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ECLAC AND ITS ROLE IN THE REFORM PROCESS

Note by the secretariat

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Introduction

This note by the secretariat has been prepared pursuant to resolution 565 (XXVII) on the reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC. This resolution recommends that ECLAC continue to apply the reform measures along the lines indicated in the note by the secretariat entitled "Reform of the ECLAC management scheme: delegation of authority and accountability."¹

The general framework for the institution's reform process was outlined by the Secretary-General in the report he submitted to the General Assembly in July 1997² entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". This programme seeks to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of efforts to adapt the Organization to the requirements of the twenty-first century. Its fundamental objective is to narrow the gap between aspirations and achievements; in order for this objective to be attained, a new culture of management and leadership will have to be created so that the Organization will be capable of achieving unity of purpose, greater coherence and a rapid response capacity in meeting the demands of the international community.

This note will outline the current status of the ECLAC reform process in keeping with the course of action defined in the note by the secretariat entitled "Reform of the ECLAC management scheme: delegation of authority and accountability",³ which was submitted to the States members of ECLAC at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission (Aruba, May 1998) and has served as a framework for the activities carried out to date.

As stated on earlier occasions, the reform measures being pursued by the United Nations are aimed at the achievement of a more agile, more effective organization, a more transparent form of management, greater decentralization of decision-making and genuine accountability. It is, in essence, an attempt to streamline procedures, eliminate duplications and modernize the Organization, which includes the incorporation of appropriate technologies.

While it is no easy matter to analyse the changes that have taken place within the ECLAC secretariat since the reform process was launched without taking a number of other factors into account that have also been influencing those changes, there is no doubt about the fact that the innovative concept of reform introduced in 1996 has acted as a strong driving force for many of these processes and has facilitated their implementation. Many of these processes have emerged as a result of internal policies. For example, the changes that have been occurring in the countries of the region during the 1990s have also influenced the work of the secretariat because they have placed different —and much greater— demands on its resources. The structure and level of support received from sources of extrabudgetary funding have changed, and there have been

¹ ECLAC resolution 565(XXVII), twenty-seventh session of the Commission (Oranjestad, Aruba, 11-16 May 1998).

² A/51/950.

³ LC/G.2011(SES/27/7).

changes in the professional staffing table, especially among the higher ranks, due to retirements which have, within a period of less than two years, brought about a very rapid generational changeover, to mention only a few of the most noteworthy aspects of this process.

Many of these events have arisen out of the dual role played by the regional commissions, a role which has become more firmly established in the course of the United Nations reform process.⁴ On the one hand, as part of the United Nations system the commissions perform functions intended to contribute to its overall programme of work; on the other, as regional bodies they perform essential functions in their respective geographic areas and serve both as a catalyst and as a facilitator for regional cooperation. These two complementary spheres of action are reflected in the outputs and objectives of the regional commissions and in the specific features that the reform process takes on in each commission as it strives to meet the needs of its geographic area. In addition, the regional commissions perform analytical and operational tasks that provide feedback for one another. In recent years, ECLAC has also been making a major effort to adapt its analyses to the new types of conditions that have emerged as the region seeks to change its production patterns while achieving greater social equity. The three central issues being addressed by the institution have been taken into consideration within this context: the influence exerted by the specific modalities of region's incorporation into the international economy, the mechanisms for the transmission of technical progress, and the relationship between social equity and development. This effort necessarily entails an ongoing dialogue with the Governments and an interdisciplinary approach to the tasks at hand.⁵

Rather than seeking to change the actual functions that ECLAC has come to perform over the years, the reform effort has chiefly been directed towards strengthening strategic planning capabilities, eliminating duplications and addressing the needs of the region's countries more satisfactorily.

In the case of ECLAC, thus far the most concrete effect of the implementation of the pilot management scheme for the delegation of authority in the field of human resources in accordance with the Secretary-General's proposal concerning the reorganization of management⁶ has been the delegation of authority to the Executive Secretary for the appointment, placement and promotion of persons to posts in the professional category up to the P-4 level. The delegation of this authority to the Commission by United Nations Headquarters has made it possible to streamline these procedures, and it is hoped that in future this authority will be extended to include other areas. As a separate step outside the framework of the pilot project, authority has also been delegated to ECLAC in respect of the reclassification of local posts up to the G-7 level and the assignment of special post allowances (SPAs).

