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LATIN AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHIC CENTRE

Note by the secretariat

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1. Aim of this document

The aim of this document is to provide a brief description of the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) so as to enable the Commission to make a critical assessment of its achievements and to decide whether ECLA should continue to support it in the future and thus enable it to carry out its growing responsibilities in the field of population.

2. Short history of CELADE

Since it was first set up in 1958 as a regional institution carrying on training, research and technical assistance activities in the field of population, CELADE has received the wholehearted support of the Commission. Indeed, after considering the Centre's achievements ECLA decided at its tenth session that it was indispensable that it continue its work, and therefore adopted resolution 238 (X), in which it requested the ECLA secretariat to continue and expand its demographic activities and pointed out to Governments the desirability of making arrangements with the United Nations Special Fund and with other interested international bodies, such as UNESCO, the ILO and PAHO, to obtain the financial assistance necessary for the continuation and extension of the Centre's operations and for the establishment of a Central American demographic research centre.

As a result of this resolution, a request was submitted by the Governments of four countries in July 1964, leading, in May 1966, to the formulation of the UNDP Special Fund project for financial assistance to CELADE, in which thirteen countries are participating covering the period up to 30 April 1971.

The ties between the two organizations were tightened when CELADE's Plan of Operations was accepted as an UNDP project, since it stipulated that ECLA's Executive Secretary would act as Chairman of CELADE's Governing Board and that two members of the Board would be elected by the Commission. This election was held at the thirteenth session of the Commission, held in Lima in April 1969. The governing Board of CELADE has held three meetings under the chairmanship of ECLA's Executive Secretary at which it outlined the Centre's future activities, adopted the annual work programmes and the budgets for them, and offered the Director of the project some guidance in its implementation.

3. CELADE's planned activities after April 1971

Following the approval of the UNDP project for assistance to CELADE in 1966, the highest bodies of the United Nations adopted resolutions and programmes in which they explicitly undertook to take action in demographic matters affecting economic and social development in the widest sense of the term. For instance, in its resolution 2211 (XXI) on population growth and economic development, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to pursue the implementation of the work programme covering training, research, information and advisory services in the field of population in the light of the recommendations made by the Population Commission at its thirteenth session. The resolution also called upon the Economic and Social Council, the Population Commission, the regional economic commissions and the specialized agencies concerned to assist, when requested, in further developing and strengthening national and regional facilities for training, research, information and advisory services in the field of population.

Subsequently, at its forty-fifth session (1968), the Economic and Social Council recommended that the United Nations Development Programme give due consideration to applications submitted for national and regional financing projects designed to assist developing countries in dealing with population problems, primarily in the fields of economic and social development.

In view of these recommendations of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council and bearing in mind that CELADE was carrying out vital work for the countries of Latin America, and that four of them (Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile and Peru) had requested that UNDP continue assisting the Centre financially and had themselves promised to assist in this respect, the CELADE's Governing Board, at its third meeting in New York on 7 and 8 May 1970, adopted resolution CD 3/1, which recommended that:

(a) the Centre's activities be extended so as to meet the growing demand from Latin American countries for training, research and technical assistance in the field of population; (b) attention be devoted to certain matters of special importance that have not yet received sufficient attention in the region, such as the demographic aspects of economic and social development,

/assistance in

assistance in the formulation of population policies, etc.; and (c) UNDP (Special Fund), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and other agencies that have provided the Centre with assistance consider the possibility of increasing their financial support so as to enable CELADE to extend its activities as recommended by the Governing Board.

At its January 1971 session, the UNDP Governing Council welcomed an application from eleven Latin American countries and, extended its financial assistance to CELADE for a further period of three years, expiring in April 1974, and indicated its readiness to review the project after eighteen months so as to determine the advisability or otherwise of granting financial resources for a second phase.

The Administrator of UNDP further promised financial assistance from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in order to enable CELADE to expand its activities from May 1971.

The Centre is also expected to continue receiving funds from other sources, as in the past.

Although their duration is uncertain, the steps outlined above mean that CELADE can continue operating until organizations concerned review the project and, according to the interest shown by the countries, adopt measures to extend its activities, if they should so decide.

4. Some remaining problems

Even though CELADE's financial situation has been settled for a further three years, a legal problem remains that ECLA could help to solve, if it so wished. Because of the way the Centre has evolved since its inception, it still has no legal status. This anomaly has been pointed out on a number of occasions by the Office of the Legal Council of the United Nations as a potential source of difficulties for the institution, with the recommendation that every effort be made to remedy the situation. It has been suggested that the problem might be solved by means of a resolution of the Commission.

In view of the very valuable work carried out by CELADE and of the vital importance of the future activities it is to carry out in accordance with the recommendations of its Governing Board, the Office of the

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Executive Secretary suggests that the Commission should study this problem with a view to finding the most satisfactory solution, bearing in mind the work carried out by the Centre in the countries of the ECLA region.

The attached document (E/CN.12/902) contains a summary of main services rendered by CELADE to the countries of the region from its creation up to the end of 1969, together with a more detailed account of its activities during 1970. They show how much progress has been made towards attainment of the objectives set out in the agreement establishing CELADE and the resolutions pertaining to it, and the extent of the Centre's co-operation, in various spheres with other United Nations agencies, particularly ECLA and ILPES.