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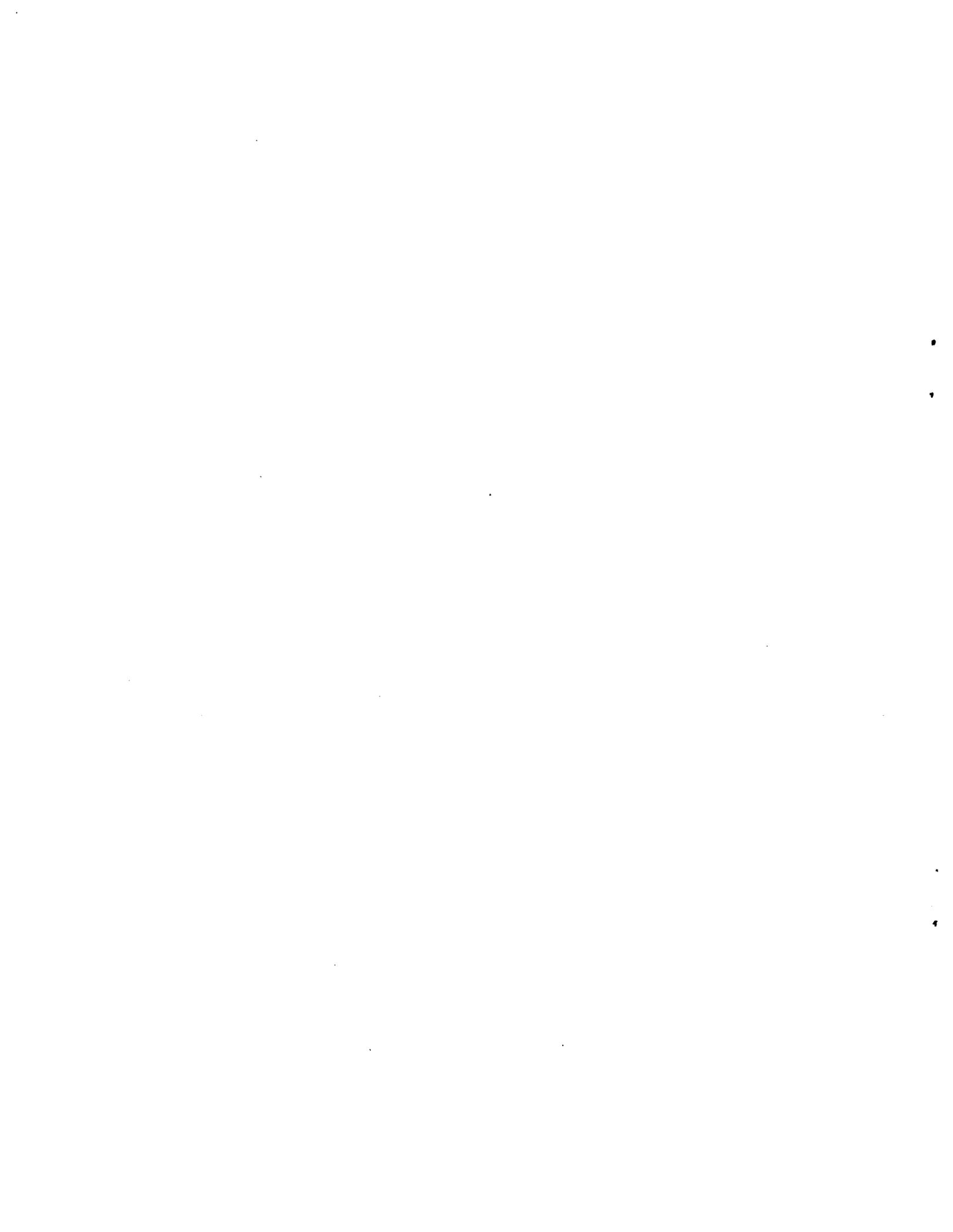
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CEPAL/FAO TECHNICAL MEETING ON RURAL SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

