

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN - ECLAC**



Distr.
GENERAL
LC/G.1711(SES.24/13)
20 February 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Twenty-fourth session
Santiago, Chile, 8-15 April 1992

COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

**ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT
TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
AND REGIONS**

Note by the secretariat

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY	1
I. TCDC IN THE ECLAC SYSTEM	3
1. The institutional framework	3
2. Operational aspects	3
II. MAIN ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC IN THE 1990-1991 BIENNIUM	5
1. General overview of the biennium	5
2. Coordination with United Nations organizations and other regional bodies	6
3. TCDC activities of the ECLAC system at the regional level	7
4. Cooperation among developing regions	13
III. GUIDELINES FOR ACTION	15
1. Main trends in TCDC in the region	15
2. Continuing difficulties for cooperation	17
3. Some criteria for TCDC activities within the ECLAC system	18

SUMMARY

Pursuant to the general guidelines and pertinent recommendations of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, and taking into account the decisions taken by the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which meets every two years to consider the progress made in implementing such cooperation in the United Nations system, the ECLAC system—which also includes the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE)—is carrying out a number of activities to promote and support technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) at the regional, subregional and interregional levels.

The countries members of the Commission established, in ECLAC resolution 387(XVIII) of 1978, a Sessional Committee to deal with matters concerning cooperation among developing countries. At each session the reports of this Committee form the basis for the mandates conferred upon the ECLAC secretariat to consolidate and further strengthen any advances in this field, in accordance with the priorities and interests of the countries of the region.

This Note by the secretariat is being submitted to the Committee as a working document for the Commission's twenty-fourth session, to be held in April 1992 in Santiago, Chile. It describes the main operational TCDC activities carried out by the ECLAC system since the last session (Caracas, May 1990).

The first part of the report provides a brief overview of how TCDC fits into the institutional and operational framework of the ECLAC system.

The second part is primarily descriptive and reviews the TCDC activities carried out during the 1990-1991 biennium. Accordingly, it presents a short general assessment of the biennium; a discussion of the advances achieved in TCDC with regard to coordination with organizations of the United Nations system and other regional bodies; a detailed description of TCDC promotion and support activities on the basis of the most significant projects and sectors; and a list of cooperation initiatives with countries in other developing regions.

The third and final part contains a brief outline of considerations and suggestions for future secretariat activities which might be of interest to the Committee in its work.

I. TCDC IN THE ECLAC SYSTEM

1. The institutional framework

Since the mid-1970s, the ECLAC system —which includes the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE) and the ECLAC secretariat itself— has been carrying out a wide range of activities to mobilize, "from within", its own capacity to promote and support TCDC cooperation projects and initiatives in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region. The basic strategic orientation of such cooperation is as a tool in attaining the economic and social development objectives of the countries of the region.

The general framework of the ECLAC system in this sphere is provided by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, which provided that the organizations of the United Nations system should play a role as promoters and "catalysts" of TCDC, and that such cooperation should essentially be initiated by the Governments themselves. In accordance with the nature of this role, the Commission's activities to support and promote TCDC at the regional, subregional and interregional levels are governed by the specific mandates conferred upon the ECLAC secretariat by the States members of the Commission.

An important step in the direction of promoting TCDC in the above-mentioned framework was taken at the eighteenth session of the Commission (La Paz, Bolivia, 1979), when its member countries adopted resolution 387(XVIII), which created a Sessional Committee to examine the progress made by ECLAC in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Since 1981, at the nineteenth session of the Commission, held in Montevideo, the Sessional Committee has met regularly to consider the work of ECLAC in this area, thereby providing the basis for the adoption of resolutions dealing specifically with TCDC in the Commission.

2. Operational aspects

One factor which weighs heavily on the operational aspects of TCDC is the diversity of situations in which the countries have managed their own TCDC activities, in that this diversity has an impact on the planning, execution and monitoring of activities and projects geared to strengthening the use of TCDC as a development tool in the countries of the region. The situations vary, from countries whose relatively higher level of development enables them to provide a wider range of TCDC-related supply, to those which are more likely to be on the demand side in terms of technical cooperation. This diversity takes a number of forms, such as the different policies which are brought to bear depending on the priority given to TCDC within national development plans; differences as to the degree of institutionalization of the national TCDC focal points; the importance and influence of leading institutions (for example, public enterprises in strategic sectors) having the legal and material resources to launch and maintain technical

cooperation activities; and the varying national capacities to manage TCDC as a systemic process and not as a series of isolated exchanges. One of the main lessons that can be learned from this overall picture is that there are no operational "recipes" for promoting TCDC in the region. It is a process which must be built from the ground up, depending on the objectives and needs of each country participating in it.

