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Note: The Summary of Debates adopted by the delegations at the last plenary meeting of the eighteenth session did not include an account of the statements made at it; this appears in paragraphs 548 to 563 of this report, and could not therefore be made available to the representatives. In keeping with established practice, any observations it is desired to make on the subject should be submitted within 30 days of the date of this report.

79-6-1451

406 (XVIII). THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND THE SHAPING OF THE
COMING GENERATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK
OF DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES 20/

The Economic Commission for Latin America,

Noting that the United Nations has laid down for the International Year of the Child the objective of prompting Governments, public and private institutions, communities and families themselves to engage in more thorough analysis and reflection concerning the needs and problems of children, reviewing the services provided to them, appraising the resources effectively channelled to them, and defining the role of the coming generations in the planned development processes of the countries,

Noting also that the International Year of the Child is not an anniversary or a celebration, but a means devised by the international community to ensure that in each country, and in international relations, effective measures are adopted which will have positive significance in the shaping and development of children,

Considering that the population of Latin America and the Caribbean is predominantly young, since 41 per cent of the total population is made up of children under 15 years of age, who have the right to improved living conditions for their physical growth and intellectual development,

Taking into account the fact that the situation of children is markedly different in the various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and between the various social groups and regions within those countries,

Taking into account also the fact that the region contains more than 50 million children living in extreme poverty and more than 25 million living in total destitution,

Aware that some of the problems affecting the development of children can largely be attributed to the patterns of growth of the economies of many countries in the region,

Convinced that the healthy growth of children and the positive upbringing of the coming generations are prerequisites for stable development and for planning for the future,

Recognizing that children under six years of age require priority assistance, since they are at a critical stage in their development and growth, yet in the countries of Latin America it is precisely these children who receive least support and services;

1. Recommends to the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean that they should:

(a) Provide resolute support during the International Year of the Child for activities and programmes which will permit better and more accurate knowledge of the problems of children, and draw up strategies for services to children which offer wider coverage and fairer opportunities;

(b) Ensure that national and regional development plans include policies, programmes and activities which are specifically oriented towards promoting the healthy growth and positive upbringing of the coming generations;

(c) Establish machinery for ensuring co-ordination with the private institutions which provide social services at the national, regional and local levels, with the aim of permitting the all-round development of the child;

(d) Give a greater boost to social planning so that action by the social sectors is better guided, social development programmes are formulated at the national and regional level, and the action of public and private bodies is co-ordinated more effectively;

(e) Channel more resources to programmes and activities designed to create social and environmental conditions which will improve the development of the coming generations;

(f) Assign greater priority to children of families in underprivileged situations, and to children under six years of age, who require support both within their families and from public services of various sectors;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the United Nations Children's Fund for the firm support provided in the past biennium for ECLA's activities in the social sector;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECLA, in the studies on social policy being undertaken by the secretariat, to consider in a broader and more penetrating manner the effects on children of the prevailing patterns of development;

4. Urges the international co-operation agencies to place greater emphasis in their co-operation programmes on activities which improve the situation of children.