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

Santiago, Chile, 1-3 June 2005

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2015**

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## A. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this document is to provide the necessary background information and a proposal for a long-term strategic plan to guide the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in order to support the development of official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. In view of the above, this document contains indications of the main needs which have been expressed at previous meetings of the Conference and which were taken into account in developing the proposal for the present strategic plan. The mission, vision, strategic objectives and the main lines of action on which the Conference should focus its efforts from now until 2015 are defined in this proposal. The participants in the third meeting of the Conference in June 2005 will be invited to give their opinion concerning this document.
3. The goal of the meeting referred to will be to prepare and approve the long-term strategic plan and the programme of work for the first biennium (2005-2007).
4. At the two first meetings of the Conference, the need for the region to have an intergovernmental forum for coordination of the regional programme of work was confirmed, as well as the interest of the member countries in taking an active part in the design and implementation of the programme. Meanwhile, the growing incorporation of multilateral cooperation agencies and organizations also shows the importance of this forum for exchanging information and coordinating work programmes. The Conference should also be a significant forum for discussion of the substantive topics which are of concern to the statistical community in the region.
5. In consideration of the above, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Conference and the secretariat of the Conference (ECLAC) have a strong wish to give new impetus to the Conference, in fulfilment of its mandate: to be the intergovernmental body that promotes and guides the development of statistics in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. For that reason, a strategic plan is to be prepared for 2005-2015 to provide the reference framework for future biennial plans. This strategic plan should clearly define the mission, the vision or state of future development of the organization, the values or principles which will guide the activities, the strategic goals and the lines of action for that period. The proposal is, ultimately, to develop a modern planning tool that will facilitate the effective accomplishment of the fundamental goals of the Conference.
6. In the discussions at the previous meetings of the Conference, the countries have referred in particular to the need to raise the quality and transparency criteria of national statistics to the level of the best international practices and to use them as a basis to promote a reputation of excellence of official statistics among the users, economic stakeholders, social actors and decision-makers. It had also been noted that in certain cases the national statistical offices of the region carry out their functions in a precarious institutional and legal framework, without sufficient human, informational and financial resources, and efforts would have to be made to remedy that situation.
7. Faced with that situation, the Statistical Conference of the Americas considers it essential to submit to the governments of the Region the necessary recommendations to ensure that the national statistical systems reach an adequate institutional level in order to carry out completely the function incumbent upon them in the new millennium, in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental

Principles of Official Statistics. In that respect, it should be emphasized that official statistics are a public good and that the State therefore has the institutional and economic responsibility of ensuring that the processes of production and dissemination are adequate for the needs of society and individuals.

8. It would be necessary in particular to promote more appropriate legal frameworks in order to facilitate the performance and strengthen the national statistical systems, as well as to define more clearly the role of national statistical offices and other institutions.
9. In another area, new information demands are emerging as a result of changes in the economic and social structure which accompany the development process in the countries of the region, and the challenges presented by globalization. In addition, the statistical products of the region must have high levels of quality, timeliness and integrity and in accordance with the most demanding standards. In that way, both by the level of development of its statistical capacity and by the emphasis placed on the processes of regional harmonization and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region should set targets based on the best practices available at the international level.
10. Moreover, the diversity of situations in the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas means that convergence towards that target of regional excellence will take place in stages, while there is a huge potential for making use of the experiences and progress achieved in each of the countries of the region.
11. Facing the challenges and opportunities referred to, the Conference has to play a very significant role in facilitating debates that lead to solutions. International, multilateral and horizontal cooperation with the countries which have modernized their statistical systems should facilitate the performance of this task. In addition, the multilateral organizations (United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and others) or the governments of developed member States of the Conference, may make their experience and financial support available to the region in order to achieve that goal.
12. At the same time, considering the basic principles of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and international experiences, the decisions and the work of the Conference should emanate from the member countries. It is therefore essential that working groups be established, consisting of representatives of the member countries, to analyse elements of common interest and formulate proposals or recommended actions.
13. It is also necessary to make the participants in the Conference aware of the initiatives agreed at the various subregional levels in order to avoid the duplication of effort and to support these initiatives and ensure their consistency with the regional goals established in the strategic plan for 2005-2015.
14. In the same way, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee considers that the strategic plan which is defined by the Statistical Conference of the Americas should allow multilateral and subregional organizations to coordinate in the best possible way their activities in the region, around objectives and activities which clearly reflect national and regional priorities in relation to statistical development. These priorities will be specified in a biennial plan of work, the goal of which is to transform into lines of activity and outputs the priorities identified for each of the stages that lead to achieving the strategic targets.

15. For all of these reasons, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee welcomes the strengthening of the role of ECLAC as secretariat of the Conference and the Executive Committee as the coordinating body for international initiatives and stipulates that the work and recommendations of the Conference should be implemented by the respective countries.

