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First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the
World Summit for Social Development

São Paulo, Brazil, 6-9 April 1997

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

- A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE
- B. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The first Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development is convened in accordance with the Programme of Action of the Summit, paragraph 95 (h) of which states: "To promote implementation of the outcomes at the regional and subregional levels, the regional commissions, in cooperation with the regional intergovernmental organizations and banks, could convene, on a biennial basis, a meeting at a high political level to review progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, exchange views on their respective experiences and adopt the appropriate measures. The regional commissions should report to the Council on the outcome of such meetings through the appropriate mechanisms".

Hence, the purpose of the Conference is to review progress in fulfilling the commitments undertaken at the Summit, consider the activities carried out in the various countries, give impetus to regional and subregional cooperation in implementing the commitments, formulate recommendations to the Governments of the region on putting those commitments into practice and provide a forum for an exchange of information in order to facilitate coordination and mutual support in achieving the region's economic and social development goals.

B. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. Election of officers

The first Regional Conference will elect officers, consisting of a Chairman, two or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur, to preside over the debates. It is suggested that the officers should be chosen during the meeting of Heads of Delegations on 6 April 1997.

2. Approval of the agenda

The first Regional Conference will have before it the following provisional agenda for adoption or amendment:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. The equity gap. Latin America and the Caribbean and the Social Summit

4. Presentation of reports on implementation in the participating countries of the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development
 5. Ministerial round table on macroeconomic management and its impact on poverty
 6. Panels on the three core issues of the World Summit for Social Development:
 - Alleviation and reduction of poverty
 - Productive employment
 - Social integration
 7. Other matters
 8. Consideration and adoption of the agreements of the Conference
3. The equity gap. Latin America and the Caribbean and the Social Summit

Working document

- The equity gap. Latin America and the Caribbean and the Social Summit (LC/G.1954(CONF.86/3))

Reference documents

- Report of the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication (LC/G.1955; LC/CAR/G.489/Rev.1)
- Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)
- Preliminary Overview of the Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1996 (LC/G.1947-P)
- Social Equity and Changing Production Patterns: An Integrated Approach (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P)
- Social Panorama of Latin America. Edition 1996 (LC/G.1946-P)
- The Social Summit. A view from Latin America and the Caribbean

As a contribution to debate at the Regional Conference, the ECLAC secretariat has prepared a document that analyses the economic and social trends in the region in the 1990s and presents a set of policy options aimed at achieving growth and equity simultaneously. In this regard, it emphasizes the need to incorporate both equity and growth into policy objectives and to lay stress in social policy not only on equity but also efficacy and efficiency.

With regard to economic and social trends in the 1990s, the chief point the document makes is that the countries of the region have undertaken far-reaching reforms and regained access to external capital. Nevertheless, the growth they are achieving is insufficient to meet their needs; levels of saving and investment are low; macroeconomic stability is still not assured; and the goals of greater social equity, despite efforts in the social sphere and the reduction of poverty in many countries, are far from being realized.

The document therefore undertakes an analysis of the economic reforms; the relationship between level of growth, job creation and wages; the issue of poverty and income distribution; trends in social spending; social investment funds; and the extent of social integration in the societies of Latin America and the Caribbean.

On the basis of that assessment, the document takes up the theme of socio-economic governability and public policy and presents a number of analyses and proposals on the qualitative aspects of growth; reform of social policies, especially with respect to effects and results; and sectoral activities in the areas of education, health, social security, housing and labour policy. These analyses are based on an integrated approach that postulates that public policy as a whole should be directed towards changing production patterns while simultaneously achieving social equity.

4. Presentation of reports on implementation in the participating countries of the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development

One of the main objectives of the Conference is to review progress in fulfilling the commitments undertaken on social issues and to foster an exchange of experience. The hope is that all the countries, in addition to participating in the general debate on the document submitted by the secretariat, will report on what they have accomplished since the adoption of the Summit agreements.

5. Ministerial round table on macroeconomic management and its impact on poverty

In view of the recognition by the World Summit for Social Development that economic growth and social equity must be considered in conjunction with one another, a ministerial round table will be held on the topic of macroeconomic management and its impact on poverty, in which a number of Latin American and Caribbean finance ministers have agreed to participate.

6. Panels on the three core issues of the World Summit for Social Development

Three panels will be organized on the following topics: alleviation and reduction of poverty, productive employment and social integration. Participants will include high-level experts and representatives of specialized international and regional organizations.

7. Other matters

Under this item the Conference will deal with other topics the delegations deem it important to consider.

8. Consideration and adoption of the agreements of the Conference

At the conclusion of the Conference, a brief document will be adopted containing the agreements that the Governments of the region have reached as a result of their review of implementation of the Programme of Action of the Summit and proposals for activities to be realized in the next few years.