ECLAC

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Joint Meeting OAS/ECLAC on Statistical Matters

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1. **Introduction**

The programme of work of the ECLAC secretariat is adopted every two years by its member States. In this framework, the tasks assigned to the Statistics and Economic Projections Division are designed mostly to meet the demand for statistical information associated with the formulation and assessment of economic development and social policy. Consequently, only a small part of the programme of work is directly related to regional cooperation in the field of statistics.

However, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division has constantly tried to promote regional cooperation in four ways: (a) linking, in so far as possible, its tasks of creating and maintaining homogeneous and comparable data banks and databases to activities to improve the statistics of the countries and support specialized studies at the subregional and regional levels. This is accomplished by systematically disseminating methodological materials in the countries and providing quantitative information to users in different organizations who analyse the economic and social development of the region; (b) organizing and supporting meetings, seminars and regional training courses; (c) carrying out technical cooperation missions in countries of the region; and (d) acting as the executing agency for the statistical development projects of the countries of the region, mainly on the basis of extrabudgetary resources acquired by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division or in conjunction with national authorities.

It is estimated that in the 1990s an average of 19% of the regular budget that finances the professional staff of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division has been used directly or indirectly for regional statistical cooperation.

2. **The regional framework of statistical information of ECLAC and forms of cooperation**

The systematic formation of computerized data banks and databases that comprise the regional framework of the statistical information of the Statistics and Economic Projections Division began in the late 1970s. In the beginning, ECLAC also received technical and financial assistance from international bodies and agencies in the United Nations system. Later, in order to extend and update that framework, ECLAC received assistance from several international bodies, listed below, and from member countries through the provision of basic statistics.

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1. The States members of ECLAC are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.
2.1 Cooperation in the provision of quantitative and methodological information

On the basis of regional framework of statistical information, ECLAC creates and provides information for analytical and methodological usage. To generate this information, it develops software, correspondence matrixes between the more important international statistical classifications under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) and Central Product Classification (CPC), methods for estimating income distribution and different situations of poverty, statistical data processing systems, etc.

Information for quantitative analysis and methodological applications created by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division is directed mainly to member Governments, international organizations, academic centres and the private sector. In this regard, a register is kept of special requests for information, which has allowed for determining their frequency and the diversity of petitioners. For example, annex 1 gives a brief description of some requests for information that have been met since January 1993.

In coordination with the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT), technical material is distributed to encourage the application of the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission in the countries of the region. Examples of this are the manuals or documents related to the System of National Accounts (SNA), the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) in its three revisions, the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) in its second and third revisions, the Classification by Broad Economic Categories (CBEC) in its original version and in revision 1, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) and the Central Product Classification (CPC). All these classifications were correlated by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division in computer files and published in the Cuaderno estadístico de la CEPAL series, No. 18.²

2.2 Potential of the regional framework of statistical information for supporting specialized studies.

The following is a brief description of the components of the regional framework of statistical information of ECLAC, outlining its contents, which in turn show its capacity to cooperate by providing data for subregional or regional specialized studies.

From an organizational point of view, the framework is anchored in the Economic and Social Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (BADESTAL). This is fed by subject areas structured into specialized data banks or databases. One of the more important of these, because of its coverage, is the Annual Statistics Data Bank (BADEANU), which provides the

² ECLAC, Clasificaciones estadísticas internacionales incorporadas en el Banco de Datos del Comercio Exterior de América Latina y el Caribe del la CEPAL, Cuadernos estadísticos de la CEPAL series, No.18 (LC/G.1744-P), Santiago, Chile, May 1993. United Nations publication, Sales No. S.93.II.G.6.
basis for the periodical publication with the broadest scope that ECLAC prepares: the Statistical Yearbook of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The main specialized statistical areas have been grouped in the following banks: (i) National Accounts Data Bank (BADECUENTAS); (ii) External Trade Data Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (BADECEL); (iii) Balance of Payments Data Bank (BADEPAG); iv) Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG); and (v) Short-term Indicators Database (BADECOY). Also in databases containing demographic, social, production, prices and external-debt statistics.

With the exception of BADEHOG, whose national-level research projects do not allow for a complete homogenization of the variables, the other statistical areas have been systematically treated to achieve greater international comparability of their components. This is the case, for example, of BADECUENTAS, which contains information from national accounts for almost 30 countries of the region, as well as input-output tables for many of them. One of the more important comparable series is gross domestic product (GDP) by sector of economic activity and by kind of expenditure, in constant dollars, for the 1950-1993 period.

