	7.5	4.7	3.2	2.9

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

Table A-5

Latin America and the Caribbean: central government balance

(Percentages of GDP)

	Primary balance				Overall balance			
	2009	2010	2011	2012 [a]	2009	2010	2011	2012 [a]
Latin America and the Caribbean [b]	-0.8	0.1	0.1	-0.5	-3.4	-2.3	-2.3	-2.8
Latin America [b]	-1.2	-0.3	0.2	-0.4	-2.9	-1.9	-1.6	-2.1
Argentina	1.4	1.5	-0.1	0.5 [c]	-0.8	-0.1	-2.3	-1.6 [c]
Bolivia (Plurinational State of) [d]	-0.4	1.4	-0.2	2.8	-2.0	-0.1	-1.1	1.9
Brazil	1.2	2.1	2.3	1.5	-3.5	-1.7	-2.6	-1.4
Chile	-3.7	0.1	1.9	1.1	-4.2	-0.4	1.3	0.6
Colombia	-1.2	-1.3	-0.3	0.3	-4.1	-3.9	-2.8	-2.4
Costa Rica	-1.3	-3.1	-1.9	-2.3	-3.4	-5.2	-4.1	-4.4
Cuba	-3.8	-2.2	…	…	-4.9	-3.6	-1.7	-3.8 [c]
Dominican Republic	-1.6	-0.6	-0.5	-4.2	-3.5	-2.5	-2.6	-6.7
Ecuador	-3.5	-1.2	-0.8	-2.3 [c]	-4.3	-2.2	-1.8	-3.4 [c]
El Salvador	-1.2	-0.4	-0.1	0.5	-3.7	-2.7	-2.3	-1.7
Guatemala	-1.7	-1.8	-1.3	-0.9	-3.1	-3.3	-2.8	-2.4
Haiti	-0.7	1.8	2.5	-0.6 [c]	-1.3	1.3	2.1	-1.0 [c]
Honduras	-5.5	-3.8	-1.7	-1.7 [c]	-6.2	-4.8	-2.9	-2.9 [c]
Mexico	-0.5	-1.2	-1.0	-1.1	-2.2	-2.7	-2.6	-2.7
Nicaragua	-0.7	0.4	1.6	1.3 [c]	-1.7	-0.8	0.5	0.2 [c]
Panama [e]	1.9	0.8	0.1	-0.4 [c]	-1.0	-1.9	-2.2	-2.8 [c]
Paraguay	0.1	1.6	1.0	-2.5 [c]	0.1	1.2	0.7	-2.8 [c]
Peru	-0.2	1.1	1.9	2.2	-1.5	0.0	0.9	1.2
Uruguay	1.3	1.3	1.9	0.4	-1.5	-1.2	-0.6	-2.0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	-3.7	-2.1	-1.8	-1.3 [c]	-5.0	-3.6	-4.0	-3.8 [c]
The Caribbean [b f]	-0.2	0.7	-0.1	-0.8 [c]	-4.2	-2.9	-3.5	-4.0 [c]
Antigua and Barbuda	-8.0	1.4	-0.9	1.3	-10.9	-1.2	-3.0	-1.1
Bahamas	-0.9	-1.1	0.7	-3.3	-3.2	-3.8	-2.1	-5.6
Barbados [e]	-3.5	-2.3	0.9	0.5	-8.3	-7.8	-5.2	-5.8
Belize	0.8	1.8	3.3	2.3	-2.8	-1.6	-0.3	-1.1
Dominica	-1.0	3.0	-8.0	-8.2	-2.1	1.3	-9.8	-9.9
Grenada	-2.7	0.2	-0.7	-1.2	-4.9	-1.7	-3.0	-3.5
Guyana	-2.1	-1.2	-1.6	-3.4	-3.7	-2.9	-3.1	-4.6
Jamaica	6.3	4.7	3.9	2.0	-11.4	-6.4	-5.9	-4.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	6.0	2.9	5.1	4.3	-0.6	-4.1	-0.9	-2.3
Saint Lucia	0.8	2.2	-3.2	-3.0	-2.1	-0.6	-6.0	-6.4
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	-0.0	-0.8	-1.2	0.5	-2.7	-3.7	-3.6	-2.0
Suriname	5.2	-3.7	1.5	0.4	3.7	-5.2	-0.2	-0.8
Trinidad and Tobago	-3.2	2.2	-0.8	-2.2	-6.0	-0.2	-2.8	-4.4

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Preliminary figures.
[b] Simple averages.
[c] Preliminary figures prepared on the basis of information from budgets for 2013.
[d] The coverage corresponds to general government.
[e] The coverage corresponds to the non-financial public sector.
[f] Fiscal year.