⁴ Report of the Secretary-General. The regional commissions in the context of a programme of reform of the United Nations (E/1998/65).

⁵ See the statement made by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC at the forum convened to mark the fiftieth anniversary of ECLAC (26 October 1998).

⁶ ECLAC, Management pilot scheme. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1964), 21 April 1997; and ECLAC, Progress in the implementation of the pilot management scheme. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1983), 28 October 1997.

The current stage of the reform process at ECLAC

Spheres of modernization

The reform process at ECLAC, which officially began with the delegation of authority to the Executive Secretary of the Commission for the appointment, placement and promotion of staff in local and professional posts up to a specified rank, has gradually been broadened to include other measures which indicate that it is entering into a new stage of management involving the expansion and consolidation of the spheres involved in the modernization process.

1. Strengthening ties with member States

This aspect of the modernization process is of the utmost importance to the Commission. The region's chief intergovernmental forum, the biennial session of the Commission, has adopted the practice of examining one main substantive issue of priority to the region at each session with the assistance of experts in the relevant field. This approach is designed to enrich the debates held at both the technical and ministerial levels. This practice was first used at the twenty-sixth session (Costa Rica, 1996) and became established as a regular part of the proceedings at the twenty-seventh session (Aruba, 1998), at which the question of the fiscal covenant was analysed on the basis of a document prepared specifically for that purpose.⁷ The continuity of the debate has been maintained through national and subregional technical seminars which have provided an opportunity to discuss the inputs of the participants regarding specific conditions in each country. These contributions have since been incorporated into a revised version of the document. The activities undertaken to fulfil the mandates given to the secretariat by the member countries have proved to be extremely successful and have made it possible both to see how national perspectives tie in with the regional position and to enrich and refine the stance of the region as a whole.

In addition to the work of the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development and of the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions, which continued to pursue their tasks within the context of the twenty-seventh session, the reform process was strengthened further by the inclusion on the agenda of a ministerial-level meeting of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and by the establishment of a direct link with the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean through the participation of the Chairperson of its Presiding Officers.

Since the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, the Ad Hoc Working Group established pursuant to resolution 553(XXVI), which is open to all member countries, has been meeting regularly with highly satisfactory results. The four meetings of this group that have been held to date have enabled the participants to acquire a fuller and more accurate understanding of the region's needs; this knowledge has served as a basis for subsequent adjustments in the

⁷ See ECLAC, *The Fiscal Covenant. Strengths, weaknesses, challenges* (LC/G.1997(SES.27/3), May 1998.

secretariat's regular programme of work. The meetings also provide an opportunity for more frequent analyses of outstanding problems and emerging issues.

The secretariat continues to work with the region's Ministries of Planning in collaboration with the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES). The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean meets once every three years, and the eighth such meeting is to take place early in the year 2000 in Lima, Peru. The Presiding Officers of this forum have been steadily gaining in political and substantive importance and currently convene two meetings each year with the support of the secretariat. In addition to these official meetings, the secretariat also maintains ongoing contact with other intergovernmental forums in the region that are concerned with sectoral issues and provides substantive support to them for such activities as the regional meetings of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector, Ministers of Mining and Energy, and transport authorities; in addition, it follows up on international conferences and recently has increased its involvement in the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government. All these mechanisms have delimited their own spheres of activity over the years, but as part of the reform process they have been broadening and refining the definition of those spheres and are now addressing a wide range of issues at the express request of the countries concerned. Thus, within the framework of the reform process, ECLAC has established much closer ties with the countries and is now collaborating with them on a much greater scale with regard to both prioritization and the execution of the relevant activities.

2. Regional coordination

ECLAC has begun to play an important role in inter-agency coordination within the region. In accordance with resolution E/1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council in July 1998, the Deputy Secretary-General convened a meeting at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, on 6 May 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to promote a better utilization of the available resources of the bodies, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system that are working in the region so that they may improve the services they provide to the countries. In addition to adopting a number of inter-agency coordination mechanisms, the participants in the meeting agreed upon the definition of the following areas for priority action: equity, governance, integration into the global economy, environment and the mobilization of resources for development. Inter-agency coordination in the region is a complex undertaking, since each unit of the system has its own mandates and work programmes, and the formation of a consensus regarding priority issues and methods of work therefore marks the beginning of a new stage in the process in which it will become possible to take fuller advantage of the available resources.

