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Joint Meeting OAS/ECLAC on Statistical Matters

Santiago, Chile, 11-14 October 1994

**PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1995-1996**

SUBPROGRAMME 3: SOCIAL AND POVERTY STATISTICS AND INDICATORS */

*/ This document was prepared by the Division of Statistics and Projections of ECLAC.
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Integrated presentation

The subprogramme presented in this document forms part of a proposed programme of international statistical work for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-1996, which ECLAC is submitting to the Joint OAS/ECLAC Meeting on Statistical Matters, for consideration by the participants.

This is the first time that a proposed programme of this nature has been prepared. This is called an integrated presentation, in so far as it assigns specific responsibilities to different countries and international organizations for carrying out statistical activities in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1995-1996 period. The countries and entities involved in the programme have not been consulted in all cases, since this is the first time such a mechanism has been used. However, it is expected that the details will be worked out at the meeting and that all involved will agree on an integrated programme for submission to the following meeting.

The subprogrammes are presented in four separate documents, with the following titles:

- Subprogramme 1:** Adaptation and production of basic statistics in the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993
- Subprogramme 2:** Environmental statistics and indicators
- Subprogramme 3:** Social and poverty indicators
- Subprogramme 4:** Dissemination of statistical information

Each subprogramme has been divided into a certain number of programme elements, which can be described as follows: i) Objectives: a broad outline of what the execution of each subprogramme is expected to achieve; ii) activities and agencies: description of the main activities, identifying as far as possible the countries or entities that will execute them; iii) meetings in the next two years: tentative purpose, place and date of each meeting; iv) expected output: specific results expected by the countries.

SUMMARY OF THE SUBPROGRAMME ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME
OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN, 1995-1996, PROPOSED BY ECLAC

| <u>Subprogramme</u> | <u>Programme element</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>Subprogramme 1: Adaptation and production of basic statistics in the framework of a regional strategy for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993)</p> | <p>1.1 Provision of access to technical documentation in Spanish to those responsible for implementing SNA 1993 and to Spanish-speaking producers of basic statistics.</p> <p>1.2 Dissemination of international recommendations concerning SNA 1993 and the production of basic statistics, and support for countries of the region in adopting them.</p> <p>1.3 Training of national accounts experts and producers of basic statistics.</p> <p>1.4 Improvement and extension of the production of basic statistics for the implementation of SNA 1993.</p> |
| <p>Subprogramme 2: Environmental statistics and indicators</p> | <p>2.1 Diagnostic analysis of the status of environmental statistics and indicators in the countries of the region.</p> <p>2.2 Transference of international experiences, training and cooperation in statistics and environmental indicators.</p> |
| <p>Subprogramme 3: Social indicators and poverty surveys</p> | <p>3.1 Improvement of household surveys.</p> <p>3.2 Use of household survey data.</p> <p>3.3 Construction and use of databases from population and housing censuses taken around 1990.</p> |
| <p>Subprogramme 4: Dissemination of statistical information</p> | <p>4.1 Policies, strategies and institutional organization for disseminating statistical data.</p> <p>4.2 New technologies and services for data dissemination using remote network connection.</p> <p>4.3 Platforms and recording media in the dissemination of statistical data.</p> |

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Background

Many activities were carried out during the 1993-1994 biennium in the area of social and poverty statistics and indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean. A brief description is given below of some activities which, especially those at the national level, are included as examples, since it was impossible to report on all that is being done in each country in this field, owing to a lack of a complete listing. ECLAC is requesting countries to provide this data in order to complete this information and make it available to countries.

At the international level

The Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty is functioning in the framework of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination of which ECLAC, among such bodies, is a member. The Task Force's terms of reference include a review of current practices, with a view to identifying the main methods, concepts, sources of information, and the use of poverty indicators and their degree of comparability, as well as the international bodies that prepare poverty data. The purpose of this is to propose measures for improving coordination among such bodies with respect to collection practices, analytical methods and data dissemination. The Task Force also is mandated to prepare proposals to improve the effectiveness of technical assistance in this field provided to countries.

At the regional level

Three regional workshops were held to facilitate the exchange of experience with social indicators and to develop methodologies for researching situations of poverty.

The second International Workshop on Poverty was held in April 1993 and the third in April 1994. These dealt with definitions, concepts and methodologies for measuring poverty. They were organized by the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico, with the collaboration of ECLAC, and were held in Aguascalientes, Mexico. These workshops were directed especially to professional staff members of the statistical offices of Latin America who prepare social data. Their perspective is theoretical as well as practical, with emphasis on conceptual aspects and measurement procedures. Participants in the two workshops numbered 55 professionals from 14 countries.