## **B. PROPOSAL FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2015**

### **1. Mission statement**

To be the intergovernmental body that promotes and guides the development of public statistics in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, by encouraging enhancement of their technical quality, international comparability, international, regional and bilateral cooperation, and their credibility, thereby contributing to improving public policies in the region.

### **2. Vision for change**

In 2015 the region will be recognized for having made significant process in approaching the best standards with regard to both the operation of its statistical system, and the quality, efficiency and public credibility of its statistics.

The national statistical offices will be significant stakeholders in the construction and assessment of public policies in the region and will have a set of common assets in relation to technological and methodological development and excellent guidelines for quality. In addition, the gaps in performance between members will have been eliminated, effective mechanisms will exist for quality certification in terms of all aspects of statistical quality, and the set of policy instruments required to manage efficient intraregional coordination will be functioning.

The member States of the Statistical Conference of the Americas will feel proud of the progress achieved and will consider the Conference to be a significant source of value added for the accomplishment of their own purposes.

### **3. Identification of the values that will guide the activities**

The Statistical Conference of the Americas endorses the commitment to be guided by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which can be described specifically as follows:

- (a) The production of public statistics on the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation must be useful to the Government and economic and social stakeholders, and the general public. For that purpose, the Conference promotes the production and impartial dissemination of public statistics on the same conditions for all interested parties.
- (b) The activities of the Conference and its members will be carried out according to strictly technical criteria, including scientific principles and professional ethics, in relation to the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of public statistics.

- (c) A correct interpretation of the data will be facilitated according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.
- (d) The community will be informed of any erroneous interpretation or misuse of statistics.
- (e) The statistics shall be produced and disseminated according to criteria for methodological quality, timeliness, efficiency and the burden on respondents and users.
- (f) Statistical confidentiality in relation to the identity of the respondents will be strictly observed, and there will be safeguards against any direct or indirect violation. Moreover, the information collected for statistical purposes shall be used exclusively for such purposes.
- (g) The coordination of operation, methods, classifications and standardized definitions that enhance the potential for international comparison is a priority for the national statistical offices in the region.
- (h) Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics, in both financial and technical resource aspects, contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all the countries of the region.

#### **4. Strategic goals**

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1. To increase the level of public credibility of national statistics in each country.
  2. To protect and enhance the quality, transparency and coverage of statistics in the region, moving closer to the international best practices.
  3. To improve the management of human resources, while observing strict criteria for quality in the recruitment of professional and expert staff in the region, and promoting their ongoing training and education.
  4. To support institution-building and the functioning of national statistical offices in the region.
  5. To optimize the impact of support from international development organizations to official statistics in the region.
  6. To improve technical coordination on methods, classifications, definitions and operational coordination, in accordance with international standards.
  7. To promote the effective participation of all members of the Statistical Conference of the Americas in its basic decision-making process.
  8. To increase technical and financial cooperation among the members of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.
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### 5. Lines of action

Goal(s)	Lines of action
1, 2 and 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To promote the modernization of the institutional and legal frameworks of the national statistical systems and national statistical offices (roles, stakeholders, attributions, functions, national coordination mechanisms, guarantees of technical independence, and others).</li> <li>2. To promote, together with the Governments, mechanisms for improvement in the areas of financing and the modernization of strategic and operational management of the national statistical systems and offices in order to achieve the best possible use of the resources.</li> <li>3. To improve the relationship between producers and users of statistics in general.</li> </ol>
7 and 8	<p>To establish working groups made up of representatives of the member countries and the multilateral agencies, which will conduct analyses and recommendations on the following substantive topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution-building</li> <li>• Human resources</li> <li>• Development of statistical capacities</li> <li>• Strengthening of international cooperation</li> </ul>
2 and 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To define long-term targets in terms of production, quality and dissemination of statistics, and to identify the stages for reaching those targets.</li> <li>2. To generate recommendations in relation to the processes and methods of production, analysis and dissemination of statistical data, including censuses, surveys and administrative records. To generate recommendations in relation to information systems or statistical matters related to: national accounts and other economic statistics, social indicators system, environmental indicators system, science and technology, and other topics required for the formulation and monitoring of economic and social policy, being guided for this purpose by the commitments made by the Governments of member countries at the respective international summits.</li> </ol>
2, 3 and 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To implement plans for training and management of human resources, considering their technical, academic and management aspects.</li> <li>2. To strengthen cooperation between the regional system and the national systems with academic or research institutions in order to promote applied social and economic research, thereby optimizing the generation of value on the basis of public statistics.</li> </ol>
5, 6 and 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To coordinate and promote bilateral cooperation and cooperation with multilateral organizations.</li> <li>2. To coordinate activities with the following regional groups and their associate members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)</li> <li>• Andean Community</li> <li>• Central American regional group</li> <li>• Caribbean Community (CARICOM)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>