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**BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE
OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC, 2007-2009**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As stated in resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, one of the objectives of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is “to draw up a biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, to meet the demands of the countries of the region, subject to the availability of resources”.

2. The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC will adopt, at its fourth meeting, the strategic plan 2005-2015, which defines the mission, vision, strategic goals, specific goals and principal lines of action on which the Conference should focus its work during the period ending in 2015. The choice of 2015 as the deadline for the strategic vision coincides with the target date set for the Millennium Development Goals, which constitute a serious challenge for national statistical systems in the region, insofar as it will be necessary to develop an appropriate system of information to monitor progress towards the Goals. There is also the preparation of the 2010 round of population censuses and the implementation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in all countries of the region, together with the updating and revision scheduled for 2008. The Conference will thus be facing three major challenges in the medium term.

3. Hence, the strategic plan 2005-2015 of the Conference is intended to serve, now and in the future, as a frame of reference for the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation. This long-term vision will enable the Conference to optimize the contribution of this programme to the effective fulfilment of the four strategic goals of the plan. The programme will sum up the specific aims for a two-year period, which should be consistent with one or more of the four strategic goals of the plan and facilitate progress towards its implementation. Furthermore, in keeping with the goals of the plan, the biennial programme should contain clear guidelines to provide direction and stimulate concrete action by countries, international and subregional organizations and the different coordination and cooperation bodies created for these purposes (for example, the working groups and committees of experts).

4. The strategic plan outlines four major goals, which, in turn, are broken down into specific goals and translated into different lines of action.¹ The four strategic goals are as follows:

- Goal 1:** To strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users
- Goal 2:** To promote the training of staff in producing high-quality statistical information, managing national statistical systems and carrying out research into statistical methodology
- Goal 3:** To promote the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information in the region
- Goal 4:** To promote coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and international agencies

¹ See ECLAC, Strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2715(CEA.4/3)), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

5. This document contains a biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities which covers the period from the fourth meeting of the Conference until its fifth meeting, scheduled for mid-2009. The programme consists of a series of specific measures in line with the goals referred to, beginning with a definition of priorities and programme components and a reference to the role and functioning of the working groups, which will contribute to clarifying the proposed tasks.

II. BIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC, 2007-2009

A. DEFINITION OF PRIORITIES AND COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

6. This biennial programme includes lines of action whereby progress can be made towards achieving each of the four strategic goals set out above through regional, subregional and international cooperation projects and activities. Nevertheless, given the magnitude and complexity of the challenges outlined, it is necessary to select an optimum number of central lines of action—from the 28 included in the strategic plan—as priorities for the period 2007-2009, in order to avoid dispersal of efforts.

7. In identifying priorities for the biennium, account was taken of the commitments, mandates and recommendations that the international statistical community has deemed essential for the period 2007-2009. In particular, attention should be drawn to the development and strengthening of statistics reflecting progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and targets in areas such as poverty, gender and the environment. In addition, the Conference will identify specific activities which can translate into implementation of the above-mentioned commitments.

8. This programme includes a number of activities and projects which are part of the ECLAC subprogrammes for the period 2007-2009 and which encompass many of the priority areas and lines of action of the strategic plan of the Conference. ECLAC carries out activities to promote cooperation among member countries and to boost their participation in various activities and also in the working groups and committees of experts, together with other coordination and cooperation bodies that the Conference deems appropriate.

9. This programme may be expanded to the extent that the various international organizations that are involved in statistics and cooperation in the region commit themselves to carrying out activities and complying with the responsibilities that contribute to achieving the goals of the Conference.

B. ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE WORKING GROUPS

10. At its third meeting, held in June 2005 in Santiago, Chile, the Conference agreed to set up six working groups and at the fifth meeting of the Executive Committee in November 2006 in Mexico City, the terms of reference of these groups were established.² Subsequently, two more working groups were

² Institution-building, human resources and training, censuses, monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, national accounts, information and communications technologies.

created, pursuant to the resolution adopted at the fourth meeting of the Conference, held in Santiago, Chile, in July 2007.³ The experience acquired to date indicates that, the working groups are a powerful forum for encouraging cooperation among the countries in line with the main goals agreed by the Conference. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its regional public goods initiative, has provided financing for four statistical projects in the context of the activities of the working groups. The Conference, at its fourth meeting, will report on their functioning and on the results of the tasks carried out by the various groups and will establish guidelines for their future work.