In view of this heterogeneous situation, and in accordance with the substantive guidelines of its own work programme, ECLAC uses a number of different operational modalities to promote TCDC, as follows:

- a) Provision of information services, mainly through the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES), a part of the ECLAC system, which is in the process of creating or strengthening national information-related capacities, by making intensive use of inter-country exchanges;
- b) Inclusion of a specific TCDC dimension in technical studies by the secretariat in important sectors, surveying the needs of the participating countries and identifying possible sources of funds to finance technical cooperation;
- c) Preparation of specific TCDC-oriented projects, together with mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to implement them, in close cooperation with the relevant focal point for cooperation exchanges in the sector in question;
- d) Provision of technical support in the operation of TCDC networks in which executing agents participate, in many cases including private entities from the sector in question;
- e) Provision of technical support, with regional or subregional outreach, to national TCDC focal points, in close cooperation with the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries;
- f) Coordination with regional organizations which also use TCDC modalities in their spheres of competence, with special emphasis on the coordination initiatives sponsored by UNDP and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System (SELA);
- g) Consultation and coordination with the other regional commissions in taking joint steps to promote TCDC in sectors of common interest at the interregional level.

Using one or more of these modalities in each case, the ECLAC system carried out its activities to promote and support TCDC as part of its work programme, in an effort to strengthen the elements or mechanisms in the various areas of each programme which could help to encourage cooperation among developing countries. In general, these activities form part of specific technical cooperation projects being implemented with extrabudgetary resources, and include the following: i) identification of opportunities for cooperation between developing countries or groups of countries; ii) support for exchanges, between developing countries, of experience in given areas or sectors; iii) strengthening of individual countries' institutional TCDC capacity; and iv) use of existing capacity in developing countries to put specific TCDC initiatives into practice.

II. MAIN ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT TCDC IN THE 1990-1991 BIENNIUM

1. General overview of the biennium

In the 1990-1991 biennium, which began, broadly speaking, with the twenty-third session, held in May 1990 in Caracas, the ECLAC system continued to provide its support and cooperation to strengthening and expanding the use of TCDC in response to the needs of the countries of the region, in keeping with the general guidelines of its work programme and the specific mandates contained in resolution 508(XXIII) on cooperation among developing countries and regions adopted at that session. The mandates given to the secretariat in that resolution refer to the following topics: a) strengthening the links between the ECLAC system and the national Government-designated focal points; b) intensifying activities designed to support existing cooperation networks and systems in the region; c) continuing with activities designed to back up the dissemination of information on opportunities and initiatives for TCDC at the regional and interregional levels; d) further expanding activities aimed at identifying and incorporating operational forms of TCDC in the various sectors of the work programme of the secretariat, especially those which permit the participation of both governmental and non-governmental agents of cooperation; e) collaborate with initiatives and mechanisms for regionally coordinating cooperation among developing countries; f) continuing to give support to the regional programming exercises in technical cooperation among developing countries in sectors of priority importance, which are sponsored by UNDP in coordination with SELA; g) continuing to collaborate with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in activities to support the national TCDC focal points; and h) stepping up joint action with the other regional commissions to promote interregional cooperation projects, in consultation and coordination with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system.

The period covered by this report is characterized in particular by activities aimed at complying with the above-mentioned mandates and carrying forward the tasks which the Commission had been performing in the previous biennium in connection with projects, including some of the TCDC promotion and support modalities listed above, and the regular activities for disseminating information and supporting the initiatives of the national focal points.

The publication of the bulletin Cooperation and Development in Spanish and English (three issues per year) is part of these information dissemination activities. Issues Nos. 31-35 were published during the biennium. It is worth noting that this bulletin has been published without interruption since 1981 and that its distribution, within and outside the region, has made it possible to establish many linkages with centres of excellence which are involved in TCDC-related research.

The fact that the main focus of TCDC in the ECLAC system is based on technical cooperation projects in specific sectors and financed with extrabudgetary resources enables a very explicit link to be established with the secretariat's work programme. In the 1990-1991 biennium, a number of projects were

completed which had been initiated in previous periods; others were pursued in accordance with their activities programmes; and some new ones were launched to promote TCDC in certain areas of special significance. ECLAC also helped to strengthen and expand the regional TCDC coordination mechanism in collaboration with UNDP, through its Special Unit for TCDC and in cooperation with the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

2. Coordination with United Nations organizations and other regional bodies

ECLAC continued supporting and cooperating with the various bodies and forums responsible for strengthening TCDC coordination both within the United Nations and in regional organizations.