BADECEL contains more standardized information, because of the universal coverage of its statistics. Thus, in the framework of the SITC in its three revisions, on-line information, disaggregated to five digits, is available, along with their trading partners, for more than 30 countries of the region participating in trade, from 1970 to the most recent year available. SITC also serves as the basis for other international statistical classifications, including the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), the Classification by Broad Economic Categories (CBEC), the UNCTAD Product Classification and the Central Product Classification (CPC), which is based only on SITC, Rev.3. From a regional viewpoint, probably BADECEL contains the most complete internationally comparable information in this area.

BADEPAG contains information organized in special formats, for individual countries, groups of countries, subregional bodies and for the region as a whole. The basic information is provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), through 112 standardized components. The Statistics and Economic Projections Division, in turn, calculates the current account of the balance of payments at constant prices at the country level, which calls for constructing deflation indexes for numerous variables for each one of them. The information is available for the 1950-1993 period.

BADEHOG is not what is normally considered a data bank. It does not allow for the cross-referencing or accumulation of data from different countries, since even though some research questions are apparently similar, their scope is often different, and therefore their

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3 Specifically, SITC, Rev.1 from 1970, STIC, Rev.2 from 1983, and SITC, Rev.3 from 1990 only for countries members of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA).
answers have different meanings. However, BADEHOG has been organized in such a way that it is possible to extract data from different specific units of analysis from individual registers, for example, family groups, heads of household or specific social and occupational strata of the population, all with their respective technical sheets. The data available vary from country to country, and geographically, BADEHOG covers 15 countries.

From another point of view, BADEHOG has made it possible for ECLAC to do pioneer studies in the field of social development. The most notable of these have been studies on situations of poverty based on the method of poverty and indigence lines, which have been quantified for several countries, through cooperation activities with their respective Governments in several of them. Work has also been done on the structure of spending for household consumption according to the purpose of the outlay, by income groups; series of publications by countries on income distribution; and the determination of unmet basic needs. Since 1991, BADEHOG has been the main source of data for the Social Panorama of Latin America, which ECLAC publishes each year.

BADECOY is the fruit of an initiative of ECLAC and several statistics directors of the region. In December 1990, ECLAC convened the Meeting of Representatives of Central Banks and National Bureaus of Statistics of eight countries of the region, to determine the way in which BADECOY would operate and the statistical fields it would cover. As to its mode of operation, it was agreed that ECLAC would centralize, standardize and distribute the information provided by the countries, following the guidelines adopted at the meeting. According to these guidelines, during the first phase of BADECOY, the information would be made available to the eight countries that participated in its foundation, but ECLAC would be authorized to invite other countries to join this undertaking, once its usefulness was demonstrated.

At present, BADECOY is functioning satisfactorily, but it will depend on the efforts of the countries themselves if it is going to realize its full potential. It contains nine subject areas, broken down into subareas and variables as determined at the original meeting. After experiencing the normal difficulties in getting started, it regularly issues quarterly reports on diskettes to the eight countries. The number of participating countries is expected to increase in the future, and the reports will be distributed by satellite transmission.

The demographic statistics database contains mainly population statistics and projections at the country level; population by sex and age groups; geographical distribution of the population; birth, mortality, infant mortality and fertility rates; life expectancy at birth; population in private households by size of household, etc. The basic information comes from censuses, surveys and administrative registers. Some of it is provided by the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), a body in the ECLAC system that has a data bank with census information at the country level, probably the most complete one in the region.

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4 Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.
The production and prices database contains statistics on the volume of production of the main agricultural, mining and manufactured products at the country level. Key indicators were prepared for the agricultural, mining and manufacturing sectors in order to analyse their composition and trends. As to prices, indexes implicit in GDP, general wholesale price indexes and consumer price indexes broken down by items in the consumer basket are all available.

Lastly, the external-debt database includes the main variables needed for the analyses that ECLAC does. Thus, from the regional viewpoint, it provides easy-to-read data at the country level, groups of countries and the region as a whole. It contains series from 1970 up to the most recent year available. The basic information is provided by the World Bank and the central banks of the countries.

### 2.3 Institutions that collaborate with ECLAC in providing basic information

The following national and international institutions collaborate in updating the data banks and databases of ECLAC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA BANKS OR DATABASES</th>
<th>COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BADECUENTAS</td>
<td>National accounts offices of the countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BADECEL</td>
<td>Customs, national statistics offices, LAIA, JUNAC, SIECA, UNSTAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BADEHOG</td>
<td>National statistics offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BADEPAG</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BADECCY</td>
<td>Central banks and national statistics offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS</td>
<td>Census bureaux and administrative registers of the countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL STATISTICS</td>
<td>Censuses, surveys and administrative registers of the countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION AND PRICE</td>
<td>FAO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNSTAT, STATISTICS national statistics offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTERNAL-DEBT STATISTICS</td>
<td>World Bank, central banks of the countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Organization and support for meetings and seminars

(a) Support for the "Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the MERCOSUR Countries", on the organization of a data bank for this group of countries, Montevideo, Uruguay, January 1993.