ECLAC has also been intensifying its bilateral and multilateral relations with other components of the system, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United

Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and others that conduct related activities with a view to avoiding duplications and making the best possible use of available knowledge and resources. ECLAC has broadened its coverage of these areas and, in view of the substantial pool of specialized expertise which it has built up over the years, institutions in other regions have requested its services in such varied fields as social policy, water resources and energy.

By drawing upon the resources of organizations involved in technical cooperation for development, ECLAC has stepped up the operational activities it undertakes to assist the countries of the region in a wide variety of areas, including the provision of training courses, direct technical advisory services, and courses geared to government agencies, academic centres, universities and non-governmental organizations. These activities have not only reinforced the relevant institutions' service capabilities but have also furnished ECLAC with more accurate information on national and subregional conditions and, in many cases, have facilitated the creation of information channels among a number of different agencies in the recipient countries. Cooperation in the area of technical assistance has increased substantially, and specifically with respect to the use of the Internet, data searches and related questions.

3. Coordination with United Nations Headquarters

ECLAC has reinforced its interaction with the various organs of United Nations Headquarters. It participates, *inter alia*, in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Group, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions. In addition, it maintains close ties with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. At the interregional level, the executive secretaries of the regional commissions continue to hold regular meetings in order to foster a free-flowing exchange of information and reinforce their common activities.

4. Delegation of authority in the field of human resources

Another aspect of the modernization of the United Nations is the delegation of authority in the area of human resources management. The Personnel Section of ECLAC undertakes assessments of the effectiveness and responsiveness of this process on a regular basis, and reports its findings to Headquarters each month and at four-month intervals. In addition, an in-depth evaluation of this process was prepared in April 1999 by a team from the Operational Services Division of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) at Headquarters.

The above report indicates that the delegation of authority in the field of human resources during the period under review has had positive results both for ECLAC and for OHRM. It also notes that the Executive Secretary exercises the authority delegated to him in a prudent and

appropriate manner in accordance with current policy and recommends that OHRM fully support ECLAC so that it may discharge the task of recruiting new staff members as efficiently as possible.⁸

ECLAC hopes to continue to increase its responsiveness in the area of human resources management. This process has taken on a number of highly specific characteristics during the current biennium due to the large number of staff members who have retired, since this has resulted in a marked change in the staff's generational composition, as well as permitting the analysis of a very large number of cases. In addition, the recruitment process is generally quite lengthy, especially in the case of P-3 posts, because it requires the circulation of the vacancy within the Organization, the analysis of the candidates selected by means of competitive national examinations and, in the event that neither of these procedures yields a suitable candidate, the circulation of the vacancy outside the Organization. All these steps certainly help to ensure the transparency of the final selection, but they also prolong the process considerably. However, the positive results obtained thus far demonstrate that the Commission is well-equipped for the extension of its delegated authority to include the selection of candidates for posts in higher categories and has the necessary mechanisms at its command for this purpose; this would also offer the advantage of permitting increased participation by staff members in the various stages of the process, which would further enhance its transparency.

5. Changes in organizational structure

A third aspect of the modernization process relates to the introduction of changes in the organization's structure with a view to the achievement of two basic objectives: to streamline organizational procedures and to place more importance on priority tasks of a substantive nature. To this end, the organizational flowchart has been reviewed and a number of essential changes have been identified. Steps have been taken to strengthen the identity of the Latin America and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) as a substantive division of the Commission. The Centre's programme of activities includes both continued research on the region's demographics and the updating of studies on population and development, together with the provision of technical assistance to the countries in the compilation of specialized information.

In order to permit greater attention to be devoted to the corresponding areas, the former Environment and Development Division has been divided into two new divisions, each of which is responsible for a more specifically defined functional area. The Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division concentrates on the study of energy sources, mineral and other natural resources, transport, the relevant policies and regulations, and infrastructure in general. The Environment and Human Settlements Division, for its part, focuses on specialized studies in its subject areas on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach that allows it to coordinate its work with other units of the Commission.

⁸ See the draft report on the evaluation of the pilot project submitted by the Director of the Operational Services Division of OHRM dated 19 April 1999.

