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PRIORITIES, PLAN OF WORK AND INSTITUTIONAL
MACHINERY OF THE COMMISSION

Note by the secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

The secretariat is presenting at the current session of the Commission its programme of work and programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977 and the medium-term plan for 1978-1979. These documents give a broad picture of the fields of economic and social development which will constitute the secretariat's main activities in the next few years.

This planning of activities is of great illustrative value to the countries of the region, which are thus informed of the projects in process of execution or under study. Based on the existing experience and knowledge of the region's problems, and essentially on the governments' mandates as expressed through the appropriate legislative organs, the programme of work adequately covers the subjects of major interest in the field of development in its broadest sense. Recently, however, the course of world events has introduced some important changes both qualitative and quantitative, in the whole problem of development and in the international economic relations between the developed and developing countries. Therefore, although our planning should cover what are considered to be the most permanent features of the development process, it should also be sufficiently adaptable and flexible to be incorporated in the analysis and proposals of solutions demanded by the actual situation.

In this respect, both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have expressed their concern at the turn which the world economic situation has taken, and decided, by means of various resolutions, to work urgently on an analysis of the fundamental aspects of the system of international relations, particularly as it affects the developing countries. This decision is embodied in General Assembly resolutions 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI), which contain a Declaration and a Programme of Action. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1896 (LVII) on regional co-operation, requests the regional economic commissions to adjust their programmes of work and activities so as to comply with the Programme

/of Action

of Action referred to in resolution 3202 (S-VI), and with the presentation of the regional mid-term reviews of the International Development Strategy.

This review should also serve as a basis for the preparation, at the regional level, of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to development and international economic co-operation.

In this resolution, too, the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions are requested to submit, as soon as possible, to the member countries of their respective commissions, suggestions for the implementation of the provisions referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Precisely in compliance with this request, the secretariat presents to the representatives of the member countries of the Commission an overall view reflecting the central ideas underlying the priority work of the Commission in the next few years, and of the institutional machinery that will be used to translate them into practical action.

1. The role of ECLA

This Commission came into being as an institution barely three years after the end of the Second World War, when the countries forming the international community, among which the developed countries predominated, laid down the rules in accordance with which world relations should operate.

The intentions of the international community were specified in an organic scheme whose foundation stones were the San Francisco Charter and the Bretton Woods Agreement. These two documents established the rules which should govern political, economic and international co-operation matters with the aim of achieving the economic and social development of all nations; obtaining international co-operation in solving economic, social, cultural and human problems; and attaining high levels of living, employment, education, health, housing, etc. for the advancement of mankind.

/ECLA has

ECLA has acted within this general framework at the regional level. It became the focal point of knowledge concerning the economic and social situation in Latin America, developing a school of thought and interpreting the situation from an essentially Latin American viewpoint. On the basis of its diagnoses, it gradually outlined a body of economic policies in line with the criterion derived from its research, which in many cases found practical application in the region. Firmly convinced of the need for external co-operation as an important complement of the internal effort, it carried out many projects in terms of both theory and practical action, and, lastly, it provided technical assistance to all countries of the region in the most varied spectrum of economic and social development problems.

But the world in which it must now operate has changed. The past 30 years have not satisfied the development expectations of many countries. A review of the situation in the developing world reveals that an equitable distribution of wealth at the world-level has not been achieved; the hunger of many under-nourished peoples has not been satisfied; financial co-operation has failed to yield the expected results; technology, notwithstanding its astonishing progress, has not spread on a satisfactory scale and has been the privilege of a few; and the lack of concern for the rational use of resources may lead to a critical situation for mankind unless proper precautions are adopted. Meanwhile, the rate of population growth remains high.

The developed countries have experienced increasing difficulties in the past few years in maintaining their growth rates, monetary stability and balance of payments equilibrium. These difficulties became more acute in 1974 and will undoubtedly affect the process for some years.

Broadly speaking, these are the characteristics of the present-day world within the context of which the United Nations system must co-operate with the countries in seeking solutions.

All the above-mentioned elements, which make up the circumstances in which ECLA has had to operate in recent years, are affected by drastic changes, so that its action priorities have had to be reviewed and adjusted in order to perform its tasks more efficiently. More specifically, at the regional level:

(a) The United Nations' sphere of action has been extended to include many new and fundamental activities; this represents a challenge, since the confidence which the governments place in it will be proportional to its efforts in the search for adequate solutions;

(b) Latin America is more demanding as regards its technical needs, and the problems faced by many countries are increasingly complex, so that it is also more difficult to generalize with regard to economic and social matters;

(c) Although the countries have learned much from their own problems, they have gained valuable experience in the field of economic policy and their teams of technical experts are much better qualified than in the past;

(d) There are a large number of centres for study and research on economic and social questions, with high-level professional staff.

All the difficulties of the present-day world affect the Latin American countries to a greater or lesser degree according to their respective potential. These general factors and those mentioned above as being characteristic of the region act upon and combine with each other to make the Commission's work more difficult. The secretariat is fully conscious of the fact that these difficulties heighten its responsibility. But it is also convinced that it is serving the cause of the developing nations of the world and that such difficulties spur it on in its efforts to be of use to the international and regional community.

Since it considers that this action should be closely linked with the governments' decision-making centres, the Commission proposes to increase its co-operation and practical contacts with the governments of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,

/organizing conferences,

organizing conferences, seminars and technical meetings, and participating also in forums or direct dialogue with countries of other developing regions. This will continue to be the secretariat's line of action in the future. Furthermore, the aim is to intensify these contacts through more institutionalized means, and section B of this note presents some ideas on the subject for discussion by the governments. The suggested institutional changes are intended to facilitate participation in and knowledge about ECLA's activities, thereby contributing to a systematic dialogue between the governments and specialists of this institution in which both parties can transmit their experiences, analyse them and determine the most suitable activities for the establishment of policies aimed at solving the critical problems facing the countries of the region.