Montevideo (Uruguay), 9 - 11 August 1978



MOST RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES IN THE REGION



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Foreword

1. Both in the national sphere and within international organizations, governments have adopted and suggested several policies and strategies to tackle the Latin American rural problems. The Eleventh Regional Conference convened by FAO for Latin America (Caracas, 5 to 20 October 1970) adopted the conceptual framework on agrarian reform and development, which defines agrarian reform as an integral part of the development strategies and as a condition for global development, being also considered as the structural dimension of rural development.
2. In several international forums stress has been laid on the need for integrating agrarian reform to national development plans, so that it will contribute effectively to improve the rural inhabitant's living conditions and at the same time, it has been pointed out that the process should be integral: rural development has reasserted its importance as the means to attain Latin American general development and of agrarian reform as the essential element in rural development.
3. It is generally accepted that within the context of the New International Economic Order, true development cannot exist without an improvement in the social welfare of the major groups of rural population, the poorest sector of which is represented by small farmers, tenants and landless workers.
4. At the meeting of the Advisory Group on Integrated Rural Development 1/ convened by the Regional Office of FAO (Caracas, 1975), there were suggestions for the priority areas to be embraced by a rural development programme, with special emphasis on the economic, social, institutional and infra-structural aspects. Among the latter, agrarian reform, peasant organization, research, technology, technical assistance, rural credit, marketing (financing, storing, transport and others), price policies and the preservation of natural resources deserved special mention for being mechanisms, instruments and actions that must be complemented by basic services and infra-structure works. In addition to the above, account was taken of diversification of production towards non-agricultural activities and of the exploitation of non-renewable resources such as forestry, arts and crafts, and others, as important elements in rural development, suggesting the need for shaping a basic global action strategy for the countries.

1/ Report on the Meeting of the Advisory Group of the Regional Integrated Rural Development Programme of FAO Regional Office for Latin America. Caracas, 22-27 September 1975.

5. Few appraisals of the social and economic improvement programmes for rural communities have been carried out. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that there has been no in-depth analysis at a Latin American level of the principal causes of rural problems, with a view to determine and design the most suitable strategies for rural development.

1. Evolution of rural development programmes as analyzed at different international meetings

6. Intervention by the State in the field of rural development in Latin America has had different manifestations and has taken shape in programmes of varying intensity going from development and improvement of agricultural production and productivity, changes in land tenure, community organization and development, colonization, physical, economic and social infrastructure and in recent years, from agrarian reform and integrated rural development to even industrialization.

7. In one of the documents 2/ of the FAO/CEPAL meeting mention is made of agrarian reform programmes introduced as from the sixties, the results of which, in most cases, did not correspond to the expectations that originated them. However, these attempts at reformation had the positive effect of arising concern at all levels and of mobilizing opinion in favour of changing the socioeconomic structures of the rural sector and, in general, of the need for special strategies and programmes to improve the living conditions of the rural workers.

8. In order to achieve these aims, there have been suggestions in favour of institutional integration, which attempts to break away from the traditional form of action based on the isolated effort of each of the entities.

9. A document by the World Bank 3/, refers to a development strategy for the rural poor class. This involves that the benefits of growth should be extended to those whose future will be to continue in rural areas, i.e., small farmers, tenant farmers and landless farm workers.

2/ "Rural Social Development in Latin America", CEPAL/FAO/78/2, June 1978.

3/ World Bank, Report N° 588, "Rural development and Bank policy", Progress Report, 4 December 1974.

10. The ideal application of rural development programmes, according to the World Bank, should include suitable regional planning, strong central coordination, effective organization at a local level and participation of the rural population at the formulation and execution stages of the process.

11. The World Conference on Food in its Resolution II asked the governments to introduce "appropriate progressive agrarian reforms...adequate means of information and motivation and other institutional improvements in rural areas aimed at...organizing, activating and assisting the rural population...for participation in integrated rural development and at eliminating exploitative patterns of land tenure, credit and marketing systems where they still prevail." Furthermore, governments were invited "to promote the development of cooperative organizations and other associations for the mass of farmers and rural workers for agricultural and rural development."

12. In recent years, both governments and international organizations for technical and financial assistance are acknowledging the multidisciplinary nature of rural development as well as the relations and links that should exist between rural development programmes and economic and social development.

13. Lack of an adequate inter-discipline and multi-discipline approach has brought about a situation in which whereas Latin American agricultural production increases at a relatively satisfactory pace, this is not reflected on a generalized improvement of the living and working conditions of the rural population. On the contrary: there are indications pointing to the fact that these conditions may assume serious forms, as for example in matters of unemployment, malnutrition, country to city migrations, etc.