11. This document contains a description of the main activities planned and the results expected by the different working groups for the period 2007-2009, in the context of the respective strategic goals. In the case that a working group is implementing a project under the regional public goods initiative, the main goals and targets of that project are presented. The working groups are at different stages in the process of consolidating their functioning and have good prospects for achieving significant results in terms of achieving the goals of the Conference. For successful completion of this consolidation process, it is important for the working groups to follow the recommendations on optimization of their activities and responsibilities as adopted at the sixth meeting of the Executive Committee.⁴

C. THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRATEGIC GOALS

12. In accordance with the agreements of the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the fifth and sixth meetings of the Executive Committee, the activities of the biennial programme 2007-2009 fall under the strategic goals of the plan and the implementation of their corresponding lines of action.

13. There follows a list of all kinds of statistical activities, organized in relation to the four goals of the above-mentioned strategic plan. There is then a listing of specific measures to ensure achievement of the four strategic goals and lastly, a few relevant lines of action are indicated that complement and support the tasks to be carried out in order to achieve the goals.

Goal 1: To strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users

Working groups

14. The Working Group on Institution-building plans to carry out activities that are mainly in the areas of goals 1 and 4 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (1.1, 1.3 and 4.3):

³ Working groups on gender statistics and on migration and trends in remittances in the Central American countries.

⁴ Report on activities of the working groups created at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/L.2595), Santiago, Chile, 14 September 2006.

- (a) Promote an awareness and application of best practices in terms of legal frameworks, strategic planning, assessment of national statistical systems and financing.
- (b) Promote the development of official statistics as a public good among governments, economic stakeholders, social actors and other decision makers, and their use in the design, follow-up and assessment of public policies.
- (c) Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas.

15. In the context of the regional public goods initiative of IDB, this group is implementing the project on integration and harmonization of instruments for social statistics, the main objective of which is to contribute to improving levels of harmonization of measurement instruments and methodologies for producing social statistics, with a view to achieving higher levels of comparability and homogeneity in the region and subregions. A first output of this project will be a document to review the situation of the countries in each subregion, as a result of implementation of phase I of the project, which will have the following title: “Strengthening the quality of statistics in the region: integration and harmonization of instruments for social statistics —review of the situation of the countries in each subregion”. This document contains a review, based on international statistical methodology, standards and recommendations, of the consistency of national practices with internationally recommended statistical standards for each specific topic and by subregion. The other activities scheduled for this project for 2007-2009 are the implementation of phases II and III of the project, as follows:

(a) *Phase II. Establishment of regional or subregional standards*

- Disseminate the results of the review by subregion and specific topic, including a presentation of the statistical instruments and their respective degrees of consistency;
- Organize a seminar for discussion and reaching consensus on the possibility of adopting subregional standards for each specific topic. The proposals will be organized in preliminary form and discussed and the adoption of standards will be considered;
- Prepare and distribute the documents that are adopted.

(b) *Phase III. Implementation of subregional standards in the countries that so desire*

- Six subregional training workshops will be held, each on a specific topic;
- Consultancy services for the implementation of the adopted standards will be provided to the countries that so desire.

Promotion of official statistics as a public good

16. This section describes various activities that contribute to the promotion of official statistics as a public good.

17. *Strengthening of national statistical offices for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the 2010 censuses.* The strengthening of the national statistical offices is a major challenge in relation to adequate monitoring of progress towards the Goals and the holding of the 2010 censuses. This is part of the effort to achieve goal 1.3: Promote the development of official statistics as a public good among governments, economic stakeholders, social actors and other decision makers, and their use in the design, follow-up and assessment of public policies.

18. In this area measures are planned on the following lines:

- (i) *Enhanced contribution of national statistical offices to national reports.* One priority line of action will be to promote and develop actions to enable statistical offices to play a more active role in the preparation of national reports to monitor progress towards fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. At the seminars held in Santo Domingo in May 2005 and in Santiago, Chile, in December 2006 there was a detailed analysis of the current contribution of statistical offices to the preparation of national reports and recommendations were made for increasing their participation in the monitoring of progress towards fulfilling the goals.⁵ It is essential that the Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals take into account these suggestions and recommendations in its programme of work. Particularly interesting is the recommendation that emerged from one of the seminars that the monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals should form part of national statistical development strategies. Accordingly, national statistical offices should commit themselves to promoting such strategies and including data generation projects that contribute to obtaining the indicators used for the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, they should apply effective measures to enhance their visibility in the countries and show governments the strategic importance of their work for monitoring public policies and assessing their impact on the population's standards of living.
- (ii) The Executive Committee and, in particular, the Working Group on Monitoring of Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals should make a special effort to urge international organizations to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, avoiding imputation, unless specific country data are available for reliable imputations following consultations with concerned countries and through transparent methodologies.
- (iii) *Institution-building for the 2010 census round.* The preparation and execution of a large-scale statistical operation such as the population censuses poses enormous exigencies and challenges for the national statistical offices in terms of management and, above all, the achievement of adequate financing. The activities of identification and mobilization of resources for fulfilling this purpose are a priority. In this regard, it should be noted that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with the collaboration of ECLAC and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is organizing a seminar to be held in 2007 on the promotion and financing of the 2010 round of censuses.