An important event in this regard was the seventh session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28-31 May. On that occasion, the Committee session was preceded by a meeting of representatives of United Nations organizations and delegations from the developing countries especially convened to consider operational TCDC issues, as decided by the Committee in 1989. This meeting was attended by 41 developing countries and many United Nations agencies and organizations, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and ECLAC. As is customary, the High-level Committee considered the progress made in implementing the tasks conferred on the United Nations system by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, pursuant to the documents prepared by the UNDP Administrator. At this session, however, the Committee for the first time evaluated the advances made in TCDC with respect to the integration of women into development, on the basis of a summary report prepared by ECLAC.

The Committee's decisions included the recommendation that the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC, in conjunction with the focal points of United Nations organizations, should elaborate a draft set of guidelines on policies and procedures applicable to TCDC in these organizations, and that this draft should be submitted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The Committee also recommended that ACC should periodically monitor the implementation of these guidelines. ECLAC has cooperated with the Special Unit in following up on this matter.

Regional coordination of TCDC activities experienced a significant boost during the biennium, an aspect worthy of mention in view of the importance attached by the countries members of ECLAC to this topic. During the period under review, in the framework of the regular meetings of the Latin American Council of SELA, the Commission participated in the fifth and sixth annual meetings of directors of international cooperation, which were held in Caracas at SELA headquarters in September 1990 and 1991, respectively.

These meetings provided a valuable opportunity to inform the national focal points about the TCDC activities being carried out by the ECLAC system and to hear the views of the countries of the region on sectors and matters of interest to them. The periodicity of these meetings has made it possible to establish a good system of feedback with the technical bodies which coordinate cooperation at the country level. Of special interest to ECLAC was the Sixth Meeting, at which a preliminary proposal was submitted by the Commission, UNCTAD and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA for holding a regional TCDC programming exercise on international trade.

Also held during the biennium were the fifth and sixth meetings of the coordination mechanism for regional bodies and units engaged in TCDC activities, an inter-agency coordination scheme which has been in operation since 1989 and has considerably streamlined communication and the transfer of data, as well as operational consultations between bodies in support of TCDC activities in the region. This has helped avoid duplication of efforts, both within and outside the United Nations system. The Fifth Meeting was held on 7 September 1990 at SELA headquarters in Caracas, with the participation of the following bodies: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Action Committee in Support of the Economic and Social Development of Central America (CADESCA), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), ECLAC, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNIDO, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Latin American Economic System (SELA) and United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Sixth Meeting took place in Caracas on 5 September 1991, with the participation of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (DTCD) and the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), in addition to those who attended the previous meeting. Special attention was devoted to reviewing the advances achieved in the preparation of the regional TCDC programming exercise in the area of health, which is being coordinated by PAHO/WHO.

Lastly, it should be noted that under the cooperation between the United Nations and SELA, ECLAC collaborated with the activities of the Project on the Status of Regional Cooperation (PESICRE) being carried out by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA with the support of UNDP, by providing relevant data on technical cooperation projects currently being executed by ECLAC so that they could be entered into the data bank being developed by the project.

3. TCDC activities of the ECLAC system at the regional level

a) A synopsis of TCDC modalities in specific projects

Many of the projects completed or being carried out during the biennium included activities specifically designed to promote TCDC in terms of one or another of the above-mentioned areas. Although this fact makes it difficult to provide a detailed account of all such activities, those in which TCDC elements were crucial to the achievement of project objectives are described below for illustrative purposes.

Project: Elaboration and dissemination of new techniques in public policy planning and programming (RLA/86/029)

From January 1987 to December 1991, within the framework of this regional project, which is supported by UNDP and executed by ECLAC through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), assistance continued to be provided for horizontal cooperation in various areas related to the planning and programming of public policies. These include, for example, joint initiatives with the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) in the field of information technology and information for development planning, aimed at programming and executing activities with the Latin American Federation of Users of Information (FLAI) and with the Regional Centre for Education in Information Science (CREI). These joint initiatives led to the

establishment of databases for a cooperative network to be used in policy planning and coordination. The project also made an outstanding contribution to horizontal technical cooperation between national agencies and bodies for the planning and coordination of decentralization and deconcentration in social sectors and services.

Project: Support for Latin American foreign services institutions (RLA/86/002)

This project, which was initiated by ECLAC in 1986 and was completed during the biennium, continued implementing the work programme through a series of activities to support and promote regional cooperation in strengthening the operative infrastructures of ministries of foreign affairs, especially in the systematizing and computerizing of data. The project also helped to reinforce coordination among groups of experts in the region with regard to relevant topics in international relations, in particular in the new international economic environment.