14. In some countries, encouragement has been given to the establishment of integrated social services programmes aiming at the convergence of actions formerly carried out in isolation, in a certain geographic area, by means of setting up coordination mechanisms at a local level.

15. There has been an evolution from mere convergence of isolated actions to integration in the planning of activities. Some programmes are still at the administrative coordination stage and others have been integrated since their formulation. The latter have had the benefit of a regional planning framework in accordance with national development policies.

16. Other programmes aim at contributing to overcome regional and interregional disequilibriums, avoiding partial and sectorial treatment of problems and needs.

17. Most of the rural development programmes carried out in the fifties and the sixties, provided no clear outlines for the active participation of rural workers in planning, execution and evaluation. Many of the programmes were designed to the advantage of rural minorities with a high income.

18. In contrast with the aforementioned policies, the majority of the programmes set up in recent years are oriented to benefit the subsistence economy social strata. In some cases, these programmes have been a follow-up to redistribution of land, aiming at providing suitable supporting services and social investments in the reformed sector.

19. Special importance has been assigned to "integrated rural development programmes" which aim at combining the different technical, social and economic aspects inherent to the full development of the rural population. Integrated rural development is considered as an action plan to bridge the gap between rural and urban life and to reduce the inequalities between the different income groups so that a more equalitarian society may emerge, more economic productivity is obtained and, consequently, a better standard of living may be secured for the majority of the population.

20. In addition to structural and institutional changes, the Fourteenth Regional Conference convened by FAO for Latin America (Lima, April 1976), advocated for the convenience of small farmers benefiting from technological advances and other services necessary to facilitate and improve production; of supplying the necessary incentives for the organization of peasants and farm-workers, the promotion of modalities of participation and the strengthening of training programmes.

21. The different international forums mentioned in the present document have insisted that the results attained by Latin American countries in the application of their rural development programmes have not been generally satisfactory, as they have been unable to affect in any significant way the employment, production, income, food and nutrition levels or, in other words, the different indices of the rural inhabitant's standard of living.

22. The Inter-regional Symposium on Integrated Rural Development which took place in Berlin (West) from 19 to 23 September 1977, recommended that rural development programmes should take the following, among other aspects, into account: carrying out changes in the agrarian structure; avoiding paternalism when assisting or organizing rural workers; avoiding the imposition of programmes unrelated to the

real conditions prevailing among the groups of beneficiaries; avoiding transfer of alien institutional forms and structures, which in any case, are difficult to adapt to a new environment; obtaining socioeconomic improvement for rural workers through the solution of their problems, and tackling institutional restructuring at a central, regional and local level.

23. Furthermore, the Symposium declared that rural development and agrarian reform are the requirements to create a stable political and socioeconomic system and the basis for the introduction of a more rational utilization of the land and its conservation, concluding that rural development is a necessary strategy to make sure that agrarian reform is not restricted to mere redistribution of land, but that it is accompanied by every development measure of both an economic and social nature. Such measures include supplying credit, agricultural inputs, marketing facilities, community projects, expansion, training, research, health, agro-industries or arts and crafts and small-scale agro-industrial activities.

24. Finally, within the context of rural development programmes it is necessary to point out that the shifts of stress that they have undergone in the last decades are significant in general terms. However, in some cases, this has only been reflected on the conceptual aspects rather than on actual operative aspects or concrete results.

2. Consultation of experts on rural development programmes

(Mexico, April 1978)

and general considerations on programmes being carried out 4/

25. In this Consultation the participants had the opportunity of voicing concerns and problems both of a conceptual and operative nature related to rural development in their respective countries.

4/ The "Consulta de Expertos sobre Programas de Desarrollo Rural en América Latina" was organized by FAO, with the collaboration of the Mexican Government through the Centro de Investigación de Desarrollo Rural (CIDER). It took place in Mexico City between 5 and 9 April 1978 with the participation of experts from Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, which have been the countries that carried out special studies on rural development programmes, the reports of which, were submitted to the Consultation. There was also participation of experts from Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Panama. Altogether, 17 experts on agrarian reform and rural development from 11 countries and technical officers from FAO and CEPAL took part in it. The Agenda covered four main topics: (i) purposes and objectives of rural development programmes, (ii) organization, implementation and execution of national rural development programmes, (iii) results attained and obstacles for the execution of programmes, and (iv) agrarian reform and rural development.