Table A-6

Latin America and the Caribbean: gross domestic product

(Annual growth rates)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 [a]
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.0	-1.9	5.9	4.3	3.0
Latin America	4.0	-1.9	6.0	4.3	3.0
Argentina	6.8	0.9	9.2	8.9	1.9
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	6.1	3.4	4.1	5.2	5.2
Brazil	5.2	-0.3	7.5	2.7	0.9
Chile	3.7	-1.0	6.1	6.0	5.6
Colombia	3.5	1.7	4.0	5.9	4.0
Costa Rica	2.7	-1.0	4.7	4.2	5.1
Cuba	4.1	1.4	2.4	2.7	3.1
Dominican Republic	5.3	3.5	7.8	4.5	3.9
Ecuador	6.4	1.0	3.3	8.0	4.8
El Salvador	1.3	-3.1	1.4	1.5	1.6
Guatemala	3.3	0.5	2.9	3.9	3.0
Haiti	0.8	2.9	-5.4	5.6	2.8
Honduras	4.2	-2.1	2.8	3.6	3.3
Mexico	1.2	-6.0	5.6	3.9	3.9
Nicaragua	2.9	-1.4	3.1	5.1	5.2
Panama	10.1	3.9	7.6	10.6	10.7
Paraguay	6.4	-4.0	13.1	4.4	-1.2
Peru	9.8	0.9	8.8	6.9	6.2
Uruguay	7.2	2.4	8.9	5.7	3.9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	5.3	-3.2	-1.5	4.2	5.6
The Caribbean	0.8	-3.1	-0.1	0.4	0.9
Antigua and Barbuda	0.0	-11.9	-7.9	-5.0	2.3
Bahamas	-2.3	-4.9	0.2	1.6	2.5
Barbados	0.1	-3.7	0.2	0.4	0.0
Belize	3.6	0.0	2.7	2.3	5.3
Dominica	7.7	-0.7	0.9	-0.3	-1.5
Grenada	1.0	-6.6	0.0	1.0	1.2
Guyana	2.0	3.3	4.4	5.4	4.8
Jamaica	-0.8	-3.5	-1.5	1.3	-0.3
Saint Kitts and Nevis	4.7	-6.9	-2.4	2.1	-1.1
Saint Lucia	5.3	0.1	0.4	1.3	-3.0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1.4	-2.2	-2.8	0.1	1.5
Suriname	3.1	7.7	7.3	4.4	4.5
Trinidad and Tobago	2.3	-3.0	0.0	-1.4	0.4
Memo item:					
Centroamerica (9 countries)	4.2	1.0	4.1	4.3	4.3
South America (10 countries)	5.4	-0.2	6.5	4.5	2.5

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

[a] Preliminary figures.

Table A-7

Latin America and the Caribbean: consumer prices

(Percentage variation December–December)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Latin America and the Caribbean	8.2	4.5	6.5	6.8	5.6
Latin America					
Argentina	7.2	7.7	10.9	9.5	10.8
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	11.9	0.3	7.2	6.9	4.5
Brazil	5.9	4.3	5.9	6.5	5.8
Chile	7.1	-1.4	3.0	4.4	1.5
Colombia	7.7	2.0	3.2	3.7	2.4
Costa Rica	13.9	4.0	5.8	4.7	4.5
Cuba	7.5	-0.1	1.5	1.7	2.0
Dominican Republic	4.5	5.8	6.2	7.8	3.9
Ecuador	8.8	4.3	3.3	5.4	4.2
El Salvador	5.5	-2.3	2.1	5.1	0.8
Guatemala	9.4	-0.3	5.4	6.2	3.4
Haiti	10.1	2.1	7.4	8.3	7.6
Honduras	10.8	3.0	6.5	5.6	5.4
Mexico	6.5	3.6	4.4	3.8	3.6
Nicaragua	12.7	0.9	9.1	8.6	7.1
Panama	6.8	1.9	4.9	6.3	4.6
Paraguay	7.5	1.9	7.2	4.9	4.0
Peru	6.7	0.3	2.0	4.7	2.6
Uruguay	9.2	5.9	6.9	8.6	7.5
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	31.9	26.9	27.4	29.0	19.5
The Caribbean					
Antigua and Barbuda	0.7	2.4	2.9	4.0	1.8
Bahamas	4.5	1.6	1.5	3.2	2.3 [a]
Barbados	7.3	4.4	6.5	9.6	2.9 [b]
Belize	4.3	3.4	0.2	2.6	0.8 [b]
Dominica	2.0	3.2	2.3	2.0	2.0
Grenada	5.2	-2.3	4.2	3.5	1.8
Jamaica	16.9	10.2	11.8	6.0	8.0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	6.5	1.2	5.2	2.8	0.2
Saint Lucia	3.4	-3.1	4.2	4.8	5.0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	8.7	-1.6	2.0	4.7	1.0
Suriname	9.3	0.2	10.3	15.3	4.4
Trinidad and Tobago	14.5	1.3	13.2	5.3	7.2

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.
[a] Twelve-month variation to August 2012.
[b] Twelve-month variation to October 2012.