The fourth International Workshop on Poverty was held in June 1994, with the additional collaboration of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Bolivia. The workshop was held in La Paz for specialists of the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia in the areas of censuses, household surveys and social statistics, as well as technical staff from other Government agencies dealing with poverty issues. Some 30 professionals participated, mostly INE staff members, including some from regional offices.

In November 1994 a seminar on social indicators will be held in Santiago, Chile, with the participation of professionals from different countries of the region. This seminar will be held in the framework of a project implemented jointly by ECLAC and the Government of the Netherlands, on indicators for social policy formulation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and ECLAC have been collaborating since 1993 with the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Uruguay in a programme to improve the socio-economic data systems of that country. Among other matters, this programme deals with the design and execution of the third Family Budget Survey, which is currently being carried out.

Consultations have taken place between the World Bank, IDB and ECLAC, to arrive at a technical agreement to promote in a coordinated manner a comprehensive programme of support for improving integrated household survey systems in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. A report on the preliminary work will be submitted to the Joint OAS/ECLAC Meeting on Statistical Matters, to be held in Santiago, Chile, from 11 to 14 October 1994.

ECLAC and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are analyzing the possibility of incorporating special modules into countries' household surveys, designed to broaden the scope of and improve studies of infancy and childhood, on the basis of the experience of Argentina and UNICEF in this area.

The Subregional Seminar on Social and Poverty Indicators was held in March 1994 in Guatemala City for Central America and Panama. The fourth meeting of the Task Force on Social and Poverty Statistics of the Inter-American Statistical Conference (ISC) was held at the same time. The seminar was co-sponsored by ISC, the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Inter-American Training Centre (CIENES). In the framework of the project on social and poverty indicator systems, CIENES held a subregional course/workshop in 1993 in El Salvador, for the Central American area in El Salvador, and another one in Peru for the countries members of the Board of the Cartagena Agreement (JUNAC).

At the national level

Argentina carried out a number of studies to update the measurement of poverty under different methodological criteria, using the latest household data available. They were done jointly by the Department for Economic Programming of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Public Works and Services and the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC).

The National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia, in collaboration with other national institutions, is preparing a project to develop the country's system of social indicators. Among other objectives, this project seeks to evaluate the consistency of social data and enhance their

quality, integrate social and economic data, and provide new inputs for improving the design of social policies. The project will be submitted in the near future to IDB and the Department of Cooperation of the Netherlands for funding.

ECLAC provided technical assistance to the Government of Brazil through the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), with the support of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, to develop research on the extent and characteristics of poverty, identifying the most vulnerable groups. This assistance made possible the preparation of the so-called Hunger Map and the Map of Unprotected Children.

The Government of Chile, through the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation (MIDEPLAN), has been carrying out a National Socio-economic Survey (CASEN) every two years. On the basis of the information provided by this survey, which has a number of purposes, ECLAC has collaborated in studies to analyze trends in the incidence and characteristics of poverty in the country.

Costa Rica is restructuring its basic food basket and its method of quantifying situations of poverty. ECLAC has been providing technical assistance to the Bureau of Statistics and Censuses (DGEC) for this effort. This work is expected to be completed in the near future.

The INEGI of Mexico, in conjunction with ECLAC, carried out a study on the extent and characteristics of poverty in Mexico. The study covers several reference years and is based on special information gathered in different rounds of the National Survey on Household Income and Expenditures, which has been taken in recent years.

Since the beginning of 1993, Venezuela has been investigating methodologies for measuring poverty. The work is being carried out by the Central Statistics and Informatics Office (OCEI), with technical assistance from ECLAC and the support of other national institutions.

With data from 1990 population and housing censuses, several countries have been updating their Maps of Unmet Basic Needs, which were based on the previous census. To date, these countries are: Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Venezuela. Chile and Peru will do so in the near future.

The Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), with financial help from IDB and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) collaborated with the countries of the region in preparing and disseminating census data, especially through the computer programme "Retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer" (REDATAM), which has made it possible to apply methodologies for identifying pockets of poverty.