Project: Strengthening of the patent information and documentation network (CAN/87/59)

The activities under this project, sponsored by the Canadian Government, were completed during the biennium. The project began in August 1987 and ended in December 1991. Its outputs include a series of proposals on options for institutionalizing a cooperative system to strengthen and improve the capacity of the countries of the Caribbean subregion in relation to industrial property, through the use of patent information. As an operational mechanism, the project established a Patent Information and Documentation Unit, attached to the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, in coordination with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), in addition to WIPO, participated as associate bodies.

Project: Technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America concerning the transport, distribution, commercialization and competitiveness of their exports (HOL/87/S60)

This project, launched in July 1988 with the aid of the Government of the Netherlands and completed during the biennium, was designed to carry out a series of case studies (Argentina, Brazil and Chile) to allow for an exchange of experiences which would help to identify the adjustments which need to be made in transport systems so that they may fulfil their proper role in the export trade of the countries of the region. The project's activities were carried out in coordination with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and in close contact with the marketing firms and export consortia of the participant countries, which are the primary agents of cooperation in this sector.

Project: Natural disaster prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean (ITA/87/S79)

With the support of the Government of Italy and the participation of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as an associate agency, ECLAC embarked upon this project in 1988. The project provides for technical cooperation activities in a new field, but one which is of growing interest to the countries of the region. Under this project, an exhaustive analysis is made of the rainfall prediction

capacities in the region. On this basis, proposals are formulated for cooperation in improving the training of human resources and for determining the need to establish early-warning flood-control systems in selected river basins.

Project: The impact of subsidies and different systems of control and organization of public urban transport in Latin America (RFA/88/S21)

This project is part of a series of activities which ECLAC has been carrying out in the field of urban transport, with a view to promoting and strengthening cooperation among the countries of the region in order to design and implement administrative and management policies for mass transit in the large urban agglomerations of Latin America. The project was started near the end of 1988 and is based on an analysis of concrete experiences in comparing productivity, costs and urban transport tariffs among countries which apply different models of fiscal intervention in this sector.

Project: Support for activities related to the design and preparation of the 1990 round of population and housing censuses in Latin America and the Caribbean through TCDC modalities (RLA/88/PO8)

This project, which has the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund, was initiated in April 1988 and completed during the biennium. Its purpose was to contribute to the coordination of the technical activities that are required to ensure both the quality and the timeliness of the demographic and statistical information gathered in the census round in the countries of the region in 1990. The project was heavily oriented towards TCDC, both in terms of the coordination of efforts to achieve common approaches and methodological procedures, and in terms of making effective use of national experts in census matters to train technical teams from other countries of the region. During the biennium, the following technical meetings were held: Seminar on Training of Staff for Field Activities, organized jointly with the State Statistical Committee of Cuba (Havana, Cuba, November 1989); Latin American Seminar on Post-Census Evaluation and Use of Samples (Cartagena, Colombia, June 1990); Seminar on Computerized Systems for Census Processing (Caracas, Venezuela, May 1990).

Project: Operation and planning of electrical systems in Central America (CAM/88/SO6)

Activities under this project were initiated in mid-1988 with resources made directly available by the national electric power companies of the countries of Central America and are aimed at strengthening the electricity sector in the subregion and the technical capacity of the companies themselves, through the execution of concrete studies and the undertaking of training activities in seminars and workshops for officials and technical personnel responsible for the management of this sector in the subregion. During the biennium, a substantive report on the project was prepared in order to support the strengthening of electric power integration in the subregion (Informe sustantivo del proyecto sobre operación y planificación de los sistemas eléctricos en el Istmo Centroamericano (LC/MEX/R.240, 6 July 1990)). At the same time, the subregional headquarters of ECLAC proceeded with its task of identifying the areas in the electric power companies of the Isthmus which require institutional and financial strengthening, within the work programme of the project on institutional development and integration of the electric power systems of the region (DIEICA II). In this context, mention should be made of the publication "Istmo centroamericano: cobertura de los proyectos regionales en planificación, distribución y mantenimiento" (LC/MEX/R.223, 15 May 1990).

Project: Technical cooperation for environmental planning and management in Latin America and the Caribbean (PMA/90/SO1)

This project has the support of UNEP and was launched in 1990, with the aim of collaborating in the design of environmentally sustainable agricultural development plans in three countries of the region which are characterized by mountainous ecosystems; helping to formulate urban industrial development plans for the efficient management of hazardous or toxic wastes; cooperating in the strengthening of government capacities to use analytical tools for environmental management; and establishing a network of institutions to promote horizontal technical cooperation in these matters. The project will be completed in December 1992.