(c) Support for the "Seminar on foreign trade statistics in Central America", organized by the European Training Centre for Economic Statisticians of Developing Countries - Madrid (CESD-Madrid), held in San José, Costa Rica, July 1993.

(d) Organization, in conjunction with the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTAT), of the "Regional seminar on the implementation of the fourth Revision of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA 1993)", Santiago, Chile, November 1993.


(g) Organization of the "Joint OAS/ECLAC Meeting on Statistical Matters", Santiago, Chile, October 1994.

(h) Organization, in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), of the "Seminar on Balance-of-Payments Statistics", Santiago, Chile, November 1994.

4 Technical cooperation missions in countries of the region

Technical cooperation missions have generally been short and connected with projects and technical cooperation agreements that the Statistics and Economic Projections Division has been carrying out (these are described in section 5). A list of those missions follows, giving the countries and subject matter treated, since this report only seeks to illustrate in general terms the direction and field of cooperation:

Argentina: Organization of computer systems applied to statistical data;
Bolivia: Development of social indicators of poverty;
Brazil: Support for a study on the measurement and analysis of situations of poverty;
Colombia: Household surveys and measurements of poverty;
Costa Rica: Support for studies on situations of poverty;
Dominican Republic: Support for studies on poverty;
El Salvador: Household surveys and measurements of poverty;
Honduras: Improvement of national accounts and basic statistics.

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5 Includes only those carried out by ECLAC headquarters, Santiago, Chile.
Mexico: Support for the organization of a seminar on poverty; Support for studies of measurements of poverty; Panama: Household surveys and measurements of poverty; Improvement of national accounts and production needs with respect to basic statistics; Peru: Organization of a short-term database; Uruguay: Methods and electronic statistical data processing systems; Venezuela: Household surveys and measurements of poverty.

5. **ECLAC as executing agency for statistical cooperation projects**

The Statistics and Economic Projections Division of ECLAC has been acting for several years as the executing agency for statistical cooperation projects, despite the fact that the organization's regular budget does not include specific items for cooperation activities of that kind.

In practice, however, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division has carried out this kind of activity, in response to requests from donor institutions and the countries benefited. Although a large part of the cooperation tasks in the field are carried out by specialists hired for that purpose, the Statistics and Economic Projections Division has responsibility for conducting the projects in all of their stages and for evaluating the results and the success of the cooperation.

ECLAC has a specialized institutional infrastructure for organizing and implementing these projects. Thus, the Programme Planning and Operations Division has the Project Management Unit, which takes charge of all the legal, administrative and accounting aspects of the activities, in order to guarantee that the projects are organized efficiently and the resources involved are used transparently.

**Technical statistical cooperation projects and agreements presently being executed by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division**

The titles of the technical statistical projects and agreements presently being executed by the Statistics and Economic Projections Division are listed below. No mention is made of their scope or content, since this report gives only general information about the fields to which statistical cooperation is directed, which is clear from the titles of the projects and agreements. For obvious reasons, ECLAC is not mentioned as a funding body. The projects and agreements are as follows:

(a) Project on "Basic guidelines for joint UNICEF/ECLAC action over the medium term". Funding: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);
(b) Cooperation agreement between the Government of Uruguay and ECLAC: "Programme to improve socio-economic information systems in Uruguay". Funding: Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Uruguay;

(c) Cooperation agreement between the Central Bank of Paraguay and ECLAC: "Technical cooperation project for the improvement of national accounts in Paraguay". Funding: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Paraguay;

(d) Agreement between ECLAC and the World Bank (data from household surveys in 11 countries of the region). Funding: World Bank;

(e) Project on "Improvement of the national accounts and the production of basic statistics in Panama". Funding: UNDP and the Government of Panama;

(f) Project on "Indicators for social policy formulation in Latin America and the Caribbean". Funding: Government of the Netherlands;

(g) Project on "Support for the Central Bank of Honduras in macroeconomic and financial management and in the improvement of the national accounts and basic statistics". Funding: UNDP and the Government of Honduras;

(h) Project on "Diagnostic analysis and evaluation of recent socio-economic progress in Latin American countries and of the impact of social policies and programmes". Funding: Government of the Netherlands.
ANNEX 1

SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION RECEIVED AND MET BY THE STATISTICS AND ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS DIVISION OF ECLAC, JANUARY 1993-JUNE 1994

ARGENTINA

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Worship and International Trade
Exports from Brazil of certain products to various groups of countries and individual countries during 1992.

Cuadernos estadísticos de la CEPAL series, No.18, "Clasificaciones estadísticas internacionales incorporadas en el Banco de Datos del Comercio Exterior de América Latina y el Caribe de la CEPAL" (C-18), and corresponding computer files.