26. The participants showed special interest in, among others, subjects such as: multi-sectorial character of agricultural development, agricultural development, rural development and national development; conciliation of alternatives for productive improvement and for better distributive justice; connexions between rural development programmes and national development plans; analysis of causes and effects of rural development; rural participation, both in local and institutional groups; changes towards rural development; employment; rural marginality; generation, application and utilization of economic surplus; participation planning; investments in rural development; analysis of present-day socioeconomic structure, and integration of multi-sectorial actions.

27. The summary of the discussions appearing below selects some of the relevant aspects of the studies and different lines followed by the participants, which were dealt with in the course of the debates, in order to present them in a coherent way without intending it to represent a consensus of the meeting.

a) Summary of the discussions 5/

28. Despite the efforts made in the majority of the countries of the region, the number of rural inhabitants living in conditions of poverty is still increasing; access to employment and production factors, inputs and services is gradually more restricted and the rural inhabitant's organization and participation is, as a rule, weak or practically non-existent.

29. Rural development concerns the whole of society and not only the rural sector. Therefore, the execution of projects or programmes framed within a sectorial context is no longer sufficient. Isolated measures aiming at increasing production and productivity, availability of certain infrastructure or mere distribution of physical and financial resources for production, which are directed only to palliate the effects of the problem without attacking their fundamental causes, are not sufficient either.

5/ Summary document containing some relevant elements pointed out in the studies and some of the topics dealt with during the debates of the Consultation.

30. The causes of such problems lie in the nature of the generation, application and utilization processes of the economic surplus which determines the intensity and direction of the process of capital accumulation. The dynamic of this process appears at intrasectorial and international levels, depends on, and at the same time determines, the different participation of the various social groups and economic sectors of power structure.

31. The execution of programmes, as instruments for rural development, involves structural changes and the need for making provision for the adaptability to the particular values and ideosyncrasy of each society.

32. Such changes are essential to permit the attainment of the objectives and purposes of rural development and might be summarized as follows: i) eradication of poverty and creation of conditions for a steady improvement of social welfare and standard of living of the rural population; ii) promotion of a rational utilization of the productive resources according to their potentiality and subordinated to the social needs of the population and iii) creation of conditions leading to an effective participation of the rural population in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

33. To reach their objectives, rural development programmes must have a national character and must be directed in an articulate way towards; i) a fair re-distribution of productive resources, mainly land and use of water; ii) income re-distribution; iii) increase of production and productivity and, iv) increase of employment. Moreover, the beneficiaries thereof should be clearly stated.

34. The execution of the structural changes which are the basis of rural development demands concrete political decisions from each country and not simple manifestations of good intentions. Not all the programmes carried out in the name of rural development affect the fundamental causes of rural poverty.

35. Independently of the technical aspects, is the political will which determines the viability and dynamics of the rural development process.

36. Rural development programmes should be conceived as a set of inter-related actions, based on their own reality, in which all the governmental institutions that serve functions within the framework of rural development should take part. It should not either detract from the real essence of the rural development transplanting foreign experiences which lack proved validity for Latin America.

37. Institutional organization must become suitable for the requirements of rural development in order to avoid dispersion of actions and efforts and financial waste, both of which impinge seriously on national availability to such effects. The solution is not to create new institutions, but to plan actions and co-ordinate their execution through taking suitable decisions and control of the corresponding allocations. Thus, a multi-sectorial orientation of rural development might be reached.

38. In order to programme actions, it is important to possess guidelines that may facilitate setting priorities and that may make it possible to obtain a greater degree of effectiveness from the programmes to be carried out.

39. Both research and technological development should correspond to the social and economic conditions prevailing in the society towards which programmes are directed. Mere investment, as a rule, has not produced the expected results.

40. In connexion with supporting services, one of the limitations of rural development programmes is the divergence between the transformation of rural economy and the structures, methods and conceptions characterizing such services at present in most of the countries of the region, which are normally oriented towards the wealthier groups of the agricultural sector. This constitutes one of the factors that makes communication difficult between technicians and peasants, who are the central element in the development process.

41. On the other hand, the agricultural and commercial policies of the developed countries hinder foreign trade of agricultural products by restricting the conditions for their access to external markets and by interfering with the possibility of securing equitable and profitable prices. The peasant sector becomes particularly handicapped with respect to this problem.