Project: Guidelines and consultancy services on controlled environmentally sound waste management (FRG/90/S58)

This project, which is funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, is a response to the growing interest expressed by the countries of the region in developing intersectoral policies and programmes for the environmentally sound management of urban residues and industrial wastes. In the first phase, from June 1990 to December 1991, information on the dynamics of deteriorating environmental processes caused by the production of urban waste (both domestic and industrial) and their impact on human settlements was gathered and systematized. On the basis of this information, a series of national seminars and a regional meeting were organized, focusing on the exchange of experience in planning future technical cooperation in this field. The second phase is expected to begin in 1992.

Project: Technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of road maintenance (FRG/90/S11)

ECLAC is supporting technical cooperation among the countries of the region in this field through a two-year project which began in August 1990 with funding from the Federal Republic of Germany. Its objective is to develop alternatives to reduce the cost of road maintenance and improve the efficiency of planning and programming maintenance projects. The project is being used, among other means, to exchange experience and identify common problems in the countries of the region on this topic, with a view to intensifying the use of TCDC in carrying out the project activities. Expected outputs include the preparation of a regional database to promote technical cooperation in the sector and methodology handbooks to improve road maintenance measures in the countries of the region.

b) Support for TCDC activities in relevant sectors

Apart from the activities designed to promote or support TCDC which are undertaken under specific projects such as those mentioned above, ECLAC has continued to participate in activities initiated by agencies and institutions of countries in certain sectors of special interest in that they underline the catalytic role which can be played by ECLAC at the regional and subregional levels. These are as follows:

i) Activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group in Support of the Mining/Metallurgy Sector, which operated as part of the activities of the Latin American Mining Organization (OLAMI).

ii) Activities of the System of Cooperation and Coordination among Planning Bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean (SCCOPALC), whose technical secretariat has been entrusted to ILPES.

iii) Activities of the Regional Programme to Strengthen Cooperation among National Information Networks and Systems for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOLAC), being implemented with the participation of ECLAC and UNESCO.

iv) Activities in support of the Permanent South Pacific Commission (CPPS), which include the initiative to prepare a joint project to evaluate and prevent the economic impacts of the ocean current "El Niño".

v) Activities in support of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), a subsidiary organ of the Commission, which are undertaken through the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, headquartered in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, which serves as the secretariat of the Committee.

vi) Activities to promote coordination and provide technical assistance to the countries of the subregion through the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in various areas of interest, including information. The ECLAC subregional headquarters participates in the operation of the Caribbean Information System for Economic and Social Planning (CARISPLAN), and in the development of the Caribbean Information System for Agriculture Sciences (CAGRIS), in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine).

c) Other activities

i) Mission by Venezuelan experts to Bolivia and Chile. With the support of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which permitted the use of resources allocated for the promotion of TCDC, ECLAC and ILPES acted as intermediaries for the dispatch of a high-level Venezuelan technical mission to Bolivia and Chile in July 1990 in order to obtain information on the respective experience of those countries in the establishment and operation of investment funds in support of social solidarity. In Bolivia the Venezuelan mission was given details of the experience accumulated with the Emergency Social Fund of the Office of the President of the Republic, and in Chile it collected information on the implementation of the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund (FOSIS), which comes under the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation of that country.

ii) ECLAC participated in the Seventeenth Meeting of Ministers of Public Works and Transport of the Southern Cone Countries, held in Asunción, Paraguay, from 10 to 14 September 1990. For this meeting, an explanatory note was prepared on the use of the International Waybill, which is one of the most important means of cooperation for facilitating road transport of goods between neighbouring countries and could therefore be very useful for strengthening intraregional cooperation in this field. The Waybill is a document which is backed up by the Agreement on the Contract of Transport and the Civil Liability of Carrier in the International Land Transport of Goods, known as the TIR Agreement. ECLAC has been working for years in support of action to promote the dissemination and use of this instrument among the countries of the region.

iii) ILPES designed and put into operation in various countries a project information system designed to collect, organize, manage and analyse relevant information on public investment projects at both the national and the sectoral and regional levels. This computerized system is structured on the basis of the life cycle of the projects and records the most important information in each of their stages (idea-profile-prefeasibility study-feasibility study-design-execution-operation). A number of technical assistance projects which have received support from the Inter-American Development Bank or UNDP served to permit the partial or full introduction of this system in various countries of the region. This has given a boost to cooperation activities among the countries, reflected in traineeships and the exchange of experience, especially on methodology. In addition, ILPES, with the support of the World Bank, held two regional seminars at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, to publicize and promote TCDC in this field. The second of these, which was held in October 1990 and had the support of the World Bank's Economic Development Institute (EDI), was designed to further the exchange of national experience on fiscal decentralization and the operation of investment project banks.