19. *Enhanced credibility of the national statistical offices.* One of the main assets that a national statistical office and the national statistical system as a whole can have is a steady increase in its credibility in the eyes of public and private users. The credibility of these offices and their products increases the use of official statistics as a public good in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of public policies among governments, the private sector, social actors and academics and, in general, among decision-makers. For this purpose, it is suggested that the Executive Committee establish an appropriate work mechanism to implement institution-building measures in the national offices, such as:

⁵ Report of the regional workshop on the national statistical offices and the Millennium Development Goals [online] www.eclac.cl/mdg/docs/taller_do.asp (in Spanish only); report of the regional seminar on a new assessment of the national statistical offices and the Millennium Development Goals [online] <http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/MDG/noticias/noticias/3/27173/P27173.xml&xsl=/MDG/tpl/p1f.xsl> (in Spanish only).

- (i) Collect and disseminate information on the legal frameworks governing national statistical systems and national statistical offices and form networks of legal and administrative experts in the countries of the region;
- (ii) Develop and promote performance assessment mechanisms for national statistical systems and implement a system whereby the Conference can track the progress they have made;
- (iii) Develop indicators for the use of official statistics in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of public policies.

Goal 2: To promote the training of staff in producing high-quality statistical information, managing national statistical systems and carrying out research into statistical methodology

Working groups

20. The Working Group on Human Resource Education and Training plans to carry out activities in the context of goal 2 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (2.1; 2.2; 2.3):

- (i) Promote an awareness and identification of institutional needs and the work skills required for producing statistical information and for management;
- (ii) Encourage an awareness of and sharing of experiences in relation to human resources management that is relevant for the stages of statistical development achieved in the region;
- (iii) Support cooperation and coordination of human resources training efforts in the region.

21. The framework for the activities of this group is the actual mandate from the Conference to implement a specific project for strengthening the education and training of the human resources of national statistical systems in countries of the region. The ultimate aim of this group, consistent with the goals of the strategic plan 2005-2015, is to promote the training of staff in producing statistical information, managing national statistical systems and carrying out research into statistical methodology through existing training centres and accordingly, to prepare an agreed, sustainable and international training programme that is consistent with the real training needs of statisticians in the region. The main activities of the project are as follows:

- (i) Identify and document institutional needs for the training of statisticians;
- (ii) Organize and harmonize face-to-face programmes of statistical training, coordinating the activities of training centres within member countries;
- (iii) Create a distance-learning model to train the staff needed for the production and dissemination of statistical information based on coordination between the training centres in the region.

22. The final outcome expected from this project, as a response to the training needs in official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, is as follows:⁶

- (i) Preparation of the main elements of an international joint training programme for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- (ii) Implementation of the above through the creation of a knowledge transfer network consisting of the member countries of ECLAC.

⁶ See Proposal for the creation of a knowledge transfer network (KTR) for training in official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean (DDR/1), 2007.

23. The implementation and funding of the knowledge transfer network is planned to occur in two stages, namely:

- (i) Establishment and initial operation stage: during this period of up to one year, member countries will contribute available infrastructure. Financial support from multilateral agencies will be crucial;
- (ii) In the second stage, it is expected that the network, as a regional public good, will receive funding from international bodies and donor countries to ensure its continued existence. In this stage, the infrastructural support from member countries of the Conference must remain in place.

Training in new statistical methodologies

24. A number of ECLAC divisions are planning activities to develop statistical capacities, initiatives that contribute to achieving goal 2.5 of the strategic plan of the Conference, which is to strengthen the region's networks of statistical information experts in various spheres.

25. *New methodology for poverty measurement.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC is considering contributing to human resources training through the organization of a training course on the new methodology for poverty measurement, within the framework of the review of the ECLAC poverty measurement methodology. At the same time, the secretariat is making resources available for holding regional discussion workshops during the biennium on various subjects of interest to national statistical offices, in a similar spirit to that of the regional workshops held in previous years in the context of the Programme for the Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (MECOVI). It also plans to implement a project to strengthen the measurement and analysis of social cohesion in the region, by developing of the relevant demoscopic instruments, the holding of expert workshops and the provision of technical assistance and training.

Horizontal cooperation for training in the region

26. *Organize horizontal cooperation for training.* At present the national statistical offices of the region have a significant amount of human capital in various statistical areas, which could be mobilized through horizontal cooperation to support training initiatives in different countries. Such measures contribute to achieving the goal of strengthening the network of experts referred to in paragraph 22 and also specific goal 4.2, which is to support and strengthen bilateral cooperation between the member countries of the Conference in an effective and efficient manner, especially for the countries that are relatively less developed in terms of statistics. The Executive Committee should establish an appropriate working procedure for such a mechanism, and may count on support from ECLAC for that purpose.