2. The Commission's responsibilities at the world, regional and country level

It is important for ECLA to determine its programme of work, its priorities and the machinery for implementing its objectives in terms of the setting in which it operates and the mode of operation which that setting dictates. Accordingly, it must be considered as a representative agency of the United Nations at three different levels: world, regional and country.

At the world level, ECLA should act as a member of an international institution which has been assigned the objective of developing ideas that may be useful to the countries of the region in their relations with the rest of the international community.

Briefly, the most important aspects are related to the universality of today's problems. On the whole, these problems are so serious and have such extensive and many-sided effects that they cannot be dealt with by means of limited or partial action. They call for a global approach which accentuates responsibilities and involves interdisciplinary work. In this respect, ECLA has more

/specific responsibilities

specific responsibilities than other United Nations agencies in the region because of the very fact that it has to deal with development problems as a whole.

Another characteristic at this level is the increasing interdependence between countries and problems as a result of economic development itself and the expansion of trade with the incorporation of more countries and products, and also of political factors.

A highly important factor is the crisis - of both a qualitative and a quantitative nature - that has arisen in the world concert of nations. This is quite obvious if it is considered that on the birth of the Organization 41 members participated with a certain weighting as regards the influence exercised by the developed countries, while at present there are 139 members of the United Nations and the balance of power is substantially different. This fact has had its impact on the working hypothesis with which the Organization had been operating and will no doubt continue to make itself felt in the approach to the establishment of a new world order.

The emergence of new and acute problems such as the effect of new technologies on developing countries, the world ecological balance, environment problems, the population explosion and the rational use of energy resources calls for a profound review of this institution's work.

Lastly, the turbulence existing in the world today and the search for a new international order also call for a radically different approach to the subjects that need to be dealt with.

ECLA's responsibility at the regional level requires that special attention be devoted to the growing disparity between the situations in the various countries, in view of their different potential and the particular features of their economic, political and social systems.

The task assumed by the secretariat, in the light of these disparities, is to provide every possible aid to the less developed

/countries in

countries in order to improve their relative economic and social position, while at the same time serving all the countries in striving for ever closer intra-regional relations, and particularly in helping to initiate a dialogue and negotiations between the developing and developed countries.

Part of this work should be centred on contributing new ways of stimulating the existing integration processes. This can undoubtedly be done and thus open up new opportunities for regional co-operation.

At the country level the secretariat's work is geared to contributing towards a better understanding of the real situation and to seeking practical solutions to the disequilibria suffered by the various countries in the development process.

Experience shows that, in spite of the progress made in the field of economic development, some basic disequilibria persist on the social side and new problems arise which call for special attention in finding adequate solutions.

ECLA, which has the privilege of serving all the Latin American countries and which, at the same time, as a member of an international agency, keeps abreast of world events, is in a good position to make contributions deriving from its own analysis and to act as a catalyst in the exchange of experiences between countries.

~~Without prejudice to any efforts which may be made in search of new activities, it is important to bear in mind that a number of small~~ relatively under-developed countries still require the traditional support of ECLA in the technical preparation of development plans and the formulation of economic policy options.

3. ECLA's work within the context of the United Nations system and regional co-operation agencies

It would not be possible to implement the programme of work and priorities without taking into account, in addition to the aforementioned factors, the changes that are taking place in the United Nations system - of which ECLA and its secretariat form part - which are indispensable if the Organization is to continue to be a useful and efficient instrument in serving the international community.

/Economic and

Economic and social affairs are of key importance in the United Nations actions, and will be more so as the global and interdependent nature of certain problems is accentuated. It is therefore essential for the United Nations system as a whole - so that it can co-operate efficiently with the governments - to be able to count on a strengthened Economic and Social Council in which constructive discussion is possible. In view of the present structure of the United Nations and its plurality and diversity, however, it is difficult to work hard and methodically. Perhaps the best policy would be a greater regionalization of activities which would give the Organization fresh impetus. Thus the importance of the role played by the regional commissions would be enhanced.

This should be one of the fundamental topics to be discussed by the United Nations General Assembly in September.

In this definition of ECLA's activities, another subject which should be examined is its relations with the existing or proposed regional co-operation institutions.

The idea of promoting co-operation among the countries of the region seems a highly positive one. There is no doubt that a constructive and responsible regionalism could be useful in stimulating domestic development and giving new dimensions and scope to relations with the rest of the world.

In this respect, the experience gained by ECLA could be useful in the analysis of problems and the technical formulation of solutions, while it could offer specific supporting services in various fields with a view to adopting a concerted position and promoting co-operation both inside and outside the region.

As regards other regional economic and social co-operation machinery, the secretariat has always endeavoured to avoid any overlapping of activities and ensure their co-ordination, but a great deal still remains to be done, and in this respect the specific definitions that will emerge from the meetings currently taking place in ECLA and other bodies will be highly important in demarcating the areas of reciprocal co-operation. There are, of course, certain spheres

certain spheres of competence in which not only is there no risk of duplication, but on the contrary there are some opportunities of complementarity.

A. ACTION PRIORITIES

The foregoing facts about the current world and regional situation and the responsibilities that have been assigned to the secretariat vis-à-vis the Organization and the system of regional co-operation determine the following basic priorities for its work in the next few years.

Two broad fields of co-operation may be distinguished in its relations with the member governments: one is related to its contribution to economic and social thinking and the other to co-operation in specific areas.

1. Contribution to economic and social thinking

Three broad central themes deserve the secretariat's special attention, considering the fundamental problems that will have to be faced in defining internal development strategies in the new context of international economic relations of the countries of the region.

(a) Development of the situation and economic and social trends in the region

This first priority relates to the Commission's undertaking to follow the course of events in the region for the preparation of its annual Economic Survey and the documents in connexion with the appraisal of the International Development Strategy.