42. As relates organization of peasants for production, achievements with some associative forms have been in many cases significant and its impact has surpassed the originating group, through motivation of other groups to create regional organizations of second and third degree.

43. The awareness of governments on the need of an effective peasant participation in the programming and execution of said programmes, through their organizations, has also been considered a positive achievement in some experiences on rural development programmes.

44. There is a greater awareness of the modest progress achieved by rural development programmes, which has sparked off the continual search for alternative methods. The programmes have also made it somehow possible to supply goods and services to people who had never received them before and to hold within the rural sector a number of inhabitants who, inevitably, would have crowded the urban sector even more.

45. The rural development process implies deep changes in the socio-economic and political conditions which at present determine rural poverty phenomena. These transformations should involve: access to basic production resources; forms and mechanisms of application of the economic surplus generated by the productive process; mechanisms and forms of co-ordinating rural economy with the rest of the economic system, and agricultural technology.

46. The importance of the agrarian reform in the process of rural development emerges from its connexion with the transformation requirements mentioned above.

47. In fact, due to the dominant characteristics of agricultural activity within rural economy, whatever happens in agriculture will be crucial to overcome present-day problems and to attain the objectives of rural development. This implies that those basic resources, access to which must be guaranteed to the most deprived wider sectors of the rural population, are precisely the agricultural resources. It also implies that the agricultural economic surplus is the key to the re-distribution process.

48. Agrarian reform is the fundamental - although not the sole - instrument to act upon both the afore-mentioned aspects, because it modifies conditions for access to the basic factor - land - and because it changes the patterns for the application of agricultural economic surplus through the re-distribution of land ownership. Furthermore, it is the key element to prevent both utilization of modern technologies and application of specific technologies for the rural sector in the transition period from becoming instruments to make more acute the prevailing disequilibriums in matters of income and employment, which tend to preserve the disparities between both - the "commercial" and the "peasant" - as would obviously happen unless the technological reform is framed within the context of a wide and deep agrarian reform.

49. Similarly, a change in the allocation of other resources necessary for agricultural production (credit, supporting services, infrastructure investments, etc.) and a modification of the mechanisms for sectorial co-ordination (agro-industrial and agro-commercial sectors, price systems and other transfer mechanisms) will only attain their aims fully within the context of a reform process that alters production conditions, that gives origin to new managerial modalities in the country and that facilitates the development of organization forms for peasants and rural workers which will ensure their real participation in the economic, social and political life of the country.

50. The above does not mean to exclude the existence of different strategies for rural development. As was said before, rural development processes and policies cannot be formulated in isolation from the historical conditions prevailing in each country. In this connexion, the emphasis on each of the aspects and also the instruments and mechanisms to be adopted will necessarily vary depending on the said conditions. However, apart from these differences, there are two aspects that are by force common to every rural development policy and which arise from the concrete reality of most of the Latin American countries: i) the need for the chosen policy to have an influence upon the real causes of rural poverty, which necessarily means framing it within a process of structural change that involves the different elements mentioned above; and ii) the need for such policies to embrace in an integral way all the above elements, pari passu with the indispensable modifications in other sectors of the economic system and their relations with world economy.

51. Agrarian reform, seen as a vast process of transformation that does not end at mere re-distribution of the land, plays, thus, an essential role within the process of rural development and together with a deep re-orientation in the dynamics of resource allocation for the rural sector, with technological changes and adjustments in the system of economic and commercial relations between agriculture and the rest of the economy, constitutes the foundation stone on which this process must necessarily be built.

52. The above does not imply ignoring the importance of other aspects - such as education, health, rural training, technological research, etc. - which affect the economic and social problems typical of the rural areas in the majority of the countries in the region. Such aspects, despite being important, are secondary as regards the structural factors already pointed out and are, to a large extent, conditioned by them. Consequently, the actions oriented towards its solution should take place within the context of the policies for structural changes, due to the fact that if performed in isolation, it is not likely that they may have a significant influence on the rural environment.