Goal 3: To promote the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information in the region

Working groups

27. Four working groups will carry out activities in the area of strategic goal 3:

- (i) Measurement of information and communications technologies
- (ii) Censuses

- (iii) National accounts
- (iv) Millennium Development Goals

28. The Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies will carry out activities according to its mandate in the area of goals 3 and 4 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (3.1; 3.7; and 4.3):

- (i) Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information;
- (ii) Ensure that all countries, according to their circumstances, have relevant studies on science and technology, in addition to a minimum set of common indicators for the region as a whole;
- (iii) Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas.

29. The working group intends: (i) to prepare a proposal for the Conference on a harmonized set of basic statistics and indicators for information and communications technologies which will serve as a recommendation for the national statistical offices and which has been validated at a number of regional meetings of national and international experts; (ii) to prepare a compendium of practices for the collection of statistics on information and communications technologies in households, companies and government by the national statistical offices, which will be prepared with the support of the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (OSILAC) and ECLAC; (iii) to formulate a recommendation for the Conference on the construction of a regional database on information and communications technologies which will be based in ECLAC.

30. The Working Group on Censuses, according to its mandate, will carry out activities in the area of goals 3 and 4 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (3.1; 3.2; 3.4 and 4.3):

- (i) Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information;
- (ii) Support and promote the implementation of the 2010 round of censuses in the countries of the region;
- (iii) Produce a document on alternative and complementary methods incorporating censuses, surveys and administrative records to improve the production of sociodemographic statistics;
- (iv) Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas.

31. In the context of the regional public goods initiative, this group implements the project on dissemination and assessment of harmonized census statistics for social programmes on sustainable development in Mercosur, Bolivia and Chile, together with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador and Mexico. This project will contribute to providing information that is appropriate to the internationally agreed development goals, including those that were based on the Millennium Declaration and those relevant to the 2010 census round to be carried out in the region. Country representatives have advocated raising the criteria of adequacy, quality and transparency of their national statistics to the level of best international practices, and using these as a basis for fostering a seal of excellence for official statistics among users, economic agents, and social and political actors and decision makers. In this

connection, the censuses are an important tool for achieving the goals proposed for the region and provide harmonized and comparable information based on the best international practices, taking into account the current diversity of the countries. The purpose of this project is to contribute to the future design of censuses and a redefinition of alternative methodologies which can be assessed through tests in the field, taking into account the individual circumstances of each country. The activities carried out, as well as those scheduled, would contribute to the preparation of three documents entitled “Nuevas demandas de información aplicables a los censos de la ronda de 2010,” “Resultados y aplicabilidad de métodos alternativos de censos de población en América Latina” and “Resultados de la prueba piloto conjunta sobre disponibilidad” which constitute an innovative experience in information collection.

32. The Working Group on the System of National Accounts, in accordance with its mandate, will carry out activities relating to goals 3 and 4 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (3.1; 3.5; and 4.2):

- (i) Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information;
- (ii) Support and promote the implementation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region and the revision process scheduled for 2008, in accordance with a regional schedule of stages;
- (iii) Support and strengthen bilateral cooperation between the member countries of the Conference in an effective and efficient manner, especially for the countries that are relatively less developed in terms of statistics.

33. The Group’s main activity is to carry out an assessment in order to classify the countries of the region according to their level of adoption of 1993 SNA. On the basis of this assessment, differential strategies can be established for the countries in keeping with their needs. This is intended to serve two purposes:

- (i) Provide a diagnostic analysis of the development of the System of National Accounts in the countries and its technical and institutional linkages with the production of economic statistics; and
- (ii) Define the priority stages for the implementation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region and the revision process up to 2008.

34. On the basis of the discussion and the results of the seminar on the system of national accounts in Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 5 and 6 June 2007, the group will define the future phases of regional support and cooperation for the implementation of the System of National Accounts in the region.

35. The Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals intends to carry out activities in the area of goals 3 and 4 of the strategic plan, especially in relation to the following specific goals (3.1; 3.3; 3.4 and 4.5):

- (i) Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information;
- (ii) Encourage the development and use of administrative records as a relevant source for the production of official statistics;

- (iii) Produce a document on alternative and complementary methods incorporating censuses, surveys and administrative records to improve the production of sociodemographic statistics;
- (iv) Urge international agencies to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, avoiding imputation unless specific country data are available for reliable imputations following consultations with concerned countries and through transparent methodologies.

36. The working group on the monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals will initially undertake an analysis of discrepancies between the data produced by the countries and those used by international bodies in monitoring the Goals. It will continue to be supported by ECLAC in its efforts to carry out that task, through the development of the work begun by the Commission in that area.