In the Economic Survey, in addition to a thorough analysis of the behaviour and trends of the national economies, work will continue on the special studies on important issues affecting economic and social development in Latin America. Thus in the 1974 Survey a study is made of the inflationary process experienced in selected countries of the region in an attempt to determine the main factors underlying its acceleration and spread. In the work of appraising the Second United Nations Development Decade, special attention will continue to be devoted to determining the extent to which the objectives laid down in the International Development Strategy have

/been achieved.

been achieved. It should be noted, in this respect, that thus far in the present decade world developments have so influenced the course of events that it is foreseeable that the goals and objectives of the Strategy will have to be reviewed and brought into line with the relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions.

(b) Basic development problems in Latin America

This second broad area of the secretariat's theoretical commitment includes the fundamental problems of economic and social development, particularly the analysis of the serious disequilibria prevailing in the present styles of development and of suitable policies for eliminating them.

These subjects will be studied as a whole so that they will cover maladjustments of both an economic and a social nature (income distribution, employment, regional development, etc.) in an effort to provide an overall interpretation of these problems.

(c) Problems of the new international economic relations and regional co-operation

In view of the significant changes that have been taking place in international economic relations in recent years, it is of vital importance that the potential of the secretariat as a privileged observer at world and regional forums should be utilized more fully in the systematic study of those relations.

To that end it is necessary to co-operate with the region in a study of the problems deriving from the international situation and of the construction of bases for a new type of relations, such as those being discussed at different forums of the United Nations system (General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD, etc.).

At the same time, it is essential that the secretariat should extend the scope of its studies in seeking new forms of regional economic co-operation, and just as these activities led to the establishment of integration machinery in the past, so new paths should be found for achieving more efficient formulas for regional co-operation in the future.

2. Co-operation in specific areas or fields

The secretariat should lend its support to concrete or specific areas in line with the requests it has received from government agencies, and with its own perception of regional needs and its ability to satisfy them by means of appropriate co-operation mechanisms.

The secretariat has identified the following areas of co-operation under this scheme:

- (a) International economic relations
- (b) Industrial co-operation
- (c) Agricultural co-operation
- (d) Co-operation in the field of transport and communications
- (e) Co-operation in technology
- (f) Co-operation in natural resources, environment and energy
- (g) Statistical co-operation

In addition to these priority areas is the specific co-operation which the secretariat provides in planning, through the services of ILPES, and in population matters through CELADE.

(a) International economic relations

For the aforementioned reasons, the drastic changes that are occurring on both the national and the international scene call for increasingly intensive action by the secretariat in the form of collaboration with the member governments in all areas of interest in connexion with international co-operation and the transformation of the system of international economic relations.

The theoretical work referred to above is designed to fulfill that purpose and requires the special attention of the secretariat at two levels: international economic co-operation and regional economic co-operation.

At the first of these levels, certain specific co-operation measures should be included, such as the following: (i) multilateral trade negotiations; (ii) negotiations relating to raw materials; (iii) preparations for the next session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); (iv) collaboration in the monetary and financial field.

Activities at the second level comprise the following: (i) assistance to the secretariats of integration movements; and (ii) studies bearing on the convergence of the various integration programmes and co-operation between them, etc.

Another study on a topic of importance which ECLA is undertaking, with the collaboration of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), concerns transnational enterprises and touches upon some of their activities in Latin America (bauxite, bananas and manufactures). This study will be carried out in several representative Latin American countries with the co-operation of official agencies.

Its main objective consists in evaluating the effects of the activities of transnational enterprises on the economic development of the countries concerned, with special reference to their most significant implications for the policies of the Latin American countries, such as those relating to employment, labour productivity, consumption and income distribution, use of local resources and the trade balance. At the same time, working hypotheses and methods for this research have been prepared, and will be applied in certain countries during the year 1975.

In addition, the ECLA secretariat has prepared a provisional report on the activities of transnational enterprises in manufacturing industry in Latin America during the 1960s indicating the leading investor and recipient countries, the distribution of capital by sectors and other important aspects of the question.

(b) Industrial co-operation

The secretariat has been working intensively on studies relating to inter-Latin American co-operation, particularly under integration programmes.

After carefully reviewing the situation, the secretariat felt it desirable, in the present circumstances, to give a new slant to the programme of work on industrial development, and under that programme to define clear-cut fields of activity. The reorientation of industrial studies does not mean that any radical change will be made in the existing programme, but rather that it will be augmented by new studies and research designed to serve as technical support for the adoption of decisions and to facilitate concerted action. The studies thus incorporated will be more specific, and will therefore be termed "sectoral studies"; they will deal with highly concrete industrial development topics - such as branches of industry or individual products, particular aspects of industrial policy, exports of manufactures, integration, establishment of Latin American multinational enterprises, etc. - which call for different treatment, according to the industrial branch or product concerned. The need to carry out such studies is not only a logical consequence of the nature of the work required to put into effect the lines of action described above, but is also a response to interest expressed by the governments themselves, by integration agencies and by other institutions.

At the Latin American Conference on Industrialization (Mexico, 25 to 29 November 1974), the countries of the region voiced their aspirations, suggested the measures that should be adopted to expedite industrial development, and urged the necessity of restructuring intra-regional economic relations to that end, besides recommending that an ECLA Industrial Co-operation Committee should be set up. This Committee would be supported by the secretariat, and its main objective would be to intensify industrial co-operation between the countries of the region and to promote the instrumentation and broaden the objectives and goals of the Declaration approved at the Conference.

/To sum

To sum up, the secretariat's work in this sector takes the following forms: general studies relating to the identification of industrial problems, and to intersectoral exchange of information and consultation; studies on industrial co-operation by sectors; and advisory assistance in the establishment of specific fields of co-operation; and promotion of joint Latin American industrial projects.

