



Twenty-sixth session
San José, Costa Rica, 15-20 April 1996

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION**

- I. Organization of the meeting
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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

The twenty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will take place in San José, Costa Rica, from 15 to 20 April 1996. Pursuant to a resolution adopted by acclamation at the twenty-fifth session (Cartagena, Colombia, 20-27 April 1994), which was later approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1994/287, the member States accepted the offer of the Government of Costa Rica to host the session. The meeting is being held in accordance with the calendar of conferences of ECLAC for the period 1994-1996.*

The session is the most important meeting of each biennium for ECLAC. It provides a forum for discussion of subjects that are relevant to the development of the countries of the region and for consideration of the implementation of the activities of the Commission itself.

With regard to development issues, this meeting will take place in special circumstances. It will be held in a regional environment characterized by uncertainty, which raises issues and challenges of relevance to current economic reforms and the future performance of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. With respect to the activities of the Commission itself, the reform of the United Nations undertaken recently by the Governments of Member States also applies to the regional commissions; it would therefore be appropriate for the highest intergovernmental forum of the Commission to participate in the current consultation process on the subject.

Thus, with regard to the first aspect, this seems an opportune moment to form a balanced assessment of both the achievements and the failures and inadequacies of the reform processes undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean since the eruption of the debt crisis. The San José meeting offers an opportunity to do this and to examine approaches which will facilitate simultaneous progress towards macroeconomic stability, more dynamic growth and greater social equity. It is suggested that the discussion focus on the relationship between macroeconomics and the changes that have taken place at the microeconomic level in such areas as saving, investment, technological progress and international competitiveness.

The results of this exercise and the identification of strengths and weaknesses will facilitate an analysis of possible alternatives for achieving macroeconomic stability combined with higher growth rates than those recorded in recent years.

With regard to the second aspect, efficient implementation of the Commission's activities, in addition to the customary consideration of the report of the Commission's activities, the programme of

* ECLAC resolution 537(XXV).

work and the calendar of conferences, it seems that it would be helpful to consider the impact of the reform of the United Nations on ECLAC.

The purpose of the present note is to make some suggestions to facilitate the consideration of the various items on the provisional agenda and to organize the use of the time available. If the Governments of member States decide to accept them, they will form the basis of the deliberations. As is customary at ECLAC meetings, these suggestions on the organization of work, together with the provisional agenda, will be considered at a meeting of heads of delegations, which has been scheduled for 15 April, i.e., at the beginning of the twenty-sixth session. The secretariat will provide the delegations with the working and reference documents for each agenda item.**

On this occasion, it is suggested that the structure of the meeting be changed to allow more time for consideration of the substantive items, and that the ministerial stage be shortened to facilitate the participation of ministers of State. Thus, on 15 and 16 April, government representatives and regional experts will hold a technical meeting to examine the substantive items of the session and to prepare recommendations that will be submitted for consideration by the ministers. Government delegations are expected to meet on 17 and 18 April and on the morning of 19 April to consider the organization of work, agenda items 5 to 10 and draft resolutions. The ministerial stage will begin on the afternoon of 19 April and will conclude on the afternoon of 20 April.

The participation of government experts in the work of the session will undoubtedly enrich the discussion of the various items, and the presence of ministers of State will give it the necessary prestige, so that the conclusions emanating from the meeting will have the stamp of approval needed to ensure their due consideration by the region's countries.

In this context, it is hoped that the Governments of the member States will wish to exchange experiences and views and to come to agreements on alternative courses of action to meet the development challenges of the rest of the decade.

In accordance with the change in the structure of the meeting, items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda will be considered during the technical stage which will take place on 15 and 16 April. The committees will meet on 17 and 18 April and on the morning of 19 April to consider the following items: reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC (agenda item 4); meetings of auxiliary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences (agenda item 5); other activities of the secretariat of the ECLAC system since the twenty-fifth session and programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 (agenda item 6); calendar of conferences for the period 1996-1998 (agenda item 7); some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission (agenda item 8); follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development (agenda item 9); and cooperation among developing countries and regions (agenda item 10).