53. Finally it should be recalled that rural development is a transitional process towards new forms of economic and social organization of the agricultural sector. Within this prospective, the structural changes play the key role in making the process possible.

b) Objectives and characteristics of the programmes 6/

54. As regards the characteristics of the rural development programmes adopted in Latin America in the last decades, it may be said that, as a rule, they have been of the sectorial type and have not benefited the most deprived groups of rural population in any significant way. Consequently, they have been unable to attain a significant improvement in the standard of living of the great rural masses and, in many cases, have not even mitigated the effects of the poverty gap.

55. The document on social rural development in Latin America presented at this meeting 7/ states that the relative and insufficient results attained by the countries in the execution of agrarian reform and rural development programmes and projects are due to the fact that the latter have been conceived and carried out within the restricted framework typical of the rural environment, without including rural events as part of the transformation process to be undergone by the whole of the economy and of society.

6/ Comments based on studies on Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, which were prepared by the national institutions on the occasion of the Consulta de Expertos sobre Programas de Desarrollo Rural, Mexico City, 5 - 9 April 1978.

7/ CEPAL/FAO, Rural Social Development in Latin America, op.cit.

56. On several occasions it has been stated that rural development should not be considered independently from the general development process. Rural development is seen as the starting point of, and the instrument for, general development effectively including the large rural mass of the population. Consequently, the organizations responsible for rural development should be integrated to the national planning system.

57. Such "national rural development programmes" as have been started in some Latin American countries might represent a strategy aimed principally at solving problems typical of the rural sector, by means of multi-sectorial actions co-ordinated in such a way they may permit the incorporation of this sector to development.

58. The nature of these "programmes" whose perspectives are so vast, whose actions are so varied and whose investments are so diversified, has, in many cases, made it necessary for external financing organizations to take part in them, playing even an important role in the adoption of strategies and of certain operative modalities typical of them.

59. In the case of Bolivia, the Five-Year Plan constitutes the basic instrument for the preparation of rural development programmes tending to "solve the fundamental social problems of the less favoured strata of the population". It aims at the economic, social and cultural integration of the Bolivian rural inhabitant; at changing the economic structure of the country into a modern, active and integrated structure. Moreover, it aims at the country becoming gradually self-supporting as regards food products and at the distribution of income in areas previously selected so that the marginal standard of living of the rural inhabitant may be overcome.

60. In Cuba, rural development has been oriented to fulfil the multiple economic and social objectives and is considered as an integral part of the process of national development. Such an approach requires from measures to increase agricultural productivity to promotion of industrial development. The transformation begins with the re-distribution of the land, formerly in the hands of land-owners. Specialization by regions is the essential element of this strategy which identified programmed farm production as the basis on which to build the development process in Cuba.

61. In Colombia, the aim is to collect the experience gained in the different national programmes for the rural sector, co-ordinating the governmental efforts and services through directing institutional action in terms of the production development needs of the rural inhabitants. The main objectives of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRD) are: rationalizing rural economy marketing; lowering profitability margins and their costs; increasing production and productivity of small farmers, and increasing employment and lowering deficits in basic infrastructure and other social services.

62. In Mexico, there are attempts to correct disequilibriums in the availability of resources, income, services and opportunities for the rural sectors and the rest of the Mexicans, by means of an increase in the use of natural resources, more employment for rural workers, basic social services infrastructure and promotion of rural organization to secure a self-generating development and legalize land tenure definitively.

63. The Mexican programme uses the following mechanisms: a) productive investments oriented to increase production and value added; b) technological improvement; c) guaranteed prices and State purchasing authorities; d) regularization of land tenure, and e) rural organization. Attempts are made to prevent each organization from imposing its own model, and from serving only the needs of the tasks originally assigned. When the Co-ordinated Public Investments Plan was introduced in 1968, there was such a multiplication of isolated projects that it was necessary to integrate and co-ordinate them by means of regional, sequential and feasible plans. As a consequence, by mid-1972, it was necessary to formulate the Investments Programme for Rural Development (PIDER).

64. In Paraguay, rural development actions are directed in particular to colonization activities oriented towards populating the country and relieving the population pressure in some areas with minifundia characteristics.

65. In the case of Peru, a general government policy on rural development has not yet been defined. There is lack of a central unit within the Public Administration, to conduct or at least guide actions at national level, for implementing rural

development policies. However, since the formulation of the Agrarian Reform Law in 1969, some elements for conceptualization of rural development already existed. In October 1977 through the Tupac Amaru Plan, the objective of achieving integral development of the rural sector, by strengthening the structural changes introduced through the Agrarian Reform, is clearly highlighted. With this purpose, this Plan sponsors the articulation of a new agrarian structure at the micro-regional level, within the context of integral development projects that include agricultural and non-agricultural activities, as well as the utilization of common services.

