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**REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Dallas, United States, 30 November and 1 December 2004

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of meeting

1. The Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held its fourth meeting in Dallas, United States, on 30 November and 1 December 2004.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries of ECLAC which serve on the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Chile, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and United States of America.

3. Representatives of the following member countries not represented on the Executive Committee of the Conference were also present: Argentina, Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, and Paraguay.

4. Representatives of the following organizations were also present: Association of Caribbean States (ACS), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Central American Monetary Council (CAMC), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI), International Labour Office, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank.

Chairperson

5. Mr. Máximo Aguilera, Director of the National Statistical Institute of Chile, chaired the meeting in his capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

B. AGENDA

6. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Round-table discussion on strategic guidelines for the Statistical Conference of the Americas and establishment of a medium-term plan of action
3. Report by the secretariat

- (i) Progress report on the activities of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005
 - (ii) Follow-up to the third meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC
4. Substantive preparations for the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC:

Review and discussion of progress in preparing for the deliberations on the substantive issues to be dealt with at the third meeting of the Conference

- (i) Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision
 - (ii) Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices
 - (iii) Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems
5. Other matters
6. Agreements and decisions

C. PROCEEDINGS

7. At the opening session, statements were made by Máximo Aguilera, Director of the National Statistical Institute of Chile, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, Hubert Escaith, Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC, representing the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and Charles Louis Kincannon, Director of the United States Bureau of the Census, in his capacity as organizer of the meeting.

8. The Chairperson said he was pleased to be chairing the meeting, which ensured continuity in the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC pending the third meeting of the Conference, scheduled for mid-2005. The Chairperson also expressed appreciation for the work of the representatives of the countries serving on the Executive Committee for the period 2003-2005 and emphasized the important role of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and its Executive Committee in strengthening national statistical systems in the region. Subsequently, the Director of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, thanked all the delegates for their attendance at the meeting, and the Director of the United States Bureau of the Census welcomed all the participants to Texas.

9. The Committee then adopted the agenda and appointed Mr. Peter Pariag, Director of the Central Statistical Office of the Ministry of Planning and Development of Trinidad and Tobago, to serve as Rapporteur of the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

Round-table discussion on strategic guidelines for the Statistical Conference of the Americas and establishment of a medium-term plan of action (agenda item 2)

10. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas presented a document (LC/L.2215) entitled Reflections on the Meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. He provided a brief overview of the paper and highlighted the objectives of the round-table discussions.

11. Following that introduction, the participants engaged in an active exchange of opinions, which resulted in unanimous recognition of the need to base the work of the Statistical Conference on a long-run framework (action plan) that set the priorities for the development of statistics in the region and strengthened the guiding role of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

12. It was agreed that the main objective of the action plan should be to build the institutional and operational capacity of national institutes of statistics and of national statistical systems. In order to achieve that objective, it would be appropriate to set up working groups composed of representatives of the countries and of multilateral agencies to work on the following topics: (i) legal and institutional aspects, including questions of financing and budgeting, as well as coordination of national statistical systems; (ii) development of statistical capacity with long-run targets in terms of production, quality and dissemination of statistics, using a step-by-step approach to achieve those targets; (iii) training and human resources management policies; (iv) modernization of the management processes of national institutes of statistics, in order to make the best possible use of resources; (v) relationships between producers and users of statistics in general; and (vi) strengthening international cooperation.

13. As a consequence, the Executive Committee, together with the secretariat, would prepare a Programme of Work for 2005-2007, geared towards increased integration of the activities implemented at the subregional level as well as those carried out in the region by multilateral agencies. This would provide the opportunity to make the shift from a vicious to a virtuous cycle.

Progress report on the activities of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005 (agenda item 3.(i))

14. The secretariat gave a report (LC/L.2113/Rev.1) on the activities conducted in the framework of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005.¹ The report described the cooperation activities in which States members of the Conference and regional and international agencies had participated.

Follow-up to the third meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 3.(ii))

15. Following recommendations issued at the third meeting of the Executive Committee, the secretariat presented a report (DDR/1) on the substantive topics considered at the Conference of European Statisticians, which could be of great interest for the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

¹ The Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2003-June 2005 (LC/L.1903/Rev.1) was approved in resolution 2(II) of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, which took place on 18 to 20 June 2003 in Santiago, Chile.

16. The secretariat reported to the Committee that a suitable date for the next plenary conference would be 1 to 3 June 2005.