It is suggested that the decisions and conclusions of the technical and organizational stages, the programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 and the resolutions be submitted for consideration and approval during the ministerial stage.

** See documents presented at the twenty-sixth session (LC/G.1907(SES.26/12)).

The annotations to the provisional agenda presented below contain background information on the various items, and offer suggestions for their consideration during the meeting. It might be useful to recall ECLAC resolution 419(PLEN.14), which states that, in order for the meeting to be a complete success, "government delegations should include experts in the specific matters to be covered".

II. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of the work of the twenty-sixth session
3. Strengthening development. The interplay of macro- and microeconomics
4. Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC
5. Meetings of auxiliary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences: conclusions and recommendations
6. Other activities of the secretariat of the ECLAC system since the twenty-fifth session and programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999
 - a) ECLAC
 - b) Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development
 - c) Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
 - d) Preparatory activities for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)
 - e) Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE)
 - f) Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES)
7. Calendar of conferences for the period 1996-1998
8. Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission
9. Follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development
10. Cooperation among developing countries and regions
11. Other matters
12. Consideration and adoption of the resolutions of the twenty-sixth session of ECLAC.

III. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers

Pursuant to rule 16 of the rules of procedure of ECLAC, the Commission shall, at the commencement of each session, elect a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected. In conformity with the practice established at previous sessions of ECLAC, the Chairman shall be the head of the delegation of the host country. It should also be noted that rule 20 of the rules of procedure provides that "the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman shall participate in the meetings of the Commission as such and not as the representative of the member by whom he was accredited".

Generally speaking, the officers elected to preside over the debates during the technical stage continue in their functions during the ministerial stage, except that this latter stage is attended by the heads of delegation.

Should the committees proposed by the secretariat be established, they will be presided over by their own officers, i.e., a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

The composition of these groups of officers will be discussed at the meeting of heads of delegation to be held on 15 April 1996.

2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work of the twenty-sixth session

The representatives will have before them, for their consideration and approval, the provisional agenda (LC/G.1896(SES.26/1)/Rev.1), which has been prepared by the secretariat in accordance with the provisions of chapter II of the rules of procedure of ECLAC and bearing in mind the various mandates of the Commission. Member countries may make such observations or suggest such modifications as they deem appropriate under the aforementioned rules of procedure.

The agenda of the session, the organization of work and the establishment of committees will be considered at the meeting of heads of delegation of the Governments of member States.

3. Strengthening development. The interplay of macro- and microeconomics

Working document

- Strengthening development. The interplay of macro- and microeconomics (LC/G.1898(SES.26/3))

Complementary document

- The economic experience of the last fifteen years. Latin America and the Caribbean, 1980-1995 (LC/G.1925(SES.26/17))

Reference documents

- Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity. The Prime Task of Latin American and Caribbean Development in the 1990s (LC/G.1601-P)
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Policies to Improve Linkages with the Global Economy (LC/G.1800/Rev.1-P)
- Sustainable Development: Changing Production Patterns, Social Equity and the Environment (LC/G.1648/Rev.2-P)
- Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P)
- Population, Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns (LC/G.1758/Rev.1-P; LC/DEM/G.131/Rev.1-Serie E, No. 37)
- Open Regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Economic Integration as a Contribution to Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity (LC/G.1801/Rev.1-P)

Five years ago the ECLAC secretariat prepared a proposal on the development of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the 1990s and beyond. This proposal, entitled Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity, was based on the chief lessons gleaned from the economic crisis in the 1980s and on the realization that the region's economies were going through a period of profound change. Since then, the secretariat has refined and expanded its proposal; at the same time, a number of extremely valuable observations have been made which have pointed towards a cause-and-effect relationship between the content and scope of public policies and economic performance. Halfway through the 1990s, therefore, it has seemed appropriate to pause in order to assess and organize these observations so that they can provide guidance with respect to the formulation of public policies.