Pursuant to the request made by the countries in resolution 570(XXVII), the work of reviewing the structure of ILPES has continued and, in order to ensure that this task receives priority attention, the Executive Secretary has assumed responsibility for its direction. To date, a comprehensive analysis has been conducted of training activities throughout the ECLAC system, since some of its substantive divisions have also begun to offer services of this type in their respective fields, while the Institute also draws on the services of numerous experts from other divisions for the courses it offers. In the coming months the Commission plans to prepare an overview of all its training activities which will serve as the basis for the development of an updated, modernized profile for ILPES in keeping with the region's priorities and demands that will permit it to use the available resources to full advantage.

ECLAC also continues to make progress in mainstreaming two sets of issues that cut across all its areas of activity: **the gender perspective and the environment**. The gender perspective has been the object of specialized policy-oriented attention for many years now and has achieved institutional legitimacy, but it is only in the last two years that it has taken on a more prominent profile. With the help of extrabudgetary resources, inroads have been made in mainstreaming the gender perspective into the divisions' regular programme of work and, in the second half of 1999, the Commission will embark upon a project aimed at reinforcing this process by ensuring that this perspective is integrated into the technical assistance services provided by substantive divisions to the countries of the region.

Environmental issues are coming to occupy an increasingly important position within the institution, but since this process is of fairly recent origin, a great deal remains to be done in this regard. An integral exploration of this subject is being undertaken with a view to examining relevant multidisciplinary areas of work with each of the divisions; this process will be headed up by the new Environment and Human Settlements Division. In order to develop a suitable methodology, the Division of Production, Productivity and Management and the Environment and Human Settlements Division are meeting in June to analyse their programmes of work in detail and identify substantive issues of common interest. This system of work was used on an experimental basis in connection with gender mainstreaming in 1998 and has yielded excellent results because it is based on concrete areas of activity and the personal involvement of the experts concerned.

In addition to these two dimensions, projects that are currently being executed with extrabudgetary resources are being employed to reinforce the organizational approach based on the use of interdisciplinary teams to address priority issues. This has resulted in a more effective use of budgetary and extrabudgetary resources and a more flexible linkage of substantive capabilities in relation to the tasks at hand, regardless of their funding arrangements. Examples of this system of work in action include the teams that have been set up to study such issues as social equity, trade and finance, to assist in the structuring of FTAA and to assess the impact of natural disasters. The use of these groups does not alter the organization's formal structure, but it

does generate a working dynamic and institutional culture that permit a more flexible and effective response to demands as they arise.

In matters relating to the subregional headquarters and offices of ECLAC, the most notable development has been a request to expand the office in Bogotá. A feasibility study is currently being conducted to analyse this request, which has the support of the Government of Colombia. In the event that this expansion is carried out, one of its effects would be to permit greater attention to be devoted to problems of concern to the entire Andean subregion.

ECLAC has embarked upon a technological modernization process which has allowed it to strengthen the links between its headquarters and its subregional headquarters and offices. It is currently in the process of installing a new communication system known as "Extranet" which will further facilitate the identification of common areas of work. Clear examples of the coordination achieved thus far include the working relationship established between the ECLAC Library in Santiago and the libraries of the subregional headquarters and country offices, and the preparation of the *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*, for which inputs are received from various sources, notably the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico, which furnishes the necessary material on Mexico and Central America; the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, located in Trinidad and Tobago, which covers the Caribbean area; and the offices in Argentina and Brasilia, which compile information on the Southern Cone. Together with e-mail capabilities, the Intranet system, which is now being installed in all the subregional headquarters and country offices, facilitates the exchange of information and promotes collaboration.

6. Management

Modernization of organizational management

This area has been another main focus of attention ever since the reform process began. The objective here is to increase the responsiveness of management in substantive areas of work, which, in turn, ought to help augment the flexibility and effectiveness of management functions in the areas of human resources and finances. One of the most conspicuous aspects of this managerial modernization process has been the expansion of division directors' decision-making powers with regard to how the available resources should be put to use in the subprogrammes under their responsibility. This process, which strengthens the decision-making capabilities of the staff members in charge of the various subprogrammes as a means of achieving a more rational, streamlined and responsive form of management, is coupled with stricter requirements regarding accountability to the Executive Secretary for the consequences of those staff members' management decisions. This process is expected to produce an increase in productivity, greater clarity in the definition of lines of responsibility, greater internal and external accountability, and the use of indicators to measure individual, institutional and team performance that will serve as a basis for the development of new criteria for the distribution of resources.