66. Since the offset, agrarian reform was conceived as a means for achieving rural and national development. The country was regionalized into sectors and these into areas, where the Integral Projects of Rural Settlements, conceived as the "set of coherent actions conductive to the organized establishment of the beneficiaries of the agrarian reform, in an area defined with a criteria of socio-economic unit" were defined.

67. Due to the above, it cannot be said that a national rural development programme exists. However, reference can be made to some efforts in which actions have been implemented, that can be partially linked with the concepts of rural development; these are: the Cajamarca Development Programme (PRODESCA), the Puno Project on Multidistrict Enterprises, the Integral Development Plan of Santa - Lacramarca and Nepeña and the Project for Employment Generation in the Rural Sector (GEAR).

68. From a conceptual stand-point, a strategy for agricultural development within the framework of the National Plan, has been defined in Venezuela. The central objective of this strategy is to transform the traditional and inefficient agricultural sector into an economic activity, strengthened by an agrarian structure adapted to this end, mainly through production and services organizations.

69. With the above purpose, different programmes, sub-programmes and projects are under way. The most important is the Rural Infrastructure Programme (PIAR) which is conducted by the National Agrarian Institute (IAN). As the name indicates, this programme is basically devoted to providing the necessary infrastructure to the land assignments that have taken place by means of the Agrarian Reform Law. A significant portion of the resources assigned to this programme have been allotted to construction of roads, houses, villages, water for home consumption, irrigation and drainage, etc. in rural areas.

c) Organization, administration and execution

70. Neither existing government institutions or legislation in Latin America are adapted to the type of development intended with the national rural development programmes. Such programmes must be based on adequate planning and must avail themselves of suitable organization and administration so that their benefits may effectively reach the rural population.

71. To these effects, it is necessary that the conduction of the programme should become the uppermost coordinating element, capable of taking forcing decisions affecting different government entities and possessing, besides, such funds as necessary for its aims.

72. As a coordinating entity, the conduction of the programme should not be in charge of the execution of actions leading towards development, but of their direction and financing, leaving their implementation to the specialized and qualified government institutions.

73. The handling and allocation of funds for the different executive entities by the coordinating entity will be a determinant factor in the progress made by the programmes.

74. The programmes should not duplicate the functions performed by the State in the rural areas. On the contrary: they should strengthen them and make them harmonic so as to make them serve the deprived rural inhabitant in an effective way.

75. Bolivia decided that the Ministry of Planning and Coordination and the Ministry of Rural and Farming Affairs should be in charge of the head office for the preparation and planning of rural development.

Being intersectorial and interdisciplinary mechanisms, the execution and attainment of the programme was assigned to the Ministries directly involved in carrying out rural development projects.

76. The Ministry of Rural and Farming Affairs, aiming at coordinating, supervising and assessing rural development programmes and projects has created the Rural Development Office to be the unit responsible for attaining the objectives set by the Five Year Farming Plan.

77. Colombia, by means of the IRD, aims at the integration of State actions, or institutional integration, in order to break away from the traditional forms of institutional action based on isolated efforts made by each of the entities. In this sense, the Programme integrates the actions of thirteen entities, four of which belong to the farming sector, one to the labour sector, one to the public works sector, one to the energy sector, four to health and two to education. For operative purposes, the Programme groups them into three components: production, infrastructure, and social.

78. The integration of IRD actions in Colombia does not consist of the mere sum or combination of the particular actions traditionally carried out by different institutions. On the contrary: they are actions within the sphere of each entity, but specifically designed in terms of the objectives of the programmes so that they may become its instruments. Such actions refer to research, credit, market, natural resources, road building, rural electrification, health, education, agro-industrialization and other aspects.

79. Cuba initiated in 1976 a new political and administrative division according to the development of the economic regions. Furthermore, massive participation was made possible in social government matters, in solving problems affecting locations in planning and controlling resources and in setting up a new system for the conduction of the economy.