A retrospective assessment of the current situation as compared with what existed 10 or even five years ago shows that major progress has been made in changing the bases of the region's economies, which has resulted in better performances. Nevertheless, the financial crisis that erupted in Mexico at the end of 1994 reveals the potential vulnerability of such progress, while at the same time, weak points still remain. They include growth which is too slow to create the jobs needed to absorb new members of the economically active population, lower levels of domestic saving than in the past, the high social cost of adjustment and the generally regressive impact of reforms.

It has also been noted that the effects of the policies in question vary significantly depending on to whom they are applied. Generally speaking, the modernization of production has gone farthest among a relatively few good-sized enterprises, and has not spread as rapidly to broader numbers of small- and medium-scale companies' similarly, in most of the countries the relative strength of the export sector has not been transferred to the rest of the economy. This session offers an opportunity to explore these phenomena and to examine approaches which will facilitate simultaneous progress towards achieving macroeconomic stability, more dynamic growth and greater social equity. As a contribution to this thinking process, the secretariat has prepared the document entitled "Strengthening development. The interplay of macro- and microeconomics" (LC/G.1898(SES.26/3)). As a complement to this document, the secretariat has also prepared "The economic experience of the last fifteen years. Latin America and

the Caribbean, 1980-1995" (LC/G.1925(SES.26/17)), which presents the empirical underpinning of the assessment set out in the first study.

4. Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC

Working document

- Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC: Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1899(SES.26/4))

Reference documents

- Restructuring and Revitalization of the United Nations in the Economic and Social Fields: Role and Functions of ECLAC (LC/G.1716(SES.24/18))
- Restructuring and Revitalization of the United Nations in the Economic and Social Fields: An Update on its Impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.1819(SES.25/20)/Rev.1)

Under this agenda item, the delegations will have before them a note prepared by the secretariat which will serve as a guideline for the debate among the States members of the Commission in the light of the current climate of reforms and financial constraints within the United Nations. While governments differ on the priority to be accorded to various aspects of the reform of the United Nations, they all concur on the need to enhance the role of the Organization in the development sphere and its efficiency and effectiveness in administrative, financial, organizational and substantive matters. This need arises from a broader concern, namely, adapting the United Nations to the international situation in the post-cold-war era and to an increasingly globalized economy.

The general status of the regional economic commissions, which obviously include ECLAC, is one of the topics considered in the context of the debate over reform, both because these commissions are part of the secretariat and because of their role in promoting regional cooperation. This is an opportune moment, then, for the Commission's member States to explore the topic from a regional point of view, even though many of its aspects (e.g., the degree to which activities can and should be decentralized) can only be decided on at the level of the United Nations system as a whole.

Nevertheless, there are matters that can be dealt with in the framework of the Commission, such as defining the institutional identity of ECLAC; establishing priorities; institutional policy with regard to extrabudgetary activities; adopting criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance; and assessing the organization, its performance and its management practices.

5. Meetings of auxiliary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences: conclusions and recommendations

Working document

- Report of the activities of the Commission since April 1994 (LC/G.1900(SES.26/5))

For the benefit of the Governments of member States information on all meetings of auxiliary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences, and on their conclusions and recommendations, has been included in the report of the Commission's activities.

6. Other activities of the secretariat of the ECLAC system since the twenty-fifth session and programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999

Working documents

- Report of the activities of the Commission since April 1994 (LC/G.1900(SES.26/5))
- Draft programme of work of the ECLAC system, 1998-1999 (LC/G.1901(SES.26/6))
- Programme performance report of ECLAC for the biennium 1994-1995. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1902(SES.26/7))

Reference documents

- Draft programme of work of the ECLAC system, 1996-1997 (LC/G.1804(SES.25/7))
- Regional Plan of Action of Latin America and the Caribbean on Human Settlements (LC/G.1912)
- Human settlements. The shelter of development (LC/L.906(CONF.85/3)/Rev.1)

To enable the Governments of member States to take a decision on the work to be done by the ECLAC system in the 1998-1999 biennium, the secretariat has prepared a draft programme of work (LC/G.1901(SES.26/7)) which can be amended in the light of any new priorities established at the current session.