Measuring productivity is a complicated undertaking and is the subject of a dynamic, ongoing debate within the organization. Given the nature of the Commission's outputs, the measurements must be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. In an effort to continue to improve the quality of its outputs, the Commission is seeking to gauge the degree of satisfaction of its main users and the extent to which its outputs are delivered on schedule by using a series of indicators, which include the number of requests received, direct feedback, press coverage, the appearance of ECLAC articles in specialized publications, the number of "hits" on its Web page, and the invitations it receives to participate in forums on specified issues. In order to determine the direct cost of its outputs, a code has been assigned to each; this not only makes it easier to monitor the implementation of the work programme but also provides an overview of the costs involved in executing each activity.

ECLAC has developed special mechanisms to measure the number of **documents and publications** produced, their distribution and the number of readers. The quantity of documents for which editing and translation services are outsourced has increased, with much of this work being sent and received via the Internet. Thanks to these procedures, in 1998 all of the Commission's annual publications were translated into English using the same level of resources as the year before.

Another important change in this area has been the adoption of a uniform design for all of the Commission's publications in order to facilitate their identification by users. A major effort has also been made to promote the publication of documents in electronic formats, and the use of this medium has increased considerably (from 13 in 1997 to 40 in 1998, with 100 such publications being scheduled for 1999). This also reduces distribution costs substantially. *ECLAC Notes*, a new bimonthly publication that is sent out to an updated list of readers, has proven to be a valuable method for publicizing the most important documents issued by ECLAC.

Document preparation is governed by the regular programme of work, but is also flexible enough to meet specific demands deriving from particular circumstances, such as the Asian crisis, the implications of the euro's adoption for the region and natural disasters. The process involved in selecting which documents are to be published by the Commission begins with a joint analysis by division directors to determine whether the documents meet the standards that have been set for this purpose. For those documents that involve a higher degree of visibility, this analysis is conducted by the Publications Committee, which confers with experts in the relevant field when necessary.

Special importance has also been placed on joint publication arrangements with commercial publishing houses in an effort to reduce production costs for ECLAC and achieve a wider distribution of the documents in question. In addition, consideration is currently being given to the possibility of leasing equipment that would permit documents to be reproduced electronically on demand. This system would also make it possible to respond to requests received over the Internet.

ECLAC has developed a consolidated system for compiling information on travel by staff members and its objectives which is then regularly forwarded to United Nations Headquarters in New York. The great majority of missions carried out by ECLAC staff members are organized in response to specific requests made by member countries. This information makes it possible to rationalize travel plans, cut costs and determine the needs of requesting countries more accurately.

The quality of the Commission's outputs is difficult to measure using traditional evaluation mechanisms, and in many cases their effects only become apparent after a fairly lengthy period of time has passed. This is a problem not only for ECLAC but for most academic institutions working in the economic and social fields.

ECLAC is also employing a number of technologically advanced mechanisms to assist it in modernizing its management functions. One such mechanism is the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), which will provide the divisions with up-to-date information on their performance. The IMIS system has already been installed and is now being loaded with the information needed for its operation on a trial basis, after which the necessary adjustments will be made. A new computerized correspondence registry system has also been introduced. This system, which is now being tested, will help to organize and streamline the relevant procedures.

Another noteworthy accomplishment is the development of indicators to measure qualitative aspects of the main types of outputs included in the Commission's programme of work, such as intergovernmental and expert meetings, technical cooperation services, training activities, development and updating of computer software and databases, the services provided by the Commission when serving as a technical secretariat for other forums, and collaboration with other organizations.

In the past few years ECLAC has begun to implement a programme aimed at upgrading staff members' substantive skills. This programme includes individual and group training sessions for staff from different divisions and offices both at headquarters and at subregional headquarters and offices, together with division meetings designed to provide staff with an opportunity to examine divisional work plans. Training activities will also be provided for administrative personnel; an intensive seminar on strategic planning as a participatory joint management method is scheduled for administrative staff in August.

ECLAC is the first organization in the system to submit a proposed budget for the 2000-2001 biennium that takes the results yielded by performance indicators into consideration. The Commission plans to continue refining these indicators, which enable it to measure the costs and benefits of its outputs more accurately.

7. Communication, information and dissemination

ECLAC has made considerable progress in establishing a modern system of communication, information and dissemination that will serve as an essential tool for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of its outputs.

