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**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF
THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC) ON
THE STATUS OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

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INTRODUCTION

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC has 14 working groups today, each headed by a country which serves as coordinator. Each group has an objective which it aims to achieve by means of various activities planned over a two-year period.

At the end of the biennium, each group's work should be assessed in terms of its outputs and the relevance of the activities it has carried out. Accordingly, a methodology has been developed for measuring, both generally and more specifically, the accomplishment of the activities proposed by the working groups up to the first half of 2014. This includes a breakdown of the activities carried out thus far and the new proposal presented by Ecuador in its capacity as Chair of the Conference during the 2014-2015 biennium. This proposal aims to provide follow-up to the programme with a view to improving the performance of each working group.

This report is divided into three sections: the first describes the follow-up to the activities of the working groups, with the outcome shown first as an overview and second by allotting a percentage of accomplishment for each group's activities, vis-à-vis the programme of activities for 2014-2015. The second section sets forth the proposal by the Chair of the Executive Committee for follow-up to working group activities. Lastly, the third section gives an account of the actions the Executive Committee should pursue in the coming biennium.

A. FOLLOW-UP TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUPS

A two-stage methodology was devised to track fulfilment of the activities programmed by the working groups: first, an overview of the status of the working groups vis-à-vis the activities proposed in the programme of activities for 2014-2015, and, second a percentage assessment of the accomplishment of these activities. The reference period is January-June 2014.

1. Tracking the status of the working groups

The status of the working groups is analysed, first, by comparing the report sent by each working group with a general overview taken from the programme of activities for 2014-2015. Here, the activities initially proposed in the programme are classified into three categories: accomplished, under way, and not accomplished (see table 1, Tracking the activities of the working groups).

As shown in table 1, up to June 2014, seven working groups had their activities "under way", proceeding as planned. The activities of eight came into the category "not accomplished": these have either been planned for the remainder of the biennium or they have fallen behind schedule owing to delays in the transfer of information or agenda issues. Lastly, four working groups have shown great progress, and have fully accomplished all the activities planned for the first semester of 2014.

Table 1
TRACKING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUPS

| Working group | Not accomplished | Under way | Accomplished |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Censuses | X | X | |
| International classifications | | X | |
| National accounts | | X | |
| Household surveys | X | | X |
| Environmental statistics | X | | X |
| Gender statistics | X | X | |
| Statistics on childhood and adolescence | X | X | |
| Statistics on public safety and justice | | X | X |
| Institution-building | X | | X |
| Labour market indicators | X | | |
| Information and communications technologies | X | X | |

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Ecuador.

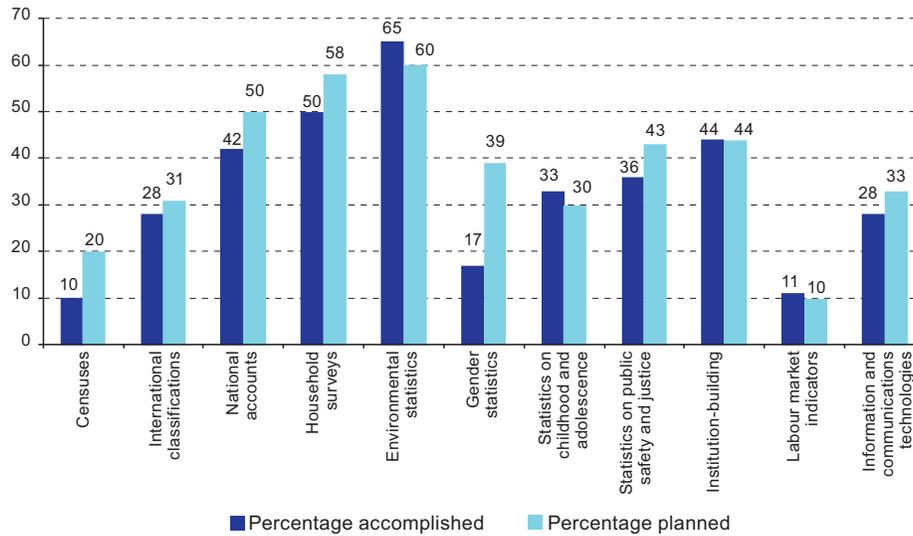
2. Valuation of accomplishment of activities

The programme of activities 2014-2015 and the reports submitted by the working groups were also used to establish percentages of accomplishment. Planned activities that had been fully accomplished by the deadline set in the initial plan were allotted a rating of 100%. Otherwise, a percentage was allotted proportionally depending on the progress of the activity, comparing advances in the first semester of 2014 with expected progress by that date.