7. Calendar of conferences for the period 1996-1998Working document

- Proposed calendar of conferences of ECLAC for the period 1996-1998. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1903(SES.26/8))

As stated in resolution 419(PLEN.14), adopted by the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC at its fourteenth session held in November 1980, the focal points around which meetings of the Commission are organized are the biennial sessions and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole, which are held in years when the Commission does not meet. It was decided in the resolution that sessions should be held in even-numbered years, so as to coincide with the two-year budget programming cycle introduced by the United Nations General Assembly. It was also agreed that at each session, the complete calendar of conferences and meetings planned up to the next ordinary session should be considered, stipulating where possible the date, duration and location of each meeting.

In compliance with this resolution, the secretariat has prepared a table (annex 5 to document LC/G.1903(SES.26/8)) listing the meetings planned for the period 1996-1998, in accordance with the mandates adopted by the Governments concerning meetings of ECLAC and its auxiliary bodies.

8. Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the CommissionWorking document

- Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1904(SES.26/9))

At its forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions, held from September 1994 to September 1995 and from September to December 1995 (first part), respectively, the General Assembly adopted various resolutions and decisions which are of particular importance to the Commission and which the secretariat therefore considers it appropriate to bring to the attention of member States at the twenty-sixth session of ECLAC.

9. Follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and DevelopmentWorking document

- Report on the follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1905(SES.26/10))

Reference documents

- Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development (LC/G.1920; LC/DEM/G.159)
- Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development (adopted at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development, Mexico City, 29 April to 4 May 1993)
- Las políticas de población en América Latina y el Caribe: algunas reflexiones en el umbral del siglo XXI (LC/DEM/G.150, Series E, No. 42)

In its note entitled "Report on the follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development", the secretariat, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 536(XXV), adopted by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session, has submitted for consideration by the delegations a report on activities relating to the Regional Plan of Action. The secretariat has prepared this report pursuant to a mandate from the Presiding Officers of the Committee of High-level Government Experts (CEGAN), who dealt with aspects relating to the formulation of the Plan, and with their support.

This note by the secretariat will serve as a contribution to the discussions of the ECLAC Sessional Committee on Population and Development, which will meet for the first time during the twenty-sixth session to review and consider topics relating to population and development, including the Plan of Action.

Specifically, the Committee will analyse the process of enriching the Plan of Action through incorporation of the agreements made at the International Conference on Population and Development. It will also consider reports on activities carried out with a view to the prompt implementation of the Plan and on actions envisaged at the regional level in the next few years.

In addition, an overview of the status of population issues in the region, and criteria for analysing population policies and programmes and other topics in accordance with guidelines provided by the Presiding Officers, will be presented.

10. Cooperation among developing countries and regions

Working document

- Activities of the ECLAC system to promote and support technical cooperation among developing countries and regions during the biennium 1994-1995. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1906(SES.26/11))

The secretariat has prepared for consideration by the delegations a note detailing the activities carried out since the previous meeting of the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions, which was held during the Commission's twenty-fifth session (Cartagena, Colombia, May 1994).

The note begins with an overview of technical cooperation among developing countries and regions (TCDC) during the past biennium. Information is organized around the following themes: i) coordination with organizations of the United Nations system and regional bodies engaged in TCDC activities in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) ECLAC technical cooperation activities and projects at the regional and subregional level; and iii) the current status of TCDC in the region and some of its main trends.

In addition, the secretariat offers suggestions which, in its view, could serve as guidelines for future activities of the ECLAC system to support cooperation among developing countries and regions, bearing in mind the necessity of changing production patterns with social equity and of sustainable development.

Under this agenda item, the delegations could discuss and propose principles and guidelines for the activities of the ECLAC system to promote cooperation among developing countries and regions in the near future, in order to ensure that such activities continue to be based on the needs of the region's countries in terms of their economic and social development.

In their discussions, the delegations could also see fit to consider the suggestions which the secretariat has presented in its activities report with the aim of facilitating the work of the sessional committee.

11. Other matters

This item covers any other issues which governments may deem it appropriate to discuss.

12. Consideration and adoption of the resolutions of the twenty-sixth session of ECLAC