iv) Cooperation in the capital goods sector. ECLAC and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) organized the Regional Expert Group Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean on the Capital Goods Industry, with Emphasis on Machine Tools, which was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, from 8 to 11 April 1991. A noteworthy feature was the participation in this meeting of directors of enterprises manufacturing or using machine tools from the metal products and machinery sectors of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. The objectives of the meeting included the exchange of experience on the use of conventional and advanced machine tools in the metal products and machinery industry and proposals for effective bilateral, regional and international cooperation measures in the capital goods industry in general and the machine tools industry in particular.

v) Cooperation in the field of transport. ECLAC participated in the meeting of the Andean Committee of Water Transport Authorities (CAATA) organized by the Board of the Cartagena Agreement (JUNAC) and held from 28 February to 1 March 1991 at JUNAC headquarters in Lima. ECLAC also took part in a Seminar/Workshop of Ministers of Transport, Communications and Public Works held within the framework of that meeting. ECLAC proposed the review of the issue of the reservation of freight in maritime transport policy, including cooperation among the countries of the subregion in order to join forces, promote ventures, exchange experience and promote the development of intra- and subregional marine transport.

vi) Through its Subregional Headquarters in Mexico, ECLAC supported cooperation activities between Mexico and Cuba in the energy sector. To this end, a framework technical cooperation agreement was arranged between the Federal Electricity Commission of Mexico and its Cuban opposite number, the Electricity Union, which comes under the Ministry of Basic Industry of that country. In addition, a diagnostic study of the energy sector in Cuba was made and arrangements were made for technical cooperation by two Mexican experts on information systems and electric power control systems.

4. Cooperation among developing regions

The subject of cooperation among developing regions has been one of major concern to the regional commissions of the United Nations as a whole and to ECLAC in particular. Interregional cooperation has received priority attention at successive meetings of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions. In the case of ECLAC, special mention may be made of several initiatives of this type undertaken in the two-year period 1990-1991.

a) Cooperation among the countries of the Pacific area. Within the framework of a project formulated by UNCTAD for the promotion of economic and technical cooperation among the developing countries of Asia, the Pacific and Latin America which border on that ocean, ECLAC and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) were invited to collaborate in the execution of the activities provided for in the preliminary programme of work of that project. This initiative will make it possible to appraise the possibilities of interregional cooperation in the light of the trade policies of the countries of the Pacific area and organize an expert meeting to formulate policy proposals for promoting TCDC/ECDC in the area; to collaborate in the definition of areas of cooperation and priorities; and to analyse the studies to be made under the project and the contributions prepared by the participating countries and by the two regional commissions involved. The idea is to provide preparatory assistance for the subsequent definition of specific projects that could be proposed in the areas of activity in question (transport, use of natural resources, trade, services and commodities) in keeping with the interests of the countries concerned. The project also aims to give special consideration to the situation and problems of small island countries of the Pacific area.

b) Joint ECLAC/ECA project on technological development policies. ECLAC and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) prepared a joint project for the exchange of experience among countries of the two regions on the formulation and application of technological development policies. This project was submitted to UNDP for consideration of its possible financing.

c) ECLAC participated in the First Meeting of the Group of Experts on the Law of the Sea of the States Members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, held in Brazzaville, Congo, from 12 to 15 June 1990. For this meeting, ECLAC prepared document LC/R.896: "ECLAC contribution to a preliminary proposal for cooperation in the Law of the Sea and marine affairs among the States of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic". This document reviews the existing framework of interregional cooperation and analyses the main mandates of General Assembly Resolution 44/11 which came within the field of competence of ECLAC, in accordance with the priorities of the Latin American countries, with regard to possible areas of interregional cooperation.

d) African fellowship-holders on CELADE training activities. Within the framework of the 1991 Post-Graduate Master's Degree Course in Population and Development given by CELADE with the support of the United Nations Population Fund, two fellowships were awarded to candidates from Equatorial Guinea working in the Department of Planning and the Ministry of Education of that country. The fellowship-holders were in Santiago, Chile from 5 March to 5 December 1991.

e) Activities with regard to the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. ECLAC participated in the Second Meeting of the Group of Experts on the Law of the Sea of the States Members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 3 to 6 April 1991. The purpose of its participation was to determine specific areas for the implementation of the possible cooperation activities already identified at the previous expert meeting in Brazzaville, Congo, in June 1990 and to suggest immediate lines of action in that respect. It should be noted that the proposals prepared by ECLAC for this Montevideo meeting are fully in line with the Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development.

III. GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

1. Main trends in TCDC in the region

The experience accumulated in these years, the analysis of the problems encountered in the execution of TCDC activities, and the view each country has of the potential of such activities have helped to build up certain trends which may serve to broaden the horizon of TCDC in the region. A brief review of these trends may be useful as background material for reflecting on the lines of future ECLAC action in this field.

a) Regional planning for the exchange of experience and the negotiation of TCDC agreements

The work done since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action has provided various forms of experience which, although they have not been entirely satisfactory in terms of consolidating TCDC as a process with its own dynamism, have nevertheless provided a more flexible conceptual framework for cooperation. In this respect, a renewed awareness has been gained of the true value of the knowledge component as an essential factor for the exchange of horizontal cooperation, in contrast with the purely mechanical transfer of the technological package involved in such cooperation.

In this respect, some innovative forms have been developed latterly which not only increase the potential for possible exchanges between two or more developing countries but also concentrate such potential in areas where there is broad identity of the capacities, priorities and interests of the countries and national institutions involved. Special mention should be made here of the regional TCDC planning exercises, which have received extensive support both from the countries and from regional organization and sources of financing. It is particularly interesting to note that these regional TCDC planning initiatives in priority areas have been welcomed both by the national TCDC focal points and by the relevant private sector agents, since they represent a concrete step forward towards the concentration of efforts to negotiate cooperation in specific sectors where it is possible to bring in the most outstanding national institutions, both public and private. These exercises began in 1989 in the area of aquiculture. Another interesting case of the application of this form of action was the exercise on the planning of TCDC in marine activities, carried out in Buenos Aires in September 1989 with the support of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and UNDP, in which some 40 marine organizations and institutions of the public and private sectors of the region took part. A third case is the exercise on the regional planning of TCDC in the area of health which is currently completing its preparatory phase and is being coordinated by the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO/WHO).

b) Missions to explore the situation and identify needs

Exploratory missions make it possible to define TCDC requests better and to study them more thoroughly. They represent technical support for the requesting country, since if a transfer of technology is required, the mission helps to specify the content of the request more precisely. This saves time and labour for the institutions which must reach agreement regarding a given TCDC activity.

Missions to identify TCDC needs form part of a different strategy. They are carried out by those countries which give priority to TCDC as an instrument of their development policy and which can devote special resources to this purpose. On the basis of these missions, new requests are generated which help establish closer cooperation links among the countries.

c) Development and consolidation of TCDC networks

The establishment and consolidation of cooperation networks in the region represent important investments for the future of TCDC. These networks place the sectoral technical bodies of each country in direct contact with each other and enable them to operate with great flexibility. They are a channel for technical participation, stimulate the exchange of information, and can develop into very expedite means of exchange and cooperation. These advantages militate in favour of a much more active and important role for such networks in TCDC activities in the region, operating side by side with the official bodies of the countries.

The existence of these cooperation networks is a noteworthy feature of the institutional infrastructure of the region for the promotion of cooperation. Many of them were established thanks to the initiative and dedication of groups of specialists in different countries —not necessarily neighbouring countries— who for one reason or another entered into contact with each other, became aware of their mutual activities and concerns, and carried out very accurately focused concerted action displaying great efficiency in the use of resources (since it was generally a question of gaining maximum benefit from the funds assigned for specific purposes or projects) and a high level of operational flexibility (thanks to the personal acquaintance of the specialists). These networks are virtually a model for direct action in the area of horizontal cooperation.

ECLAC has vigorously stimulated the formation of such regional and subregional networks in fields of action where the participation of public and government agents in specific sectors is an essential element for ensuring the success of cooperation initiatives.

d) Establishment of specialized TCDC units within national institutions

In recent years, most of the institutions directly engaged in technical cooperation have set up units responsible for coordinating TCDC. This facilitates not only the work of the institutions themselves, but also that of the national focal point. The interest displayed in setting up these units shows the importance that the institutions attach to TCDC as a means for their own technical strengthening. These initiatives have been particularly strong in those countries which have progressed furthest in consolidating their national focal points for TCDC. The establishment of specialized TCDC units within the institutions is promoted from these focal points as a means of strengthening their own internal coordination role, and

this results in a national network capable of linking up and channelling international horizontal cooperation activity both to and from the country.

e) Enhancement of the use of selective information

The intensity and diversity of the demands and changes currently facing the public sector and the complexity of its technical bodies highlight the importance of the availability of selective information for identifying the most appropriate human and financial resources for dealing with requests for cooperation, with full confidence in their professional calibre, operational capacity and flexibility in each case. It must be noted, however, that in some sectors there are networks and in some cases whole systems of information which have idle capacity that it would be worth using more fully.