37. The project for updating methodology for measuring poverty in the region is conducted by ECLAC in the context of the regional public goods initiative and in cooperation with interested countries. The overall goal is to extend and improve the sources of statistical data and the methodological basis for preparing poverty indicators and thus to contribute to monitoring progress towards Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals. The topics of regional interest that may be covered in the context of this project are:

- (i) To carry out workshops for analysis of conceptual and methodological aspects of conducting family budget surveys;
- (ii) To extend the study of methodologies for generating poverty estimates in small areas;
- (iii) Updating the information bases and reviewing the methodology to be used in constructing new CPI baskets and poverty line values;
- (iv) To encourage the strengthening of household surveys that measure income so that regular poverty estimates can be made.

38. One of the main objectives of this Group will be to support and promote the active participation of national statistical offices in the preparation and dissemination of national reports on the Millennium Development Goals in each country.

Technical and methodological capacity-building

39. In the context of the goals for technical and methodological capacity-building, ECLAC will take various measures to respond to the main statistical challenges set out in the strategic plan: information for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; preparation for the 2010 census round, and implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region and the review planned for 2008. These activities are mainly related to meeting the following specific goals:

- (i) Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information;
- (ii) Support and promote the implementation of the 2010 round of censuses in the countries of the region;
- (iii) Support and promote the implementation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region and the revision process up to 2008, in accordance with a regional schedule of stages;
- (iv) Promote and develop gender statistics in all the countries of the region.

- (v) Ensure that all countries, according to their circumstances, have relevant statistics on their natural resources and environment, in addition to a minimum set of common sustainability indicators for the region as a whole.
- (vi) Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas.

(a) Millennium Development Goals

40. *Strengthening of capacities for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and associated targets and the proposal for complementary indicators.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC completed a significant number of the activities relating to the project entitled “Strengthening the capacity of Latin America and Caribbean countries to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals”. In 2007, a number of technical documents will be published on the proposal for complementary indicators for monitoring fulfilment of the Goals and targets and analysis of the regional situation based on official indicators and the new proposed indicators. A regional meeting will also be held with the national agencies responsible for preparing the national reports and with the national statistical offices in order to present the complementary indicators and to support the active participation of those offices in the preparation of national reports.

41. *Review and updating of the methodology used to improve monitoring of progress towards Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC is implementing a project for review and updating of the methodology used to quantify indigence and poverty in the region and to improve the monitoring of progress towards the first of the Goals. This project includes methodological and empirical research activities, expert meetings for analysis of specific aspects of the method, a training course for officials of national entities that are in charge of monitoring poverty issues and regional workshops on topics relating to measurement of well-being and the improvement of household surveys in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This programme provides for the active participation of the countries through the creation of working groups that will be responsible for data processing and the exchange of ideas on specific elements of the poverty measurement process. In addition to the generation of a new methodology for the construction of poverty lines, the project includes the creation of a database with the new harmonized poverty measurements of the countries of the region, as well as a series of methodological documents on the procedures to be used and their results.

(b) Gender statistics

42. *Use of free time and unpaid work.* The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in conjunction with the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico, established a cooperation and joint sponsorship agreement for the organization of the international meeting on gender statistics. Held annually in Aguascalientes (Mexico), this forum is an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas on various issues relating to gender statistics in the different countries. Financial resources permitting, a training course will be offered on time use and the contribution of unpaid work to the economy. The Women and Development Unit of ECLAC will also coordinate an interregional project on strengthening national capacities to eradicate violence against women, especially in relation to measuring the incidence and magnitude of violence in the context of official statistics.

43. *Gender indicators.* In the context of the Millennium Development Goals, the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC intends to continue with its work on gender mainstreaming with the

proposal of indicators that are complementary to the indicators which were officially adopted but do not include the gender perspective. The Unit is also participating, together with the Social Development Division, in the project for interregional cooperation to strengthen social inclusion, gender equality and health promotion in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, in which context substantive links will be established between those Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The aim is to develop indicators that allow strategic monitoring of both mandates. The Unit will also continue to provide technical assistance under the project entitled "Use of gender indicators in public policy-making". This project is intended to support the generation of gender statistics and implementation by the countries of systems of gender indicators within the framework of social information systems.

44. *Satellite household accounts: gender and health.* The Women and Development Unit of ECLAC will continue to collaborate with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in measuring the contribution of women's unpaid work to health and economic development.

45. *Working group on gender statistics* A working group on gender statistics will be created, headed by Mexico, to encourage efforts to systematize national statistical information with a gender perspective and promote in all countries the implementation of the time use survey or the inclusion in household surveys of a module to measure women's unpaid contributions, and the systematic and regular submission to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean of the relevant statistical information for the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. In that framework, the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC will continue to promote the preparation of time-use modules for household surveys and a basic proposal will be put forward for indicators as a guide for including a set of questions on the issue designed primarily to increase the visibility of the burden of productive and reproductive work and caregiving. The Unit will also continue to collaborate with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), PAHO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in order to move forward with establishing a regional consensus in relation to methodologies, classifiers, questionnaires and the design of surveys on time use in the region.