CELADE has also carried out a series of field studies on the relationship between population, poverty and development, the results of which have been published in several documents, especially those presented at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference

on Population and Development, held in Mexico City in 1993. Lastly, CELADE has also assisted countries in formulating projects to integrate demographic variables into the measurement of poverty and the treatment of these issues in various national educational efforts. Naturally, such matters are included as a standard feature in the regular training courses provided by CELADE.

SUBPROGRAMME 3: SOCIAL AND POVERTY STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

Rationale

The structural backwardness that characterizes the social situation of the Latin America and Caribbean countries, which has been exacerbated by the crisis of the 1980s and the macroeconomic adjustment policies applied to confront that crisis, has increased the need for an adequate system of indicators to support the ongoing assessment of the living conditions of the population.

Efforts have been made in recent years in the region to broaden the bases of information and improve the timeliness and coverage of social statistics and indicators. In this context, mention should be made of special research projects being carried out in some countries to assess the extent and intensity of poverty, follow its trends, and weigh the effects of current socio-economic policies and programmes to alleviate poverty.

Despite these advances, it is essential to continue improving the quality and continuity of these statistics, the consistency of basic information, the effectiveness of indicators in aiding comprehension of the complexity of social processes, as well as the concepts and methodological definitions that allow for suitable comparability.

Objectives

The overall objective is to develop activities to improve the quality and timeliness of the social statistics normally generated by the countries of the region, and to broaden their subject area and territorial coverage, with a view to integrating them into a coherent conceptual and analytical framework.

The specific objectives are to carry out actions to improve household surveys and administrative records, and to enhance the capacity to use data generated by information sources and by population and housing censuses.

Programme element 3.1: Improvement of household surveys

For more than two decades, and especially in the last 10 years, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have accumulated a good deal of experience in taking household surveys. That is due to an awareness of the need to complement administrative statistics and population and housing censuses by using effective low-cost tools that allow for constructing an efficient set of demographic, economic and social indicators.

Efforts have also been made to respond to the challenge of deepening knowledge about the situation and characteristics of population groups in different socio-economic strata, particularly the most vulnerable. Attempts have also been made to meet the growing demand for information from the public and private sectors, international organizations and non-governmental bodies, especially those that cooperate in improving the living conditions of the most needy sectors of the population.

In recent years, the number of countries in the region that not only regularly carry out some kind of survey but also have a programme of multi-purpose household surveys has been growing. In the early 1990s, this was true of 17 of the 20 countries of Latin America and more than half of the Caribbean countries. The remaining countries have also carried out surveys on specific questions, but on an occasional basis and not integrated into a coherent, systematically applied programme.

To consolidate the experience acquired and continue to make progress, it will be necessary to improve household surveys, particularly the quality, timeliness, relevancy and coverage of the data they are expected to provide.

Activities and means

ECLAC will organize a seminar to assess the current situation of multi-purpose surveys being carried out in the countries of Latin America. The participants will be technical staff members in charge of this area in national statistical offices. Particular attention will be given to the possibilities and limitations of redesigning the central questionnaire of this kind of survey, or at least of sections of it. The purpose is to constantly adapt it to changing economic and social circumstances, take advantage of new advances in computer technology and research techniques, improve ways of researching certain variables, and obtain greater consistency, integration and complementariness with other research instruments.

A mechanism will have to be established to exchange information among countries, particularly about national projects to improve their surveys and initiatives to establish new household survey programmes that redesign current national research systems.

International cooperation will be needed in many cases, so the meeting must be a forum in which the directors of national statistical offices can express their viewpoints. On that basis, the representatives of the participating international bodies, in particular, should take those viewpoints into account in reporting to their respective cooperation offices. Naturally, the directors can propose other ways of obtaining the assistance they consider necessary.

The World Bank, IDB and ECLAC have set up a committee to coordinate and direct their activities to help improve household surveys in Latin America. The members of this committee are the Vice-President of the World Bank for Latin America, the Vice-President of IDB and the Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

Expected output

A report summarizing the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar assessing the current household surveys in countries.

A mechanism established for the exchange of national experiences and documents on strategies to improve surveys and to channel the viewpoints of countries about technical assistance to potential funding sources.

A World Bank/IDB/ECLAC programme to improve household surveys in Latin America, which takes into consideration the proposals of the directors of national statistics offices about the technical and financial assistance needed for various activities.

A UNICEF/ECLAC support programme which is under preparation and is to include modules on the situation of children in current household surveys.

Meetings in the next two years

A seminar to assess the situation with respect to multi-purpose household surveys, to be organized by ECLAC. Place: Santiago, Chile; date: second quarter of 1995.

