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ECLAC

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

**INFORMATION NOTE ON THE UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY  
COORDINATION MEETING FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN  
AND CARIBBEAN REGION**

(Santiago, Chile, 6 May 1999)



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## **1. Introduction**

1. The United Nations inter-agency coordination meeting for the Latin American and Caribbean region was convened by the Deputy Secretary-General, pursuant to the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 30 July 1998 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) acted as the secretariat for the meeting and collaborated with the Deputy Secretary-General in convening it.

2. The meeting took place on 6 May 1998 at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, and was attended by representatives of the following components of the United Nations system: the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General, the Regional Commissions New York Office, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Department of Disarmament Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

## **II. Summary of proceedings**

3. In her opening statement, the Deputy Secretary-General said that the meeting was taking place within the framework of efforts by the Secretary-General to consolidate at the regional level the remarkable progress in the area of coordination which had been achieved at the international and national levels. She added that there was already close inter-agency cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, embodied in various agreements among two or more agencies, committees and other special forums. Nonetheless, the Organization should consider whether it would be possible to create broader coordination mechanisms involving a larger

number of agencies that could address new topics without becoming a bureaucratic dead weight. This would permit a better use of the resources available to the United Nations and the provision of improved services to the countries of the region.

4. She invited participants to express their views regarding areas which they believed should be given priority treatment in strengthening inter-agency cooperation with a view to identifying topics of special interest to the majority of agencies.

5. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC referred to the limitations of the reform process in public policies in the region in terms of sustainable development and the countries' ability to react to external crises and, most importantly, in relation to the impact of the process in terms of equity. Equity in its broadest sense should be a priority matter for the United Nations in the region; he emphasized that, being a multidimensional issue, it was a suitable area for inter-agency cooperation.

6. The Regional Director of UNDP referred to three other broad areas of interest to the region: governance, the environment, and the globalization process and the countries' response to it. The United Nations system had comparative advantages in those three areas, which was a further reason for the Organization to give them priority treatment.

7. In their respective statements, the representatives of the participating agencies expressed agreement with the proposed priorities for collaboration within the United Nations system in the region on the basis of the aforementioned thematic areas. They also pointed out that those areas matched the needs arising out of the conditions prevailing in Latin America and the Caribbean. There had been a return to democratic forms of government, but the types of institutional structures existing in the societies of the region made consensus-building difficult; there was a strong commitment to integration into both the regional and world economies, but there was limited capacity for capitalizing upon opportunities resulting from globalization or for blocking its negative effects; and public policy reforms had been undertaken but had only been partially effective, meaning that a second generation of reforms would be necessary.

8. Summing up the results of the first session, the Deputy Secretary-General said that a broad consensus had been achieved regarding four central elements of the work of the United Nations. Taking those elements as a starting point, the second part of the meeting was devoted to identifying various ways of implementing inter-agency cooperation in the aforementioned areas.

### **III. Agreements adopted**

9. The bodies and agencies represented at the meeting agreed that their collaboration should centre around the following basic issues: (i) equity; (ii) governance; (iii) integration into the global economy; (iv) the environment; and (v) mobilization of resources for development.

10. Collaborative efforts would initially be focused on equity with a view to developing a shared vision, based on collective efforts, of the problem and of how it should be approached.
11. As for governance and integration into the global economy, it was agreed that priority should initially be given to coordination of tasks and a substantial increase in the sharing of information on the work being done by each unit or body.
12. In the environmental sphere, it was agreed that cooperation activities already under way should continue within the framework of the Inter-agency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Similarly, follow-up to the various United Nations summits and world conferences would continue in the context of activities led, *inter alia*, by the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children and its working group on the reduction of maternal mortality, inter-agency meetings to promote the integration of women in development, and the Joint Inter-agency Coordinating Committee for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.
13. It was agreed that a working group on development financing should be created to identify new and innovative ways of obtaining additional resources to finance the activities of the United Nations system in the region. The Director of the Pan American Health Organization said that it would be prepared to contribute resources for the development of a project on equity of a genuinely regional and inter-agency nature.
14. It was further agreed that particular attention should be given to coordination of activities in the Caribbean and that a survey should be made of the resources of the United Nations system in the subregion. The Regional Director of UNDP said that her office would be willing to contribute funds for that purpose.
15. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations requested ECLAC to take responsibility for overall monitoring of the new cooperation and coordination mechanisms and for convening an annual coordination meeting of all United Nations bodies and agencies involved in activities in the region. ECLAC should request collaboration from the various components of the United Nations system in carrying out those tasks, and consultations for that purpose would begin in the near future.