At all events, there is a clear tendency to attach greater importance to selective information and to adopt realistic attitudes with regard to the true potential and implications of such information for ensuring concrete and timely cooperation activities.

A notable advance which has been taking place in this field is in the design, establishment and operation of project banks for rationalizing public investment: a process which is being supported by various international organizations and multilateral financing agencies. These information systems have aroused great interest because of their low cost and the progress recently made in the application of microcomputer programs. Project banks can make an appreciable contribution to the proper organization of the operational sectors of the public administration, especially through the introduction of the time dimension as an essential parameter of government action in medium- and long-term projects. Such information systems open up interesting prospects for horizontal cooperation, provided that they are designed and operated in such a way as to incorporate cooperation projects which use various forms of TCDC in their execution, as a subsystem which is parallel to but interconnected with the operational routines of the banks, which have so far dealt mainly with matters directly related with public investment proper.

2. Continuing difficulties for cooperation

In reflecting on possible guidelines for future action in the area of TCDC, mention must be made of some obstacles which still hinder technical cooperation among developing countries. This issue was the subject of a meeting of national experts, organized by the Administrator of UNDP in accordance with the terms of Decision 6/3 adopted by the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which was held from 9 to 20 April 1990 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. As well as identifying obstacles, the national experts also analysed possible measures for promoting the incorporation of TCDC in all programmes and projects financed by the United Nations system. In view of the importance of this issue, the results of this meeting are summarized below.

The obstacles identified by the experts were the following: i) the uneven and sometimes insufficient knowledge and information possessed by government and private bodies in the countries on the national potential for TCDC, together with various practical misconceptions regarding the applicability of forms of TCDC as a viable means for technical cooperation; ii) in close relation with the foregoing, the existence of attitudes sometimes tending to favour the use of traditional forms of technical cooperation rather than TCDC in the execution of projects; iii) the weak functioning or total absence of the national

TCDC focal points which are essential for the full utilization of this form of cooperation; iv) the recurrent shortage of resources for TCDC, aggravated by complicated administrative procedures of the financing agencies; and v) the inappropriate attitudes taken by Governments to the organizations of the United Nations system, which have meant that TCDC still does not form part of the mainstream of the system's activities.

With regard to recommendations, the Group proposed some possible measures, both by Governments and by the United Nations system, for tackling each of the obstacles in question. Among the recommendations concerning the United Nations system, special mention may be made of the improvement of the flows of information to and from Governments on matters related to TCDC, especially in order to facilitate consideration of the use of various forms of TCDC right from the initial stages of the project preparation missions; cooperation with Governments in the establishment or strengthening of national TCDC focal points; a substantial increase in the resources available for the use of TCDC in the regional, interregional and global projects of the Fifth Programming Cycle of UNPD; and the periodic systematic review of the policies and manuals of procedures of the organizations of the United Nations system in order to ensure that TCDC options are taken into account in the process of identification, formulation, analysis and approval of each development project supported by the organizations.

3. Some criteria for TCDC activities within the ECLAC system

In addition to the aspects already referred to in the preceding sections, it should be emphasized that the guidelines for future activities by ECLAC in this field should aim to strengthen the forms of work used by the secretariat, by reasserting certain basic criteria such as:

a) furthering the increasing use of extrabudgetary resources for activities to promote and support TCDC, in order to avoid financial repercussions on the resources allocated under the regular budget of the Organization;

b) making possible the continued participation of the ECLAC system in coordination initiatives carried out in the region, in order to help to maximize the sectoral results of the various regional bodies—both inside and outside the United Nations system—in this field;

c) strengthening action aimed at collaboration with and support for national TCDC focal points, especially in the preparatory stages of technical cooperation projects, when requested by the governments of the region;

d) continuing to provide support, in the fields of competence of ECLAC, in coordination with UNDP and other competent regional bodies, for the initiatives undertaken by countries or groups of countries with a view to furthering the planning of TCDC at the regional level in those sectors considered to be of priority importance for their economic and social development.

e) within the limits of the available resources, expanding the dissemination of information on the projects executed by the ECLAC system which have clear potential for supporting and promoting TCDC activities.

f) strengthening activities designed to secure closer linkages of TCDC actions, so that these may serve as instruments for taking care of the needs of specific population groups in areas which particularly affect them and which occupy a leading place in the ECLAC programme of work, such as expanding the opportunities for technical training for young people and furthering the integration of women into development.