17. The secretariat also reported that, by agreement with the Chairperson, the proposal for the Programme of Work for 2005-2007 would not be presented at the meeting, given that its content should derive from the discussions of the round table on its strategic options, and from the working groups formed at the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee.

Substantive preparations for the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 4)

18. In the light of the discussions held at the third meeting of the Executive Committee, the participants discussed progress in the preparation of the three substantive topics selected:

- (i) Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision
- (ii) Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices
- (iii) Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems

19. The countries tasked with preparing the topics reported on the work carried out thus far. There followed a discussion on how to enrich the analysis contained in the documents to be presented at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

Human resources training and education: towards a strategic vision (agenda item 4.(i))

20. The representative of Chile presented the results of a survey on human resources training and education, to which 20 member countries of ECLAC had responded. A task force comprising Canada, Chile, Paraguay and Spain had coordinated this work. The participants welcomed the results of the report and, in the discussion that followed, exchanged information on existing national and international training programmes.

Development of national statistical systems and the responsibilities of national statistical offices (agenda item 4.(ii))

21. The representative of Mexico presented the draft of a survey questionnaire on national statistical systems to be sent to ECLAC member countries. The questionnaire touched upon five topics: national development programmes, statistical development programmes, information systems, characterization of the main agencies overseeing statistical work, and international cooperation. The participants congratulated the representative on this work, and the subsequent discussion focused on other questions that might be included in the survey and on the inclusion of data from surveys conducted by other agencies.

Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities for national statistical systems (agenda item 4.(iii))

22. The secretariat presented a document for discussion on monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, the implications for national statistical systems, and the role of national institutes of statistics. The

document put forward a proposal for a questionnaire to be sent to national institutes of statistics in those countries that had prepared national reports on progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The responses to this questionnaire would be used to prepare a report to be presented at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

23. The participants highlighted the significance of the topic, as well as the fact that countries varied with respect to the guiding role of the national institutes of statistics in the production and coordination of indicators. Mention was also made of the importance of incorporating a regional vision into the process of monitoring the goals and of harmonizing indicators.

Other matters (agenda item 5)

24. No other matters were raised.

25. Lastly, the Executive Committee adopted the report on its fourth meeting and the agreements of the fourth meeting of the Executive Committee.

Agreements and decisions (agenda item 6)

26. At its fourth meeting, held in Dallas, United States, on 30 November and 1 December 2004, the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to:

1. Prepare a medium-term plan of action setting out strategic guidelines for the work of the Conference, to be submitted to the Statistical Conference of the Americas for consideration at its third meeting, to be held in June 2005;
2. Request the Chair of the Committee to prepare, with support from the secretariat, a preliminary proposal for the medium-term plan of action;
3. Decide that the proposal for the medium-term plan of action should focus on the following subjects: institution-building measures for statistical offices and national statistical systems, training and human resources, statistical development (coverage and quality), modernization of management and the advancement of statistics;
4. Instruct the Chair to form a thematic working group for each of the subjects listed in agreement No. 3 and to coordinate their work;
5. Request the secretariat to organize an inter-agency meeting of entities within the United Nations system and other organizations to study proposals for coordinating statistical work in the region and the feasibility of collaborating in the implementation of the medium-term plan of the Conference;
6. Take note with satisfaction of the work done on the substantive issues to be addressed at the third meeting of the Conference and to thank the persons responsible for those preparations;

7. Hold the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on 1, 2 and 3 June 2005 at the Economic Commission's headquarters in Santiago, Chile;
8. Express its appreciation to the Government of the United States of America and, in particular, to the Director of the United States Bureau of the Census for their excellent organization of this meeting and for the hospitality they have shown to the participants.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
Member States of the Commission****1. Países miembros del Comité Ejecutivo de la Conferencia de Estadística de las Américas
de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe
Member States of ECLAC represented on the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference
of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean****BOLIVIA**Representante/Representative:

- Oscar Lora, Director Ejecutivo, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas

CHILERepresentante/Representative:

- Máximo Aguilera Reyes, Director Nacional, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE)

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- René Saa Vidal, Coordinador de Cooperación Técnica Internacional, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE)

ESPAÑA/SPAINRepresentante/Representative:

- Antonio Martínez López, Jefe del Gabinete de la Presidencia y de Coordinación y Planificación Estadística, Presidencia, Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)

ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA/UNITED STATES OF AMERICARepresentante/Representative:

- Charles Louis Kincannon, Director, United States Bureau of the Census

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Glenn Ferri, Chief, Methodology and Software Development Branch, International Comparison Project (ICP), United States Bureau of the Census
- Alfonso Mirabal, Director, Dallas, Regional Office, United States Bureau of the Census

TRINIDAD Y TABAGO/TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Representante/Representative:

- Peter Pariag, Director of Statistics, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Planning and Development

2. Países no miembros del Comité Ejecutivo de la Conferencia Estadística de las Américas de la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe Member States of ECLAC not represented on the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

ARGENTINA

Representante/Representative:

- Mario José Krieger, Director Adjunto, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC)

CANADÁ/CANADA

Representante/Representative:

- Ferhana Ansari, Chief, Multilateral Relations, International Relations Division, Statistics Canada

CUBA

Representante/Representative:

- Teresa Lara Junco, Subdirectora, Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE)
- Julia Magalys Pérez González, Jefa, Departamento de Estadísticas Sociales, Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE)

GUATEMALA

Representante/Representative:

- Jacobo R. Sigfrido Lee Leiva, Gerente, Instituto Nacional de Estadística

JAMAICA

Representante/Representative:

- Sonia Jackson, Director-General, Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

MÉXICO/MEXICO

Representante/Representative:

- Gilberto Calvillo, Presidente, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Francisco Javier Gutiérrez, Director General de Estadística, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)
- David Romero Vargas, Director General de Coordinación de los Sistemas Nacionales Estadístico y de Información Geográfica, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)

PARAGUAYRepresentante/Representative:

- Zulma Sosa de Servin, Directora General, Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos (DGEEC), Secretaría Técnica de Planificación

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA/DOMINICAN REPUBLICRepresentante/Representative:

- Pablo Tactuk, Director General, Oficina Nacional de Estadística (ONE)

**B. B. Organizaciones intergubernamentales
Intergovernmental Organizations**

Asociación de Estados del Caribe (AEC)/Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

- Luis Noriega, Director de Comercio/Director of Trade

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- José Antonio Mejía, Coordinador Programa MECOVI, Departamento de Desarrollo Sostenible/Administrator of the Program for the Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI)

Banco Mundial-Banco Internacional de Reconstrucción y Fomento (BIRF)/World Bank-International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

- Gilberto Moncada-Vigo, Economista, Poverty and Gender Group, Latin America and the Caribbean

Comunidad del Caribe (CARICOM)/Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

- Philomen Harrison, Director Adjunto, Programa de Estadística, Secretaría de la CARICOM/Deputy Programme Manager, Statistics, CARICOM Secretariat

Consejo Monetario Centroamericano/Central American Monetary Council

- Macrino Blanco Pinto, Subsecretario Ejecutivo

Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

- Edilberto Loaiza, Oficial de Programas, Información Estratégica, División de Política y Planificación/Programme Officer, Strategic Information Unit

Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (UNFPA)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

- Carlos Ellis, Population Data Specialist, Country Support Team

Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI)/International Monetary Fund (IMF)

- Edgar Ayales, Director Adjunto, Departamento de Estadística/Assistant Director, Statistics Department

Instituto Interamericano de Estadística (IASI)/Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI)

- Evelio O. Fabbroni, Secretario Técnico/Technical Secretary

Oficina Internacional del Trabajo/International Labour Office

- Bolívar Pino, Coordinador, Sistema de Información y Análisis Laboral (SIAL)/Coordinator, SIAL Project

Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

- Carlos Castillo-Salgado, Gerente, Área de Análisis de Salud y Sistemas de Información Sanitaria/Manager, Area of Health Analysis and Information Systems

C.

**D. C. Secretaría
Secretariat**

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

- Hubert Escaith, Director, División de Estadística y Proyecciones Económicas/Director, Statistics and Economic Projections Division
- Juan Carlos Feres, Jefe, Unidad de Estadísticas Sociales, División de Estadística y Proyecciones Económicas/Chief, Social Statistics Unit, Statistics and Economic Projections Division
- Simone Cecchini, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, División de Estadística y Proyecciones Económicas/Economic Affairs Officer, Statistics and Economic Projections Division
- Luis Fidel Yáñez, Asesor Legal, Secretaría de la Comisión/Legal Counsel, Office of the Secretary of the Commission