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Second meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, Chile, 18-20 June 2003

**GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE  
STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN**

This document was prepared by the ECLAC secretariat at the request of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Executive Committee, at its two meetings in 2002, underscored the need to improve the effectiveness of the proceedings of the plenary sessions of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. The present document, prepared by the ECLAC secretariat at the request of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, seeks to ensure as efficient a use as possible of the limited time available, while allowing sufficient time for in-depth discussion of the substantive items on the Conference agenda. The secretariat, after referring to the rules and procedures in use in other United Nations statistical conferences, in particular the Conference of European Statisticians of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the United Nations Statistical Commission, has prepared the following proposal. The Conference is asked to consider accepting it as a set of procedural guidelines for the Chair to follow.

### **A. Objectives of the plenary session of the Conference**

The following —in decreasing order of priority— are the objectives of the plenary session which have a bearing on procedural issues.

- (i) Discussing, enriching and approving the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2003-2005;
- (ii) Election of the Executive Committee;
- (iii) Discussing in some depth of the designated substantive items on the agenda;
- (iv) Maximizing opportunities for delegates and observers to interact formally and informally;
- (v) Taking note of and complementing the report of the Programme of International Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2002-2003.

### **B. Procedural recommendations**

1. There should be a recommended time allocation for each agenda item.
2. The Chair should recommend and strictly enforce time limits for each speaker based on the number of expected statements and the time available for the item. The number of statements outstanding at any time should be ascertained in an on-going manner by the secretariat and the Chair; a running list should be kept of delegates who wish to take the floor.
3. Lengthy oral reports on country practices are discouraged. References to country experiences are appropriate when they explicitly:
  - (a) Draw attention to what is believed to be an innovative practice from which other countries might benefit; or
  - (b) Highlight a point or principle of broad applicability.

4. Countries that wish to share other types of information with the Conference may do so, either by making copies of their institutional documents available to participants, or by preparing brief documents and sending them in advance to the secretariat for reproduction and distribution as reference papers in the Conference room. In the same spirit, delegations are kindly requested to refrain from using computer presentations or similar audiovisual support during their statements.

5. The discussion of the substantive items on the Conference agenda should, however, allow more time per speaker. Substantive papers will be presented by the countries that were designated by the Executive Committee. The substantive discussion will be moderated by a specific Chairperson who should guide the debate.

6. Where a delegation feels it is important that the precise wording of a statement should be made available to the Conference, it may make arrangements with the secretariat for the distribution of such a statement in advance of, or during, the session.

7. Delegates should agree to focus on future rather than past activities in their discussion of the work programme of the Conference. By the same token, the Conference requests the secretariat to minimize the length of staff presentations on past accomplishments. Such statements should be made available in written form prior to the session.

8. Delegates should be recognized by the Chair in the same order as their requests to address the Conference are recorded. However, during the discussion of the substantive items, in order to facilitate the logical course of the discussion, an exception to this rule may be made by the Chair when a delegate wishes to briefly comment upon a statement that has just been made.

### **C. Preparation and adoption of the final report**

9. In order to facilitate the preparation and adoption of the final report during the session, it is the Executive Committee's wish that:

- (a) Issues and decisions should be recorded along with a very brief indication of the nature of the discussion;
- (b) Records of discussions on the substantive issues should be limited to the procedural aspects of the meeting rather than the technical content of the discussion, so that delegates may express their personal opinions as freely as possible.