(c) Agricultural co-operation

Despite its acknowledged importance, this sector, generally speaking, has not been characterized by dynamic growth. Recent world events have demonstrated the structural, social and institutional deficiencies existing in the agricultural sectors of many Latin American countries. In the present world situation, countries that are not self-sufficient have sustained the two-fold impact of the increased costliness of their imports of agricultural foods and raw materials and the rise in fuel prices, accompanied by a shortage of fertilizers. The problem appears more serious, too, when it is borne in mind that in Latin America large population contingents are suffering from malnutrition and under nutrition, although if the obstacles obstructing the normal development of agriculture were overcome, the region could not only supply the needs of its own population, but could help to improve the food situation of other regions.

In view of the importance of the subject and on the basis of resolutions adopted at the World Food Conference held in November 1974, the secretariat will propose to its member governments the holding of a Latin American technical conference on food and agriculture, to be organized jointly with FAO.

The object of such a meeting would be to enable the Latin American countries to determine their potential in respect of food production and real availabilities for internal consumption and export. It would then be necessary to establish regional, sub-regional and national strategies and targets. Lastly, the Latin American countries should co-ordinate the efforts they will have to make to reach the goals envisaged and improve their bargaining position in trade relations with third countries. Regional and sub-regional programmes will provide valuable leverage for the attainment of this last objective.

//(d) Co-operation

(d) Co-operation in the field of transport and communications

In this sector the secretariat will continue supporting regional action to facilitate the procedures applied in intra-regional and extra-regional trade and transport. To cope with the manifold problems which this action involves, the secretariat will have to convene specialized meetings to serve as forums for the countries of the region.

These plans also comprise assistance to Latin American countries in the prior co-ordination of regional positions during the preparatory work for world meetings in general, and in particular for an international convention on combined (i.e., intermodal or multimodal) transport, with reference to the standards applicable to containers for transport of this type. Similarly, in agreement with other regional and sub-regional agencies, assistance will be rendered to member countries through studies, advisory services and other action with the aim of ensuring that their national and multinational merchant marines may obtain an equitable and increasing share in the transport of their foreign trade cargo, and that maritime freight charges may be compatible with their trade policy objectives.

The secretariat will maintain its collaboration with the countries of the region in the improvement of the bases for transport planning, including information systems, and, at the same time, the application of the transport and communications technologies that are most appropriate for the economic and social development of the Latin American countries will be encouraged by means of special studies, as well as by the arrangement of technical meetings for the interested countries.

As a result of a round table meeting of insurance superintendents, held at ECLA headquarters in December 1974, plans are afoot for co-operation in the establishment and organization of an Association of Insurance Superintendents.

/Another activity

Another activity considered in this context is support for the promotion of tourism, and for an initiative of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) relating to a regional project, with UNDP financing, for promoting, by means of studies and advisory services, frontier integration of telecommunications networks, as a contribution to the more effective social and economic integration of Latin America.

(e) Technological co-operation

At the Conference on Science, Technology and Development in Latin America, held in Mexico from 2 to 6 December 1974, the countries members of the Commission decided to request it to undertake a number of activities in that field. These related, inter alia, to the transfer of technology to the countries of the region; the exodus of qualified personnel to the developed countries; and measures in favour of the relatively less developed countries. At the same time it was decided to establish an intergovernmental committee of experts to analyse the application of science and technology to development in Latin America.

In compliance with these requests, and with earlier mandates, a preliminary analysis is being made of the approach to be adopted, with due regard to the wide scope of technological co-operation and the responsibilities incumbent in this terrain on United Nations agencies, as well as on other international institutions. This analysis is in course of preparation, but the intention is to give it both the solidity and cohesion required for it to serve as a focal point for action, and the flexibility necessitated by the region's heterogeneity, alike in respect of stages of technological development and in terms of different policy orientations and development strategies.

As part of the action to be undertaken in this field, it is proposed to work on the conversion of the ACAST Plan into an operational plan which can be put into effect through specific projects.

/It should

It should be pointed out that activities connected with technology will be carried out jointly with the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), which will be responsible for the pertinent training and advisory services.

(f) Co-operation in respect of natural resources, environment and energy

The pursuit and application of more rational and more equitable formulas implying more inter-country co-operation in the development of natural resources, is a task of great importance for the establishment of a new system of international economic relations, in which the various United Nations agencies are called upon to take part.

Thus, considerable changes are likely to be introduced in resource utilization policies. This means that the secretariat should step up its co-operation with the countries of the region in the achievement of the above-mentioned objectives, stressing the role that the efficient use of natural resources (primarily water, mineral and energy resources) may play in the acceleration of their overall development, as well as in the conservation and even, in specific respects, the improvement of the environment.

The following would be the secretariat's tasks: research on trends in the development of natural resources, as well as in the conservation of the environment, in this latter respect in co-ordination with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with its support; work connected with the United Nations conference on water resources to be held in Buenos Aires in March 1977, including a regional preparatory meeting; co-operation with the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) with a view to reciprocal support; collaboration in studies relating to strategies for the energy sector; co-operation with the Central American countries in a study on electricity projects; and promotion of an exchange of experience among State mining enterprises in the region, by means of technical meetings.

/(g) Statistical

(g) Statistical co-operation

The purpose of this activity is to compile, analyse and prepare statistics for the use of the secretariat and to provide general information on economic and social affairs, to which end work is being done in the following fields: current statistics; status of national statistics; statistical analysis of income distribution; foreign trade indexes; compilation and analysis of data on regional development; formulation of a system of social indicators; and analysis of input-output tables. Furthermore, the secretariat will continue to provide technical co-operation to the countries of the region in connexion with censuses; sampling techniques; household surveys; national accounts; vital statistics, processing, analysis and tabulation of basic statistical data; preparation of special studies on income distribution, national accounts and new systems of social accounts; foreign trade; relations between statistics and planning; social and demographic statistics; and regional statistics.

Under an overall programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations, the improvement of national statistics and of their international comparability will be promoted, in due relation to the regional activities of the specialized agencies.

Broadly speaking, these activities include the work done by the Economic Projections Centre, which in addition to its routine tasks is co-ordinating the basic quantitative data for the appraisals of the International Development Strategy.

B. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WITH COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

Technical co-operation is a dynamic and expanding component of international co-operation for development, to which the secretariat will need to assign priority. Its objectives are to strengthen the national economies with a view to prompting the countries' political and economic independence: to ensure the attainment of higher levels of economic and social welfare for their peoples; and to promote self-sufficiency in respect of the operational, technical, administrative and research capacity needed to formulate and implement development plans in the light of the available options.

Ever since it was established, ECLA has provided technical co-operation to the countries of the region in the study of solutions for economic and social problems; the formulation of development plans and projects; the improvement and strengthening of their institutions; and the invigoration of the regional and sub-regional economic integration movements. Experience has clearly shown that if basic technical assistance is to be more efficacious, an interdisciplinary approach is needed, together with a thorough knowledge of the country and its problems, an ad hoc collection of facts and statistics, and a capacity for steadily advancing along the path of progress.

With the aim of unifying regional action in this field, the Commission decided that the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) should be incorporated in the ECLA system. Thus, the operational activities of the three institutions will be developed on a basis of co-ordination and under a harmonized programme. This will also make it possible to pool resources and efforts in order to offer more effective assistance to the Latin American countries and regional groupings.

In the context of the unification of technical co-operation activities at the regional level within and through the ECLA

/system, the

system, the United Nations established in 1974 three multinational interdisciplinary teams to provide advisory assistance for development. These groups are operating in relation to the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean, the members of the Andean Group, and the Central American countries plus Haiti, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

The basic objectives of these advisory groups, whose activities are co-ordinated and oriented by ECLA, ILPES and the United Nations secretariat, are to co-operate with the governments of a specific group of developing countries in the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes, and projects in the context of integrated national development; to formulate, harmonize and launch policies, programmes and projects within the framework of sub-regional integration; to identify the technical co-operation and external financing requirements of individual countries or groups of countries in the light of their development needs, objectives and available resources; to strengthen or create local or sub-regional structures and capacity for carrying out the activities referred to above; and to collaborate with UNDP in the process mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

The fact that the activities of these multinational and interdisciplinary advisory teams are concentrated in a group of countries makes it possible for them to acquire an intimate knowledge of the development requirements of each. The teams are thus in a position to play a highly effective part in the identification, formulation and execution of multinational projects or national projects of a multinational character, by virtue of which the limitations imposed by the size of the national markets can be reduced, and, in addition, efficient utilization of available resources can be achieved.

In resolution 1896 (LVII) of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General is requested, in consultation with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, to make the necessary arrangements allowing for the delegation of the

/appropriate functions

appropriate functions of an executing agency to the regional economic commissions for regional, sub-regional, and interregional projects, financed by the Programme, in cases where such delegation is requested by the countries concerned and recommended by the Administrator of the Programme.

In the same resolution, also, the regional economic commissions are requested to extend their co-operation to the United Nations Development Programme by participating in the planning, and, as appropriate, the implementation of relevant regional, sub-regional and interregional projects, and by ensuring the co-ordination with the Programme of their own activities, and in particular, the activities of the United Nations Development Advisory Teams.

The application of this resolution will enable ECLA to strengthen still further its co-operation with the region, and to maintain closer and more constructive contact with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Moreover, the unification of the ECLA system's regional action with that of UNDP will facilitate long-term programming for the areas in which demand for technical co-operation is expected to increase and in which projects may be introduced that signify an innovation in this field.

There are several areas of activity in which there is room for projects with such characteristics that may enable countries to make rational and efficient use of their natural resources, mitigate the balance-of-payments, employment, fiscal revenue and other difficulties, and face up to the changing problems of the world economy. Among these projects, mention should be made of the following:

- (a) Formulation and execution of integrated regional development projects at the subnational, intra-regional and intra-insular levels;
- (b) Studies on the integrated development of international river and ocean basins;

/(c) Establishment

(c) Establishment of Latin American multinational enterprises for the development of basic agricultural industries, with a view to extra-regional exports, mainly to developed countries;

(d) Creation of specialized regional institutes for technological development;

(e) Creation of centres for the promotion and rationalization of small-scale industry.

Another significant form of reciprocal technical co-operation is the bilateral type between two developing countries, to which increasing importance is being attached in international forums, and which may become a major factor in the acceleration of the economic and social progress of the countries concerned.

The importance of such co-operation lies primarily in the joint utilization of the capacity, know-how and experience acquired by the developing countries, irrespective of their stage of evolution, with a view to reducing and ultimately terminating their technological and economic dependence, as well as to striving for self-sufficiency, through concerted action aimed at speeding up their integrated development.

For the attainment of this last objective, it will be necessary to analyse the nature of the procedures that will best facilitate the early launching of this new co-operation system.

C. RATIONALIZATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF ECLA AND
ITS SECRETARIAT: INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

1. General considerations

The main purpose of this note is to contribute to the study of ways and means of improving the efficiency of the activities of ECLA and its secretariat, suggesting certain basic priorities for the programme of work and some institutional arrangements and machinery for facilitating the follow-up of these activities by the member governments.

Previous sections present an outline of the general framework, both world and regional, within which ECLA operates as a principal organ of the United Nations for Latin America in the economic and social field. A brief account is also given of the course followed by these activities as a result of the changes that have been taking place inside and outside the region, and of the new responsibilities that are emerging in this connexion. All this demands periodical adjustments in the work programme and in the operation of ECLA's institutional system with a view to concentrating the limited resources available in activities of fundamental importance to the region as part of a balanced and unified approach that will also take into account the different stages and styles of economic and social development of the member countries.

The areas of activity in which efforts should be concentrated, as suggested in the previous section, are subjects or problems which the member governments themselves have been indicating as priority matters. Thus, for example, in the periodical regional appraisal of the implementation of the International Development Strategy, the member governments of ECLA contribute towards adjusting the guidelines and general priorities to be followed in future activities, as in fact has just been done by the Committee of High-level Government Experts at its meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, from 11 to 15 March 1975, the report (document E/CEPAL/AC.69/4/Rev.1) of which also includes recommendations of an institutional nature. Furthermore, at other

/regional meetings

regional meetings held under the sponsorship of ECLA since the fifteenth session of the Commission, the member governments have reached certain conclusions and formulated recommendations for action in various sectors of activity, including institutional aspects, which are embodied in document E/CEPAL/988.