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Public Works and Services, Office of Economic Programming
Trade of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico with the countries of South-East Asia, from 1985 to the most recent year available, according to SITC, Rev.2.

Brazil’s foreign trade in 1992, according to SITC, Rev.2, and Brazil’s trading partners.

C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Department of International Relations (Argentina)
Foreign trade of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries with the main markets, according to categories of goods, for the 1987-1991 period.

International Economics Centre
Argentina’s foreign trade with Brazil in selected goods, for the 1986-1990 period.

Jorge Macri Foundation
Information on "Latin American poverty".

New York Times (correspondent in Argentina)
Information on situations of poverty, gross domestic product and gross investment for several countries of the region.
BOLIVIA

National Institute of Statistics
Computer file of the correlation matrixes between HS and SITC, Rev.3, and other international statistical classifications, to update their own correspondence matrixes.

BRAZIL

Centre for Foreign Trade Studies Foundation
Foreign trade of each country member of MERCOSUR with the other countries in the group, according to ISIC, Rev.2, for 1980, 1985 and 1990.

CHILE

DRISCOLL & ASSOCIATES (Private enterprise)
Brazil’s foreign trade in copper sulphate, for the 1990-1992 period.

Dos Mundos Ltda. (Private enterprise)
Imports of specific products by Argentina and Brazil, for 1992.

Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN)
Measurements of the income insufficiency of the poor and indigent in Chile, for 1990 and 1992.

COLOMBIA

Ministry of Finance and Public Credit
Manufactures exports by Latin American countries to the rest of the world and Latin American countries, for the 1980-1993 period.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Foreign trade in agricultural products of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, according to SITC, Rev.2.

C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

Ministry of Foreign Trade
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

National Bureau of Statistics (DANE)
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.
COSTA RICA

**Federation of Central America and Panamanian Private Entities**
Information of the countries of the Central American Common Market and Panama, for studies on Central American integration.

**University of Costa Rica, Institute of Economic Research**
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

CUBA

**State Statistical Committee**
Computer files of correlation matrixes between HS and SITC, Rev.3, and other international statistical classifications.

ECUADOR

**Ministry of Industry, Trade, Integration and Fisheries**
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

**Central Bank of Ecuador**
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

GERMANY

**Deutsche Seereederei Rostock GH (DSR-LINES).**
Foreign trade in goods (in tons) between Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela with France, Italy and Spain during the 1989-1992 period.

GRENDADA

**Ministry of Finance, Statistics Office**
Breakdown of the gross domestic product of the manufacturing sector of Granada.

HUNGARY

**Hungarian Embassy in Santiago**
Gross domestic product of Chile, in the 1985-1992 period.

MEXICO

**Department for International Trade Negotiations**
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.
National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI)
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

PANAMA

Latin American Bank for Exports, S.A. (BLADEX)
Total foreign trade by category of goods of the countries of Latin America.

Annual projection of the foreign trade of Latin America, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, up to 1998.

Bureau of Statistics and Censuses
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

PARAGUAY

Bureau of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

PERU

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of Political Affairs
Goods exports of each of the countries of Latin America, by major economic categories, for the 1970-1992 period.

National Customs Service
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

SPAIN

Ministry of Trade and Tourism
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

Institute for European-Latin American Relations
Estimates of poverty in Latin America.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Economist
Poverty and extreme poverty in Chile and Mexico.

Cambridge University
Unrequited transfers from abroad, public and private, to Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua, for the 1965-1992 period.
Rob Walker (journalist)
Monthly consumer-price indexes for groups of goods and services of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, for the 1988-1992 period.

Darwin College
Mexico’s foreign trade with the United States, according to the maximum detail of SITC and ISIC, for the 1970-1990 period.

World Equity
Gross domestic product, population and external debt of several countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, for the 1991-1993 period.

UNITED STATES

The University of Alabama at Huntsville
Information for studies on the economic and social development of the countries of Latin America.

Dole Food Company (Private enterprise)
Information on population, national income and foreign trade in food and agricultural products of Latin America.

The University of California
Statistics of the countries of Latin America for research on income distribution.

VENEZUELA

Latin American Economic System (SELA)
Information about BADECEL, to incorporate it into the REFEX-DATA directory to be disseminated throughout the region by that reference base.

Central Statistics and Informatics Office (OCEI)
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

SUBREGIONAL BODIES

LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION ASSOCIATION (LAIA)
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.

Canada’s foreign trade with specific countries and groups of countries, according to SITC, Rev.2, for 1991 and 1992.

BOARD OF THE CARTAGENA AGREEMENT (JUNAC)
C-18 and the corresponding computer files.