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ECLAC
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

**INFORMATION NOTE ON THE SECOND
UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION MEETING
FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGION**

Santiago, Chile, 15 May 2000

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Place and date

1. The second United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting for the Latin American and Caribbean Region was held in Santiago, Chile on 15 May 2000. As requested by the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and agreed at the first meeting in Chile on 6 May 1999, it had been convened by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following United Nations bodies: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization/Pan-American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Agenda

3. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
1. Cooperation initiatives undertaken by different organizations to maximize the work of the United Nations in the region
 2. Mechanisms for optimizing coordination in the Caribbean subregion
 3. Reports on regional processes coordinated by the different organizations in follow-up to the world summits and conferences of the United Nations
 4. Establishment of a data bank on coordination activities among organizations in the region.

Proceedings

4. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, who welcomed participants and invited them to make contributions and suggestions on the coordination process. The items on the agenda were discussed fully and an account of those deliberations is given below.

Cooperation initiatives undertaken by different organizations to maximize the work of the United Nations in the region (agenda item 1)

5. A brief overview was given of cooperation initiatives already undertaken by various organizations, including those relating to the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), gender and development, the "Education for All" project (EFA), the follow-up to the World Summit for Children and others implemented by the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The representative of PAHO also referred to the joint work undertaken with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on a joint health agenda.

6. Participants agreed that the follow-up activities to world conferences usually conducted jointly by United Nations bodies should be centred on one key issue, namely, equity, thus ensuring continuity with the first United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting for the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

7. In that connection, the representative of PAHO recalled that his organization had circulated a proposal that included the design of joint databases, the implementation of impact assessments, the identification of inter-sectoral links, the development of joint projects at the country level and the design of equity-based programming instruments. Copies of the proposal were redistributed to the organizations represented at the meeting.

8. On the basis of the two previous points and the ensuing debate, participants agreed to study the issue of equity from the viewpoint of equal opportunities, which had more direct implications at the policy-making level.

9. The outputs could be two-fold: a meeting of United Nations bodies in the region on the issue and a joint system for following up on world conferences. As regards procedures, participants agreed to ask ECLAC to prepare, as soon as possible, for circulation and comment, a document on equal opportunities with a view to convening a technical meeting on that theme.

Mechanisms for optimizing coordination in the Caribbean subregion (agenda item 2)

10. The organizations represented agreed to a proposal by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC that a meeting should be held in the Caribbean to optimize coordination. Emphasis was placed on the need for thorough preliminary work so that, on arriving at the meeting, participants would already have a clear grasp of the situation and that the meeting could be used to make progress towards finding concrete solutions.

11. A number of observations and recommendations were made. In particular, it was suggested that the findings of the second meeting of representatives of the United Nations and Caricom and its associate agencies, held in Nassau, Bahamas, in April 2000, should be taken into account. The agenda of the meeting should cover programmatic as well as administrative and logistical matters. The former should include the follow-up to the summit of Small-Island Developing States (SIDS), natural disasters, and the relationship with the activities of the Caribbean Community (Caricom). Administrative and logistical matters should cover the implications of the current geographic dispersal of the subregional offices of the various organizations in the system.

Reports on regional processes in follow up to the United Nations summits and conferences which are coordinated by different organizations (agenda item 3)

12. The ECLAC secretariat presented a report on inter-agency collaboration in preparation for the Special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (Beijing+5), and referred also to the organization's preparatory work for the Regional Conference and its support for the Lima Consensus. The Commission had been named task manager of the working group on gender impact indicators by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality on which all organizations in the system were represented. In that capacity, it was currently developing an integrated system of indicators to monitor the agreements of summits directed towards strengthening the policy-making process. The ECLAC representative reiterated the recommendation of the eighth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies in the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (November 1999) urging participating agencies to contribute in a decisive manner to the implementation of the project on gender indicators for monitoring compliance with decisions taken at world meetings and summits. The organizations fully appreciated the importance of the initiative and recommended strengthening coordination mechanisms.