In addition to the specific recommendations already made by the member governments in the institutional field, some general considerations reflecting trends observed at meetings held within the ECLA system are summarized below.

First, the member governments have expressed growing concern regarding ways of ensuring their full and timely participation in the decision-making process involved in the complex changes and adjustments that are occurring at the international economic and social level more intensively and rapidly than ever before, which accentuates the need to adapt the existing institutional machinery with a view to keeping abreast of events and contributing to the convergent action of all the interested parties at both the regional and the international level.

Secondly, the governments of the region are showing more and more interest in co-operating with one another in various fields which may contribute to development increasingly stimulated from within, while at the same time striving for a better co-ordination of their efforts with the purpose of improving their economic relations with the rest of the world, as in the case of the multilateral trade negotiations which have been initiated within the context of GATT. The role which ECLA should play in this respect, too, has often been underlined.

Thirdly, emphasis has been placed on the need for a wider application of the unified economic and social approach to development not only in analytical, research and planning activities, but also in supplementary operational aspects such as advisory and technical training services, including more efficient co-ordination between international and regional agencies operating in these fields.

/Moreover, it

Moreover, it is important to note that one of the main points to be considered at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to development and international co-operation, which will be held early in September of this year, is precisely the institutional readjustments that should be introduced in order to make the economic and social activities of the United Nations system more efficient. In compliance with the relevant United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions, all subsidiary organs, including the regional economic commissions and their secretariats, should contribute to facilitating this process of rationalization of the Organization's activities in the economic and social field.

Taking these general considerations into account, as well as the specific recommendations on institutional aspects already formulated by the member governments of ECLA and by the higher organs of the United Nations system, the secretariat puts forward the following suggestions regarding some readjustments that might be introduced in the institutional machinery and operation of the ECLA system, in line with the priorities of the programme of work proposed in the previous section of this note. It is basically a question of rationalizing the activities of the whole system of ECLA and its secretariat, starting with the more efficient utilization of existing machinery and resources, but also taking into account the new institutional modalities proposed by the member governments.

The biennial programming period currently in force in the United Nations system by a mandate of the General Assembly has been used as the frame of reference for this rationalization effort.

2. Meetings of the Commission, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee of High-level Government Experts

From its establishment in 1948 until 1951, the Commission met once a year. Since then the sessions of the Commission 1/ have been convened biennially, in the odd years, while in the even years the Committee of the Whole has normally met for only one day or two days, in Santiago, mainly to consider and adopt the Annual Report on its activities which ECLA must submit to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

In 1970, in adopting the International Development Strategy (IDS), the General Assembly decided to make an overall appraisal of the progress in implementing the IDS biennially through the Economic and Social Council, on the basis of the appraisals at the regional level made by the regional economic commissions. The first overall appraisal was made in 1973, and the second is scheduled to be made in 1975 in the form of a review of the first quinquennium. To that end, one of the main items on the agenda for the fifteenth session of the Commission held at Quito in 1973 and on the agenda for the current session is the regional appraisal to be carried out by ECLA. Moreover, in compliance with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixth special session, the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1911 (LVII), requested "all organizations, institutions and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations system" to take into account the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, adopted by the General Assembly "when conducting the review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy at the regional and sectoral levels". This, in fact, is the combined task that has already been initiated within the context of the ECLA system, through the Committee of High-level Government Experts at its recent meeting in Bogotá, the report of which is to be considered now by the Commission.

1/ Of the sixteen sessions thus far held, three have taken place at ECLA headquarters in Santiago, Chile, and thirteen in other countries of the region.

/It should

It should be noted that in Part III (paragraph 131) of that report, the secretariat of ECLA is recommended, in conformity with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, especially 3202 (S-VI), Economic and Social Council resolutions and ECLA resolution 310 (XIV), to convene the "Committee of High-level Government Experts regularly, at least once a year, in order to deal more fully with basic and specific aspects of the world situation and international action, so as to achieve greater clarity in the analysis of the problems and principal features of a new international economic order". The same report (paragraph 132) states that "the meetings of the Committee of High-level Government Experts, or other ad hoc meetings at the technical level which may have to be held in the next two years", should cover, in particular, certain subjects suggested there, "subject to changes in priority dictated by the trend of international events".

In this respect, the secretariat would appreciate receiving more precise guidelines on the subjects which should be covered at the meetings of the Committee or other ad hoc meetings at the technical level which it may be decided to convene, taking into account the recommendations contained in paragraph 134 of the above-mentioned report.

In other words, the sessions of the Commission in odd years and of the Committee of the Whole in even years (at latest in April or early May) and an annual meeting of the Committee of High-level Government Experts (usually before the session of the Commission or of the Committee of the Whole) would constitute the institutional focal points for the organization of other meetings and activities of the ECLA system in the ensuing two years, in conformity with the decisions adopted by the government members and the central organs of the United Nations system.

The statutory rationalization of the meetings of the Commission, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee of High-level Government Experts could be effected along the lines indicated without prejudice to the extraordinary sessions which it may be decided to convene, in

/compliance with

compliance with the relevant regulations, in order to deal with emergency situations such as those deriving from natural disasters or other problems which the member governments may consider to be urgent.

Moreover, within the context of the statutory meetings established for the Commission, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee of High-level Government Experts, in addition to the activities they are expected to carry out by mandate of the central organs of the United Nations system, it would be desirable to indicate as clearly and as much in advance as possible the priority subjects which the member governments may wish to consider in certain depth, so as thus to facilitate the preparation of the agenda and other preparatory work required for each meeting.