On average, the working groups' activities showed progress of 33%, compared with the 38% planned for the first semester of the biennium. Figure 1 compares each working group's planned and accomplished activities. The working groups on environmental statistics, statistics on childhood and adolescence, labour market indicators and institution-building show the greatest progress, followed by the working groups on international classifications, national accounts, household surveys, public safety and justice, and information and communications technologies, and, finally, the working groups on gender statistics and censuses, which show less progress.

In general, substantial progress has been made, since several working groups have already carried out activities corresponding to the second semester and have made great efforts to keep to the agenda originally planned.

Figure 1
**PROGRESS OF WORKING GROUPS OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE
 OF THE AMERICAS, FIRST SEMESTER OF 2014-2015 BIENNIUM**
(Percentages)



Source: National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Ecuador, on the basis of data from the Economic Commission from Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

B. PROPOSAL FOR FOLLOW-UP

When the activities carried out by the working groups had been analysed, it was concluded that one of the main problems leading to certain activities being held up was delay in the transfer or exchange of information by the national statistical offices of the States members of the group, which prevented activities being carried out on schedule. In addition, some activities had to be postponed because of scheduling conflicts with regional events, and are now due to be carried out in the coming months.

It has also become apparent that the timescales allotted for carrying out activities are very long, which hinders follow-up and makes it difficult to allocate a percentage of progress.

In view of these issues, the Chair of the Executive Committee proposes tracking activities by defining subactivities with verifiable outputs, and shortening the reporting period to every quarter instead of twice yearly. This should facilitate the accomplishment of the proposed agenda and the achievement of the expected outputs. This proposal was put to the Executive Committee at an extraordinary meeting held on 11 June 2014, at which the Committee decided to table it for consideration at its thirteenth regular meeting.

Below, the current methodology for follow-up to the activities of the working groups is compared with the proposal made by the Chair.

CURRENT SITUATION

| Activity | Subactivity | Date of implementation |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | |

PROPOSAL BY THE CHAIR

| Activity | Subactivity | Expected output | Deadline | Progress (percentages) | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Jan-Mar 2014 | Apr-Jun 2014 | Jul-Sep 2014 | Oct-Dec 2014 |
| | | Cumulative progress towards target | | 50 | 70 | 80 | 100 |
| | | Cumulative progress towards target | | 30 | 40 | 70 | 95 |
| | | Cumulative progress | | 60 | 57 | 88 | 95 |

- The Chair of the Executive Committee, through the secretariat, will ask the countries serving as coordinators to send a verifiable output of their planned activity, so that progress can be tracked in a timely manner.
- The working groups will be asked to update the tracking table on a quarterly basis, showing the progress of their activities and the subactivities that will lead to the expected output on the dates set.
- The percentage of accomplishment of the working groups will be measured on the basis of the progress made towards the planned outputs, thereby showing the performance of each group.

C. ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT

The Executive Committee has a Chair and six member States. For the current period, Ecuador serves as Chair and Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) serve as members. The Committee has the following functions in its role of providing support for the Statistical Conference of the Americas:

- To carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Conference.
- To draw up, every two years, a biennial programme of activities of regional and international cooperation on statistical matters, to be submitted at the regular meeting of the Conference.
- To follow up the implementation of the agreements reached and the tasks entrusted to it by the Conference.
- To decide on the documentation required for its meetings. As a general rule, no substantive discussion shall be initiated unless an appropriate document is available. The secretariat shall facilitate compliance with this rule.

In this context, the Committee and the Chair put forward the proposal outlined below, with a view to continuing the activities underpinning the future work of the Conference.

1. Programme of activities 2015-2016

Under the proposed operational guidelines for the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the working groups are to have a biennial programme to describe the specific goals and attainable targets during the mandate and that are measurable using mid-term and final evaluations.

The Chair thus proposes to follow up on the biennial programme of activities prepared by each working group and presented to the Conference for review and endorsement. To that end, the Executive Committee will provide such support and advisory services as may be needed to ensure that the programme has specific activities and dates, whose accomplishment can be measured alongside the schedule established. The following steps are proposed for preparing the plan of activities.



2. Strategic Plan 2015-2025

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to guide the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC in support of the development of official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Strategic Plan reflects the main priorities set by the members of the Conference, on the basis of different studies on the main challenges facing national statistical systems in the region.

Accordingly, a draft strategic plan is prepared in light of the objectives established, and is circulated to the rest of the countries for their consideration, observations and suggestions. Once any changes required in view of the countries' observations have been made, the Plan is submitted to the Conference for adoption and implementation.

