

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL
E/CN.12/AC.42/4
21 May 1959

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Eighth Session
Panama City, Panama, 14 May 1959

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON UNESCO ACTIVITIES RELATING TO PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Approved by Committee I on 21 May 1959

The Economic Commission for Latin America,

Taking into account the fact that, according to statistics for 1956 published by UNESCO, the percentage of illiteracy in Latin America reaches the alarmingly high figure of 40 per cent, with a school life of four years for the literate population and only one year for the total population,

Considering that not only has the ideal of "education for all", expressed in most of the Latin American Constitutions, fallen far short of achievement, but the educational outlook is aggravated by the region's high rate of population growth, which means that approximately one million children are added annually to the school-age population, so that 25,000 classrooms and 25,000 teachers ought to be incorporated into Latin America's educational programme every year, if the present deficit represented by the 15 million children who have no school to attend is not to continue increasing,

Mindful that the effort to give every human being an education, besides being an irremissible duty of the State, is also the most noble of missions and the most profitable investment that can be effected, especially in the field of economic and social community development,

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Bearing in mind that one of Latin America's most urgent economic development requirements is an adequate supply of properly qualified specialists, technicians and skilled labour, which can be obtained only by means of an educational system that will ensure the elimination of illiteracy and the steady raising of the school age,

Taking into consideration, furthermore, that UNESCO is applying, in Latin America with the co-operation of the Governments of the region and of international organizations a major project for the extension of primary education in Latin America, which, it is hoped, will bring about substantial changes within a period of ten years in the present general picture of Latin American primary education,

Recommends:

1. That, in their economic programming, the Governments should give due priority to work programmes designed to improve and increase education in general and technical and primary education in particular;
2. That the Governments should give their support as hitherto but so far as possible on a larger scale, to UNESCO's major educational development project for the extension of free and compulsory primary education in Latin America.