Over and above any specialized conferences or technical meetings that it may be decided to hold at the regional level, another possibility which might be considered is that of establishing at some of the ordinary sessions of the Commission or the Committee of the Whole, an ad hoc committee or working group to deal with certain specific topics, such as transport facilitation, for example, or international problems relating to natural resources, energy and environment, which merit periodic consideration and action at the intergovernmental level, without its being necessary to set up new subsidiary agencies of a permanent nature for that purpose. It should be pointed out, however, that in order to ensure the satisfactory operation of this type of committee or working group during an ordinary session of the Commission or of the Committee of the Whole, the government delegations would have to include specialists in the areas which were to be explored in greater depth.

Something of the same sort might also be done in connexion with other sectors covered by ECLA's activities as, for example, the social sector, where such subjects as the participation of women in development could be discussed.

/The rationalization

The rationalization of the priority activities and statutory meetings of the Commission, of the Committee of the Whole and of the Committee of High-level Government Experts (CEGAM) along the lines suggested in this Note, besides facilitating compliance with the relevant recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, would also contribute to more efficient utilization of resources already existing, as a basis for the other institutional adjustments which have been proposed by the governments members of ECLA and which are reproduced in the following paragraphs.

Some of these proposals envisage the creation of new subsidiary agencies of the Commission. In this connexion it should be recalled that the Terms of Reference of the Commission, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council, include the following paragraph:

"The Commission may, after discussion with any specialized agency concerned, and with the approval of the Council, establish such subsidiary bodies as it deems appropriate, for facilitating the carrying out of its responsibilities."2/

2/ Terms of Reference of the Commission, paragraph 10, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its sixth session, and amended at its ninth, thirteenth, twenty-eighth and forty-seventh sessions.

3. New auxilliary bodies or institutional machinery proposed

(a) Industrial Co-operation Committee

In pursuance of resolution 341 (AC.66) adopted at the Eighth Extraordinary Session of the Committee of the Whole of ECLA the secretariat convened the Latin American Conference on Industrialization, which was held in Mexico City from 25-29 November 1974. Among the most important of the resolutions adopted at that Conference was the resolution recommending the Economic Commission for Latin America, at its sixteenth session, "to set up an ECLA Industrial Co-operation Committee made up of all the member governments from the Latin American area in order to intensify industrial co-operation between the countries of the region and to promote the instrumentation and broaden the objectives and goals of the Declaration approved at this Conference. This Committee would operate with technical assistance from the ECLA secretariat and with the co-operation of UNIDO, on programmes of work to be determined by the Committee itself". ^{3/}

If it is decided to set up the Industrial Co-operation Committee as a standing auxilliary body of ECLA, it would be desirable to specify more clearly the functions it would discharge, the Programme of Work it would carry out in the coming years, and the frequency with which it would meet (perhaps every two years).

^{3/} The complete text of this and other resolutions and conclusions of the Latin American Conference on Industrialization is given in document E/CEPAL/988 (pages 33-53 inclusive).

/(b) Intergovernmental

(b) Intergovernmental Expert Committee for the analysis of the application of science and technology to the development of Latin America

In accordance with resolution 322 (XV) adopted by the Commission at its fifteenth session the ECLA secretariat convened the meeting on Science, Technology and Development in Latin America, which was held in Mexico City from 2-7 December 1974. Among the recommendations adopted at this Meeting by member governments was the following:

"2.1 In accordance with paragraph 4 of ECLA resolution 322 (XV), an Intergovernmental Expert Committee should be created within the Commission to analyse the application of science and technology to Latin American development and should meet in 1975."

As in the case of the Committee referred to in section (a) above, if it is decided to set up this Intergovernmental Expert Committee it would be desirable to specify its functions and the programme of work which it would carry out, bearing in mind the recommendations and conclusions already formulated on these matters by member governments at the Meeting in Mexico City.^{4/} Alternatively, the Intergovernmental Expert Committee itself could be entrusted, once it had been set up, with the task of defining more precisely its objectives, functions and programme of work at its first meeting, either in 1975 as recommended in the resolution adopted in Mexico City, or else preferably in 1976 as a preparatory stage in the organization of the International Conference on the matter to be held in 1977 under the auspices of the United Nations.

^{4/} The Report of the Meeting on Science, Technology and Development in Latin America is contained in document ST/CEPAL/Conf.55/L.5/Rev.1. Part III of this Report, which contains the resolutions adopted at the Meeting, is reproduced in document E/CEPAL/988, pages 62-85 inclusive.

It may be recalled at the same time that in another resolution adopted at the Mexico City Meeting 5/ the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America is requested "to take the necessary measures to set up an ad hoc group of experts from the Latin American countries to meet as often as is necessary in Mexico City to study in depth the problem of the exodus of qualified personnel from the Latin American countries to some developed market economy countries, in order to determine the causes, effects, and ways of eradicating and reversing this phenomenon".

(c) Institutional machinery in the field of population

At its fifteenth session, ECLA adopted resolution 327 (XV) on the preparations for the World Population Conference and the strengthening of the operational capacity of ECLA and CELADE. In pursuance of this resolution, the Latin American Preparatory Meeting for the World Population Conference was held in San José, Costa Rica, from 15-19 April 1974. After the Bucharest Conference had been held, the Second Latin American Meeting on Population was held in Mexico City from 3-7 March 1975 in accordance with the recommendations adopted at the San José Meeting and the Bucharest World Population Conference. Among the recommendations made by the member governments at the Mexico Meeting was that calling upon the ECLA secretariat to "study appropriate means of enabling the Latin American Governments to take more regular, direct and effective action in the field of population and the latter's relationship with economic and social development, and ...

5/ Resolution on "Exodus of qualified personnel from Latin America to the developed countries" (See document E/CEPAL/988, pages 74-77 inclusive).