13. The ECLAC representative reported on the preparations being carried out in close collaboration with the United Nations Centre on Human Settlements (Habitat) for the Regional Meeting in Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), scheduled to be held at ECLAC headquarters from 30 October to 1 November 2000. That regional effort was being coordinated in conjunction with the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean and with IDB. Reference was made to the leadership role assumed by the financial agencies in those areas and it was suggested that consideration should be given to the World Bank-sponsored initiative entitled "Cities without Slums". The PAHO representative showed an interest in coordinating participation in that regional meeting with ECLAC and Habitat.

14. The ECLAC representative also reported that, in accordance with Agenda 21, which mandated the regional commissions to follow up on the agreements of the Rio Summit at the regional level, the Commission was collaborating closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations Secretariat on preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio+10). In that connection, Governments represented at the Regional Consultative Meeting on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (January 2000) had requested DESA and ECLAC (the joint conveners of the Consultative Meeting) to support countries in evaluating their fulfilment of Agenda 21 and to organize the regional preparatory meeting in 2001; at the same time, UNDP, UNEP, the IDB and the Organization of American States (OAS) had been urged to participate in the regional preparations for the above-mentioned 10-year review (Rio +10). The UNEP representative referred to the agreements taken at the twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Barbados, March 2000) and, in particular, to decision 17 welcoming the proposal by ECLAC to organize the Regional Meeting on Sustainable Development in 2001 in conjunction with the organizations participating in the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (UNEP, UNDP, ECLAC, IDB and the World Bank) as well as the UNEP offer to assist with the preparation of country reports and to organize regional and subregional meetings of support in that process.

15. The organizations expressed support for the process at all levels and urged ECLAC to promote the adoption for the 10-year review meeting (Rio +10) of an integral development approach

encompassing the full range of issues identified in Agenda 21 in order to avoid duplication of tasks with the Forum of Ministers of the Environment. The representative of ECLAC confirmed that it would include on the agenda, not only the environment but also the agriculture, education and cooperation sectors, as well as the important issues of financing for sustainable development, foreign investment and trade.

16. The representative of UNICEF said that as regards the follow-up mechanism for the World Summit for Children, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean was the only one that had a permanent inter-agency committee with two meetings already to its credit since the beginning of the year and another planned for July. A fifth ministerial meeting on the issue was scheduled to take place in Jamaica in October 2000; six documents had been requested by the host country and would be entrusted to the agencies collaborating on the preparations for the meeting.

17. UNESCO referred to the inter-agency collaboration for the meeting on "Education for All", held in Dakar in April 2000.

18. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC reported on the High-level Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development, for which a regional preparatory meeting would be held in Bogota in November 2000. UNCTAD expressed great interest in the event stating that financing was a key issue in the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (May 2001), which it was organizing. UNDP expressed its willingness to collaborate on the meeting and its interest in receiving the relevant documentation in advance.

19. The ITU representative announced that plans existed for a world summit on the information society but that no dates had yet been set. The Executive Secretary stated that the issue of information technology would be treated in the course of the year by the high level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

Establishment of a data bank for the coordination activities among organizations in the region (agenda item 4)

20. The Executive Secretary proposed the establishment of a basic information system on the follow-up to the summits, joint analytical studies and technical cooperation activities and at the suggestion of the UNICEF representative, proposed treating the issue of statistics of the different sectors in a technical meeting that could be held jointly with the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

21. The representatives of UNAIDS and PAHO suggested using the Internet. PAHO was willing to collaborate on the design of a virtual library, since it had the technical means to do so.

22. Agreement was reached on the establishment of an information system and inventory of joint projects, both in simple database format, but which could subsequently be converted to hypertext format in order to allow the creation of links and access to information in electronic form. The UNICEF representative proposed that a meeting of focal points should be organized to make a concrete recommendation on how such a system could be established.

Other matters

23. It was pointed out that teleconferences, for which facilities existed, were a less expensive option than traditional meetings and one that organizations should consider using more frequently.