46. The Women and Development Unit of ECLAC, as part of the activities relating to the Millennium Development Goals, will supplement the studies already published by those prepared in Brazil, Haiti, Honduras and Uruguay. The Unit also plans to prepare a periodic publication on gender statistics and indicators, the first issue of which will be published in the second half of 2007. In addition, the Unit will continue to update the web page of the system of gender statistics and indicators by incorporating the new information supplied by United Nations agencies and bodies or taken from recent household surveys. The system of statistics and indicators will be moved to the new platform of databases (CEPALSTAT), which is currently being developed by ECLAC. Further information will be generated for the countries of the Caribbean, with new periods incorporated and coverage of gender statistics extended to other countries. Subsequently, a comparative study will be published on the situation of women and men in that subregion.

47. *Gender parity observatory.* The Women and Development Unit intends to support the establishment of a regional observatory for gender parity in Latin America and the Caribbean, which would serve the purpose of providing governments and social and community organizations with the tools that can be used for timely analysis of women's employment and political participation and gender violence. In this context, an effort will be made to prepare shared indicators to evaluate and monitor compliance with international agreements in the countries; to establish statistical recording systems with data disaggregated not only sex, but also by ethnicity, age and geographical location, and to develop indicators that are comparable among countries for employment quality and time use of

women, women's political participation in the legislative, executive and judicial powers and the prevalence and incidence of all manifestations of violence against women. The implementation of this project is subject to obtaining the necessary financial support.

48. *Accounting for and assigning a value to unpaid domestic work.* The Women and Development Unit and the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC are contemplating the joint implementation of a project for the development of national accounts designed primarily to promote an awareness of, account for and assign a value to unpaid housework. They will also continue to collaborate with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the preparation of a health satellite account with a gender focus that includes accounting for health-care work conducted in the home.

49. *United Nations website on gender statistics.* In collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, the Women and Development Unit will support the preparation of an Internet site and a compact disc for the dissemination of gender statistics and indicators, which will be part of an international and inter-agency gender website project (Global Electronic Bulletin Board).

50. *System of indicators for indigenous populations and peoples.* Work will continue on the development and updating of a system of indicators on indigenous populations and peoples, which will be useful for the design and implementation of programmes and policies targeting these groups, in consultation with the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Populations and Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

(c) Preparation and implementation of the 2010 round of population censuses

51. *Preparation of the 2010 census round.* During the period 2007-2009, the national statistical offices of the countries of the region will be concentrating much of their efforts and resources on the preparation of the next population census, to be conducted in or around 2010. This task poses huge technical, methodological and other challenges. It is therefore one of the priorities of the biennial programme to coordinate and complement the efforts of the countries and organizations with a view to obtaining a successful outcome in the 2010 round in the region.

52. *Emerging issues in census questionnaires.* The experience acquired in the previous census round and the proper and timely treatment of the new issues and demands of the next census round will be treated as priorities in the work of the Conference. This work will be conducted in coordination with the working group on censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. To this end, meetings of experts will be needed and the various national experiences and challenges must be addressed. CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC is planning to hold a meeting of experts in 2008 to address the emerging issues (relating to both the content and the operational aspects of the censuses) which are expected to be included in the 2010 round. Thus, CELADE - Population Division will prepare the substantive documentation for these events, including a document on the principal emerging issues to be included in the census questionnaire of the 2010 round. Another document being prepared concerns the usefulness of the new data of the population census of Nicaragua, which could equally well apply to the censuses of the 2010 round. Moreover, CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC will support the initiatives presented by the MERCOSUR countries, the Caribbean countries and the Working Group on Censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

53. *Meetings of experts and data-processing tools.* A meeting of experts will be held in 2007, with support from PAHO and UNFPA, to promote better use of vital statistics for updating intercensal estimates of the population by sex and age and for monitoring and assessing social programmes. Further

work will be carried out to develop REDATAM-related data-processing tools in order to facilitate the dissemination, processing and analysis of sociodemographic data, especially those from the population and housing censuses and vital statistics.

54. *System of indicators for follow-up to the main conferences and summits.* One of the activities of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC consists of updating the system of indicators for the follow-up of the recommendations set out in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo and assisting the Women and Development Unit in updating the indicators relating to the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2007, special emphasis will be placed on the implementation of a system of indicators for the five-year review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. In this connection, CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC will hold consultations with ECLAC member countries.