Possible participating organizations

IDB, the World Bank, UNICEF, and ECLAC.

Programme element 3.2: Use of household survey data

Along with the execution of programme element 3.1, activities must be reinforced to promote a better and broader use of the information. This involves challenges not only in disseminating the primary data but also in designing the economic and social indicators needed for evaluating the living conditions of different strata of the population.

Activities and means

ECLAC will continue to carry out the project funded by the Government of the Netherlands on indicators for the formulation of social policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this context, it will give priority to proposing indicators and exchanging experience among countries.

ECLAC will continue to collaborate with INEGI of Mexico in organizing the International Workshop on Poverty (definitions, concepts and methodologies for measuring poverty) that has been held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, at least once a year. The number of specialists of national statistical offices participating in this workshop is expected to increase. The possibility of holding it in another country of the region will also be explored.

ECLAC will consider carrying out joint studies with countries of the region on the quantification of poverty and the description and analysis of the characteristics of impoverished groups.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is carrying out a number of studies along these same lines.

Expected output

Documents on situations of poverty in at least three countries of the region, as a joint activity between those countries and ECLAC. Annual report by ECLAC on the social panorama of Latin America, using available information to analyze social trends in the region.

Meetings in the next two years

Two workshops on methods of measuring and analyzing poverty. Place: Mexico; dates: April 1995 and 1996.

Workshop on social indicators, in the framework of project activities carried out by ECLAC and financed by the Government of the Netherlands. Place: Santiago, Chile; date: November 1994.

Possible participating organizations

Department of Cooperation of the Government of the Netherlands, INEGI and ECLAC.

Programme element 3.3: Construction and exploitation of databases of population and housing censuses taken around 1990

Most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have already carried out and evaluated the population and housing censuses of the 1990 round. The activities planned for this programme element therefore mainly concern the construction of computerized databases that facilitate access to and management of data for a broader range of users.

Activities and means

CELADE and ECLAC will organize a seminar on the structures of databases and the use of census data to analyze and assess the social situation. This is expected to encourage countries to carry out studies like the Map of Unmet Basic Needs; to that end, an exchange of methodologies and experience among the countries of the region will be promoted.

CELADE will carry out studies on the quality of demographic data in the countries of the region. It will especially evaluate the quality of information provided by key questions

included in census questionnaires. This information will be used to elaborate demographic estimates and population projections.

Depending on the results of requests for project funding, CELADE will study differences in fertility rates according to geographical areas and social sectors, in mortality rates (especially infant mortality) for different strata, international migration and domestic migration at diverse administrative levels in each country.

Expected output

Studies assessing the census data and population projections of the countries of the region. Studies on fertility, mortality and migration (if funded).

Meetings in the next two years

A seminar on the exploitation and use of census, population and housing data. Place: Santiago, Chile; date: to be determined.

A workshop on objectives, criteria and procedures for elaborating Maps of Unmet Basic Needs. Place: to be determined; date: to be determined.

Possible participating organizations

CELADE and ECLAC.

**PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1995-1996**

| SUBPROGRAMME 3: SOCIAL AND POVERTY INDICATORS | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Programme element | Substantive actions by ECLAC | Main entities with which coordination is required | Expected outputs |
| 3.1 Improvement of household surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize a seminar to assess multi-purpose household surveys. - Design a mechanism to exchange information on national projects to improve household surveys. - Carry out task in the framework of the IDB/World Bank/ECLAC programme to improve household surveys. - Execute the UNICEF/ECLAC programme to assess the situation of children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDB, World Bank, UNICEF - IDB, World Bank - UNICEF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report on conclusions. - Mechanisms established for the exchange of information. - Improvement of household surveys by following the programme. - Report on the situation of children in Latin America. |
| 3.2 Use of household survey data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue working on the project on social indicators. - Participate in the organization of the international workshop on methodologies to measure and analyze poverty. - Help prepare national poverty studies. - Prepare the Social Panorama of Latin America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government of the Netherlands - INEGI (Mexico) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced national capacity to carry out poverty studies. - At least three studies on situations of poverty. - Annual report on the social situation of Latin America. |
| 3.3 Construction and exploitation of databases of population and housing censuses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide technical assistance for structuring databases and using census data. - Encourage the preparation of Maps of Unmet Basic Needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CELADE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studies assessing information and population projections. - Maps on Unmet Basic Needs in the countries interested. |