The construction of the ECLAC Website and the mounting number of hits it is receiving, the installation of a LAN network (the "Intranet") and, in general, the use of new document production and distribution technologies have permitted a more active exchange of information between relevant actors and ECLAC and have served as the underpinnings for a new concept of communication and its possibilities. The objectives of the modernization process in this realm are to strengthen the organization's ability to meet new demands, upgrade its communications and information-exchange capabilities, improve and expand the dissemination of substantive publications, establish a better communication flow with national and international counterparts, increase training activities dealing with the use of new technologies, modernize the technological platform, and prepare the organization and its staff to function in today's "information society".

One example of the results obtained in this respect is the considerable increase to be noted in the dissemination of information on the Commission's activities during the past year. More specifically, the executive summaries of the documents it produces have been more widely distributed and staff members have been interviewed more frequently, closer ties have been established with the media, and the ECLAC Library is supplying an ever-increasing volume of information on regional economic and social development issues via the Internet. E-mail requests for information have jumped by 200% in 1998, and the Commission distributes press releases, summaries and bulletins via its Webpage in both English and Spanish.

The Commission is currently analysing a variety of methods for translating the comments received from users into reliable indicators that will permit subjects of interest to be identified and will be useful in assessing the institution's performance.

8. Technical cooperation for development

Although the documents dealing with the United Nations reform process do not refer explicitly to technical cooperation for development, this field of activity has clearly been influenced by the reform programme. Both the level and composition of the resources made available for technical cooperation have changed a great deal in recent years, as have the types of areas that are of interest to donors. One of the chief aims of the steps being taken to modernize this field of activity is to achieve greater coherence in terms of the budgetary and extrabudgetary funding for such operations, along with the improved efficiency and productivity that this would entail.

ECLAC has made an effort to establish a strategic position for itself within the framework of the wide-ranging array of working relationships it maintains with international cooperation agencies, with its primary objective in doing so being to enhance the work it carries out on behalf of the countries of the region. Specifically, ECLAC has established links with

bilateral and multilateral donors, with other regional organizations, with the Governments of the region that have begun to play an active role in mobilizing internally-generated resources for cooperation activities, with national bodies and with a variety of non-governmental actors. These links are two-way streets which permit an exchange of resources, outputs and services that benefits all concerned. This expanded framework for cooperation is an extraordinarily dynamic and fluid system, making it all the more necessary for ECLAC to devote special attention to modernizing its ability to manage this important process.

The vast majority of the projects being executed by ECLAC act as a complement to its regular work both in substantive fields and in relation to United Nations reform. With ever-increasing frequency, donors are requesting a "management-by-objectives" form of project execution that permits the identification and verification of the project's direct results in the countries concerned. Thus, the new management concepts that are applicable in this area are similar to those used for technical cooperation projects and programmes.

In accordance with operative paragraph No. 3 of ECLAC resolution 565(XXVII), the Commission has intensified its coordination and collaboration with other United Nations organs, agencies and programmes (especially in the case of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund), with mutually beneficial results. It is also engaged in very productive forms of collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank and has strengthened its cooperation with multilateral institutions in the region (such as the Organization of American States), subregional integration mechanisms and subregional banks.

This collaboration has contributed to greater flexibility in the implementation of the work programme, which is approved two years in advance of its starting date, and the execution of such projects often provides a way of facilitating the programme's adaptation to new needs as they arise.

It should be pointed out that, although the level of extrabudgetary resources available to the Commission has increased in absolute terms, once the effect of inflation is taken into account it becomes apparent that the situation is quite different than before. Although the volume of resources is greater, fewer activities can be financed with those funds, and the organization is therefore caught up in a constant effort to align its priorities.

Summary

The reform process is clearly a complex endeavour that engenders further processes of change. ECLAC has sought to move ahead gradually in order to ensure the continuity of the measures it adopts; in addition, the use of new technologies —particularly the Internet— has proven to be extremely useful in the area of communications.

The reform process initiated by the United Nations has played an essential role in helping the Organization to move forward and has served to revitalize it. Some of the most noteworthy components of the reform process are the following: (i) more frequent contact with the member countries at the technical, substantive and political levels; (ii) the development of new and better channels for regional coordination; (iii) the conversion of the technological platform, its placement at the service of the region and its use within the organization for staff training and skills development; (iv) introduction of a more streamlined, decentralized and flexible management system equipped with improved information channels; (v) a marked enhancement of the Commission's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean and at the international level; and (vi) greater transparency in all administrative and substantive processes, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, in order to facilitate a more effective form of management that will contribute to the renewal of the United Nations.