(d) Implementation of 1993 SNA in all the countries of the region and development of economic statistics

55. *Methodological guide for updating national accounts in Latin America.* As indicated, one of the major challenges facing the countries of the region is the implementation of 1993 SNA and the recommendations that will emerge in the current updating process. This is one of the priority objectives for the biennium 2007-2009 and a great deal of effort will be devoted to its achievement. Some Latin American countries have not yet adopted all of the methodological recommendations contained in 1993 SNA, while others, in drawing up their national accounts, use a statistical base—weighting and prices—that is far removed from the present structure of their economy. The few countries where a new statistical base has been recently adopted or where such a base is being prepared have come up against institutional, technical and financial problems. Thus, one of the projects being pursued by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC is the production of a methodological guide for modernizing national accounts in Latin America. The objective of this project is to formulate a set of recommendations—based on an analysis of recent experiences and international good practices—to enable the different countries to overcome these problems and modernize their national accounting system more efficiently. This project, moreover, meets the demands formulated by national experts gathered at the 2005 Latin American seminar on national accounts, held in Caracas from 24 to 28 October 2005, in relation to the problems faced by countries when modernizing or changing the base year of their national accounting system.

56. *Annual seminars of experts.* The methodological guide for the modernization of national accounts in Latin America should be examined at the annual ECLAC seminars on national accounts. An executive summary of the document, to be presented to the Statistical Conference of the Americas, will highlight the technical and financial prerequisites for keeping the systems of national accounts up-to-date. For its part, the Conference could use this document and its recommendations to rally the support of national authorities for projects to change the base year, bearing in mind that the financial resources needed must be incorporated into the budgets of national statistical institutes or central banks that prepare the nation's accounts and that the statistical operations necessary for changing the base year must be carried out. A document on national accounts and conceptual, methodological and practical guidelines is at an advanced stage of preparation. It is intended to present a kind of inventory of problems faced by the technical teams in the reference compilation of national accounts of the countries.

57. *Satellite accounts.* In order to meet the demands of the different sectors and of a wide range of users of national accounts, one of the priority lines of work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the period 2007-2009 should be the promotion, support and preparation of satellite

accounts in different social and economic areas, including health, tourism, culture and information and communications technologies.

58. *Economic indicators for tourism.* ECLAC, together with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), has been developing a set of economic indicators for tourism as a tool for macroeconomic analysis of this activity in the countries of the region, especially in those that do not yet have a tourism satellite account. This initiative has been disseminated thanks to methodological documents and meetings of experts and it is expected that this line of action will be strengthened in view of the importance of this activity for the economy of many countries in the region.

59. *Classifiers.* In the area of economic and social classifications, ECLAC will continue to support the countries of the region in the process of adopting and adapting these basic statistical instruments, with the dissemination of methodological documents and the organization of workshops and expert meetings, in order to gain information on and discuss the use of the latest advances on this issue.

60. *Business opinion surveys.* The Division will continue to provide technical support to the Seminar on business opinion surveys, organized jointly with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission. ECLAC will undertake to select a specific methodology and to construct a regional composite indicator. The countries have therefore agreed to send to ECLAC the historical series of reviews of opinion polls relating to the manufacturing sector.

(e) Environmental statistics

61. *Creation of a group on environmental statistics.* An initiative group will be formed, consisting of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as well as those member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas which are interested in taking part. The purpose of the group will be to establish the terms of reference and the mandate of a future working group on environmental statistics, for consideration and approval by the Executive Committee at its eighth meeting.

Goal 4: Promote coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and international agencies

62. *Subregional statistical cooperation.* In 2002, the Central American and Panamanian offices initiated a process of consolidation of a regional agency entitled Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System, which is intended to support a process of strengthening of the statistical systems of each of the member countries in an ordered and systematized manner and which also leads to the generation of standardized regional statistics in order to carry out comparative analyses of social, economic and political issues in the region. This process of subregional cooperation has resulted in initiatives that include implementation of the project on migration and trends in remittances in Central American countries, which is part of the regional public goods initiative of IDB. This project contributes to fulfilment of various specific goals, including the following (1.3; 4.2; and 4.3):

- (i) Promote the development of official statistics as a public good among governments, economic stakeholders, social actors and other decision makers, and their use in the design, follow-up and assessment of public policies;

- (ii) Support and strengthen bilateral cooperation between the member countries of the Conference in an effective and efficient manner, especially for the countries that are relatively less developed in terms of statistics;
- (iii) Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas.

63. *Creation of a working group on trends in migration and remittances.* A working group on migration and trends in remittances will be created, comprising the same countries which have taken part in the project “migration and trends in remittances in the Central American countries” of the IDB regional public goods initiative. The subject of research has been based on the fact that migration has increased in the Central American countries over the last three decades for various reasons, such as internal conflicts, the population’s socioeconomic conditions and the lack of resources for family support, which have led to a situation where one or more members of a household move to other countries for work reasons and for the advantages deriving from the change of currency. An attempt will be made to explain the behaviour of emigrants, for which purpose the exodus from Central American countries will be studied and measured and the destinations will be identified. The aim is to have information on the amounts of money or goods sent to family members and to assess whether the social conditions of the beneficiaries have improved and the repercussions of this phenomenon on the national economy.