Table A-8

Latin America and the Caribbean: unemployment and employment rates [a]

(Tasas anuales medias)

			2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 [b]
Latin America							
Argentina	Urban areas	Unemployment	7.9	8.7	7.7	7.2	7.2
		Employment	54.2	54.2	54.4	55.2	55.0
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Departamental capitals [c]	Unemployment	6.7 |	7.9	6.1	5.8	…
		Employment	… |	52.4	53.6	…	…
Brazil	Six metropolitan areas	Unemployment	7.9	8.1	6.7	6.0	5.5
		Employment	52.5	52.1	53.2	53.7	54.2
Chile [d]	Nationwide total	Unemployment	7.8	9.7 |	8.2	7.1	6.4
		Employment	51.7	50.8 |	53.7	55.5	55.7
Colombia	Thirteen metropolitan areas	Unemployment [e]	11.0	12.4	11.8	10.9	10.6
		Employment	55.3	56.2	57.6	59.1	60.1
Costa Rica [f]	Urban total	Unemployment	4.8 |	8.5	7.1	7.7	7.8
		Employment	55.7 |	57.0	56.4	57.8	57.4
Cuba	Nationwide total	Unemployment	1.6	1.7	2.5	3.2	…
		Employment	73.6	74.2	73.0	73.6	…
Dominican Republic	Nationwide total	Unemployment	4.7	5.3	5.0	5.8	6.5
		Employment	47.7	45.8	47.1	48.0	48.2
Ecuador	Urban total	Unemployment [e]	5.3	6.8	6.1	4.9	4.2
		Employment	56.0	53.9	52.6	51.9	53.2
El Salvador	Urban total	Unemployment	5.5	7.1	6.8	6.6	…
		Employment	60.6	59.7	60.0	59.5	…
Guatemala	Urban total	Unemployment	…	…	4.8 |	3.1	2.7
		Employment	…	…	… |	59.0	62.8
Honduras	Urban total	Unemployment	4.1	4.9	6.4	6.8	…
		Employment	50.5	50.5	50.3	48.9	…
Mexico	Urban areas	Unemployment	4.9	6.7	6.4	6.0	5.9
		Ocupación	57.5	56.2	56.2	56.7	57.4
Nicaragua	Urban total	Unemployment	8.0	10.5	9.7	…	…
		Employment	49.5	46.6	…	…	…
Panama	Urban total	Unemployment [e]	5.0	6.3	5.8	3.6	3.6
		Employment	60.2	59.3	59.1	59.8	60.7
Paraguay	Asunción and urban areas of	Unemployment	7.4	8.2	7.2	7.1	8.1 [h]
	the Departamento Central [g]	Employment	57.0	57.1	58.0	58.0	57.6 [h]
Peru	Lima metropolitana	Unemployment	8.4	8.4	7.9	7.7	6.8
		Employment	62.4	62.7	64.5	64.5	64.4
Uruguay	Urban total	Unemployment	7.9	7.6	7.1	6.3	6.4
		Employment	57.7	58.6	59.1	60.1	59.8
Venezuela (Bolivariana Republic of)	Nationwide total	Unemployment	7.3	7.9	8.7	8.3	8.1
		Employment	60.2	60.0	59.0	59.0	58.7
The Caribbean							
Bahamas	Nationwide total	Unemployment [i]	8.7	14.2	…	15.9	14.0
		Employment	69.7	63.0	…	60.6	64.1
Barbados	Nationwide total	Unemployment [i]	8.1	10.0	10.8	11.2	11.7 [h]
		Employment	62.1	60.3	59.4	60.0	58.6 [h]
Belize	Nationwide total	Unemployment [i]	8.2	13.1	12.5	…	15.3
		Employment	54.3	…	…	…	55.7
Jamaica [f]	Nationwide total	Unemployment [e]	6.9	7.5 |	8.0	8.4	9.2
		Employment	58.5	56.3 |	54.6	54.4	54.1
Trinidad and Tobago	Nationwide total	Unemployment [i]	4.6	5.3	5.9	5.1	5.4 [j]
		Employment	60.6	59.4	58.4	58.2	58.4 [j]

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of household surveys.

[a] Unemployed population as a percentage of the economically active population and employed population as a percentage of the working-age population, respectively. The data relating to the different countries are not comparable owing to differences in coverage and in the definition of the working age population.

[b] Preliminary figures.

[c] Figure for 2008 refers to urban areas.

[d] New measurements have been used since 2010; the data are not comparable with the previous series.

[e] Includes an adjustment to the figures for the economically active population for exclusion of hidden unemployment.

[f] New measurements have been used since 2009; the data are not comparable with the previous series.

[g] Up to 2009, urban total.

[h] January-September average.

[i] Includes hidden unemployment.

[j] Figure for March.

ECLAC

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