..... present a report on the subject at the forthcoming session of the Commission". Immediately after the Meeting on Population in Mexico City, the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the Committee of the Whole was held in the same city. At this Session it was decided that CELADE - an autonomous organization which had been functioning under the aegis of ECLA - should become part of the ECLA system as a permanent institution with its own identity. At the same time, the Session repeated the recommendation to the ECLA secretariat to "study appropriate machinery for enabling the Latin American Governments to participate more regularly, directly and effectively in the field of population and its relationship with economic and social development". 6/

In document E/CEPAL/1002 prepared for this session of the Commission the secretariat presents ECLA's Population Programme, the implementation of which will be CELADE's main task. Part two of that document (paragraphs 22 to 25 inclusive) discusses the institutional machinery for government participation in the Regional Population Programme, including the main tasks incumbent on governments and the institutional modalities through which these could be performed.

In this connexion, the following alternatives are suggested:

- (i) The establishment of a permanent governmental subsidiary organ of the Commission which would meet at intervals to be decided;
- (ii) the holding of regular meetings of government representatives working in the field of population, similar to those held in Costa Rica and Mexico; and
- (iii) the consideration, without prejudice to the adoption of one of the two alternatives above, of the possibility of establishing complementary machinery for meetings of government experts to deal with specific issues and act as advisers to the ECLA secretariat and the main guiding body of the Regional Population Programme as required.

6/ See resolution 345 (AC.68) adopted at the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the Committee of the Whole of ECLA.
/It is

It is now for the Commission to decide whether these or other modalities are to be used to set up the institutional machinery for government participation in the Regional Population Programme. In any event, to avoid overloading the programme of meetings of the ECLA system, it is suggested that the specialized population conferences held at regional level should only be convened every two years.

(d) The Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) - Technical Committee

In accordance with resolution 340 (AC.66) approved by the Committee of the Whole of the Commission at its Eighth Extraordinary Session,^{2/} ECLA has already established the new modalities for the Institute to perform its task by making it part of the ECLA system as a permanent institution with its own identity. ECLA also decided to establish, on a provisional basis, a Technical Committee of ILPES "consisting of representatives at the appropriate level of the Ministries of the countries of the Latin American region responsible for planning" which will have the following functions:

- (i) to act as the senior guiding body for ILPES activities in those areas entrusted to it;
- (ii) to serve as the advisory body for the Executive Secretary of ECLA, both with respect to the implementation of the work programmes of ILPES and the evaluation of their results; and
- (iii) to review and approve the work programmes of ILPES.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution of the Committee of the Whole of ECLA, the Technical Committee of ILPES will meet for the first time on 7 May 1975 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The report of the meeting of the Technical Committee, covering any institutional aspects which may have been discussed at the meeting, will be submitted immediately to the Commission for its consideration at its sixteenth session. This procedure of holding parallel meetings could perhaps be continued in the future, without prejudice to the special meetings of the Technical Committee of ILPES which it might be necessary to convene in accordance with established practice.

^{2/} Held in New York on 24 and 25 January 1974. The report of the Session is contained in document E/CN.12/AC.66/5.

Other recommendations of an institutional nature

Transport

The First Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting on the International Intermodal Transport Convention was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from 21 to 30 October 1974. One of the resolutions adopted by the government representatives refers to transport facilitation. 8/ This resolution suggests that the countries of the region that have not yet done so should consider the organization of transport facilitation groups and disseminate through regional organizations any information and initiative in this field that may affect the region, and recommends to ECLA that it maintain its consultations with intergovernmental organizations, principally those of the region, in the field of facilitation, with a view to achieving the greatest co-ordination of their actions and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Furthermore, the expert meeting convened by INTAL to examine the ECLA/INTAL report on international land transport (Buenos Aires, 3 to 6 December 1974) recommended that ECLA should consider the advisability of setting up a Facilitation Committee to institutionalize the work of co-ordination embarked upon in connexion with the preliminary studies for the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee on an International Intermodal Transport Convention.

The secretariat feels that these purposes could be served basically by means of technical meetings of facilitation experts, 9/ to be convened whenever necessary in consultation with the governments concerned, although this would not prevent these problems from being discussed also at the level of the Commission or Committee of the Whole of CEGAN, as appropriate.

8/ See document E/CEPAL/988 (pp. 59-60).

9/ See document E/CEPAL/1005.

Insurance

A Round Table Meeting of Latin American Insurance Superintendents was held in Santiago, Chile, from 9 to 13 December 1974. The discussions dealt with the importance of regional co-operation as a means of solving insurance problems and with methods of improving the position of national enterprises in the insurance market. It was accordingly recommended that a Latin American Association of Insurance Superintendents should be established, and it was requested at the same time that the constituent meeting of the Association should be held under the sponsorship and with the assistance of the institutions and mechanisms which contributed to the holding of the Round Table meeting in Santiago. So far, the insurance supervision agency of Argentina has been designated as the co-ordinating and contract centre for these activities.

If the member governments of the Commission support this initiative, the ECLA secretariat, in consultation with the appropriate Argentine authorities and in co-ordination with UNCTAD and UNDP, will make the necessary arrangements to hold the constituent meeting of the Association.

Specialized conferences and seminars

In addition to the established sessions convened within the ECLA system and others of a technical nature already mentioned in earlier paragraphs, the possibility is being considered of convening certain specialized conferences or seminars during the coming biennium, in keeping with the priorities laid down by member governments in the Programme of Work or as a result of expressions of interest by member governments, in such fields as food and agriculture; statistics; employment; and to deal with certain problems connected with natural resources such as water, as mentioned in section 1 of this Note. Furthermore, as a preparatory stage for the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements (HABITAT), which is to be held in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976, the Executive Secretary of ECLA, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the Vancouver Conference, has already convened a Preparatory Regional

/Conference for

Conference for Latin America which is to be held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 30 June to 4 July 1975. The Secretary-General of the HABITAT Conference will attend the present ECLA session and will explain the significance of the Vancouver Conference and the importance attached to the Preparatory Regional Conference for Latin America. Similar arrangements are being explored as regards the Conference on Employment which is being organized by ILO for 1976.