64. *Integrated programme of statistical activities.* The Executive Committee will establish appropriate and efficient mechanisms to promote regional, subregional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation activities designed to contribute to achieving the goals of the Conference. These actions will include promoting the creation of an inventory of the statistical activities and projects of international organizations in the region. There is therefore planned to create a systematic register of these activities that could become an integrated programme of statistical activities in the region, similar to that of the Conference of European Statisticians.⁷

65. *Horizontal cooperation projects.* The promotion of horizontal cooperation projects between countries for modernization of their national accounts, which include adoption of 1993 SNA and the change of the base year, tasks that are financed with credit lines from multilateral agencies, may be another priority task for the Statistical Conference of the Americas and a powerful instrument for harmonizing and ensuring the comparability of the systems of national accounts of the countries in the region.

66. *International Comparison Programme.* As part of the planned activities, the possible implementation of the second phase of the International Comparison Programme should be considered. This second phase is designed to extend the coverage and update the calculation of purchasing power parities and have more precise measurements of per capita GDP in order to carry out international comparisons and calculate regional macroeconomic aggregates. If there is to be a second phase of the programme, the activities for the 2007-2009 biennium will have to include efforts to raise awareness of the need for this programme and the quest for financial resources for its implementation.

67. *Technological cooperation programme.* The Executive Committee will take the necessary measures to promote technological cooperation as proposed by Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and the United States, offering the use, free of charge, of the electronic hardware and software used for data capture in censuses and surveys and also offering the sharing of methodology for the preparation of housing directories.

⁷ See Database on International Statistical Activities (Integrated Presentation) (DISA/IP) [online] <http://unece.org/stats/ces.html>.

D. OTHER IMPORTANT LINES OF ACTION

68. This section describes, for information purposes, a number of activities that are part of institutional mandate of ECLAC. Arising from cooperation agreements signed with other multilateral organizations or projects agreed with external donors, these activities bear a direct relationship to the production, analysis and dissemination of statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean.

(a) Economic projections

69. *Activities of the Economic Projections Unit of the ECLAC Statistics and Economic Projections Division.* The mission of the Unit is to complement the efforts of the ECLAC member countries and the regional community to construct, strengthen and harmonize statistical information systems. Using an analytical approach, the Unit works in three areas, namely: economic projections, modelling and databases. The Statistics and Economic Projections Division, together with other ECLAC divisions, will continue to publish economic projections in the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean* and *Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Economy*. At the same time, these results will continue to be disseminated by Internet, through regular updating of the *Atlas del Crecimiento*.

70. *Modelling.* The Division will continue its work of statistical analysis and modelling of the effects of regional integration and free trade agreements in the region and hopes to pursue its efforts of medium term modelling, in particular, with the development of a small global module for modelling the impact of the world economy on Latin America. In addition, the Division will continue to provide technical assistance to member countries in the area of economic modelling as well as to regional bodies for more specific issues.

(b) Development and maintenance of databases in the region

71. *Dissemination of information.* The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC will continue with the maintenance and update of its databases and metabases, including the expansion of their historical coverage, the incorporation of new economic, social and environmental issues and the improvement of short-term indicators. These activities also include the maintenance and update of the data bank on input-output matrices and stock of production factors, in order to relate them to national accounting data and widen their focus to encompass concepts of social accounting matrices. Efforts will be made to improve service to internal and external users by incorporating more sophisticated data-processing platforms. CEPALSTAT has been online since the end of 2006 and contains social, economic and environmental figures and indicators for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean at the regional, subregional and national levels. ECLAC will have to continue its efforts in this line of work, to include additional indicators and update the existing ones, while ensuring comparability of the data. The Social Statistics Unit of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division carries out the maintenance and update of databases of social statistics and household surveys. Between 2007 and 2009, the Unit will continue to expand the Social Indicators and Statistics Database (BADEINSO) and the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) and to provide updated information, which is a crucial input for monitoring living conditions in the region.

72. *Population projections.* CELADE - Population Division of ECLAC, in conjunction with competent national institutions, will continue to update population estimates and projections by sex and age, using the most recent demographic data available, which will be published in the *Demographic Observatory*. The results will also be included in the United Nations publication *World Population Prospects 2006 and 2008*.

73. The Statistics and Economic Projections Division will publish the *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean* and will participate in preparation of the *Social Panorama of Latin America*, to which it contributes the statistical appendix, as well as studies on poverty, equity and income distribution.