80. In Peru and Venezuela important rural development programmes are being carried out without possessing a special administrative structure for carrying out rural development policies. They are mainly carried out through the application of agrarian reform programmes and of other not necessarily coordinated policies such as technological transformation, irrigation, hydraulic works, expansion of agricultural surface, physical equipment, prices, credit, marketing, employment, territorial arrangement, education, technical assistance to rural inhabitants, etc.

81. In Paraguay, in order to prepare and maintain a national rural development policy and also to secure the effective coordination of the programmes, the National Council for Social Progress was organized. This is an inter-institutional structure formed by different ministries including the National Planning Technical Secretariat.

82. In Latin America, in their horizontal dimension, programmes generally embrace selected rural areas or communities according to the priorities set to relieve rural poverty. At this level, the objectives take form by means of the coordinated actions of the local government organizations. This horizontal dimension of the programmes implies decentralization of functions towards local governments.

d) Progress of the programmes and specific obstacles for the implementation of rural development

83. The experience gained indicates that in order to attain the objectives set in the rural development programmes structural changes are needed in the rural environment and also in other sectors of the economy. The programmes which are incorporated to a defective socioeconomic structure tend to go off their original concept, and be diverted towards other sectors of the population not given priority consideration by the programme. Due to the impossibility of modifying the land tenure system through agrarian reform, the priority concern has been to solve problems such as the lack of capital and technology of small farmers.

84. In Mexico, when attempts were made to introduce the changes required to reach a more advanced development phase, which would break the economic structure and modify the political scheme, the "programme" met with strong and persistent opposition on the part of the economic interests that would necessarily be affected. Therefore, although it was essential to assign greater importance to rural organization, this has not been achieved to the required extent.

85. As a rule, State investment in rural development programmes has been insufficient to attain the objectives aimed at. Among other reasons, this situation is due to the fact that governments prefer to invest in other sectors which are more profitable, and that even within the agricultural sector, they prefer investments which are more directly productive in the short term. Rural development makes it necessary to reallocate the country's financial resources and the transfer of substantial resources to the rural areas.

86. Rural development programmes must necessarily be applied in a gradual way because they break away from the operation patterns traditionally used by government entities and because they conflict with the vices acquired by the rural communities themselves throughout their existence vis-a-vis their own structures of power and their attitude towards the State services.

87. At the beginning, rural development programmes in Mexico were applied in a rapid way and turned out to be low in benefit and high in cost. In this initial stage, although the personnel engaged in them was well-intentioned, they did not have sufficient information on the community needs. Lack of experience in public organizations produced, among other effects, several mistakes in estimating costs of the projects and, consequently, the running out of funds when the works were under way.

88. In Colombia, appraisals made on the effectiveness of the organizations involved in the programme indicate contradictions of a conceptual order as regards strategies to induce development, as well as lack of ample knowledge on rural economy and its operation. Diagnosis is restricted to mere inventories of needs, in such a way that each entity chooses as main action strategy that activity over which it can best act.

89. When rural development programmes are structured, the easy cooperation and coordination of the institutions involved in them are taken for granted. However, in practice, perhaps due to the lack of full information on objectives, goals, strategy and philosophy of the programmes, combined with institutional "jealousy" in many cases, it has been impossible to achieve an effective institutional participation. Should this problem remain unsolved, the execution of rural development programmes will become increasingly difficult even if the responsible entity is given more political backing, adequate financing and full decision powers.

90. In spite of the interest that some governments have shown in achieving administrative decentralization of their rural development programmes, such efforts have not had significant results due to political, administrative, institutional and other reasons.

91. Both the achievements and the effects of the rural development programmes being carried out in Latin America are difficult to see due to their recent introduction, their restricted geographical range and their limited budget resources. Therefore, they have been unable to alter in any significant way the whole of the trends in production, employment and rural environment income.

92. Finally, it must be said that although there is an awareness of the marginal conditions in which a large part of the rural population lives, in most of the countries there is no strong political commitments directed to undertake true rural development programmes. Combined with the above is the lack of an effective rural organization, capable of applying pressure in favour of carrying out the required transformations. Failures in the basic education of the rural population and in agricultural training at different levels make it even more difficult to attain the objectives of rural development.

93. An appraisal of the progress of one of the programmes showed that lack of motivation on the part of the communities to take an active part in the solution of their problems was one of the most serious obstacles for the exploitation of the works and systems built by the Government. As a rule, the communities were not consulted on their needs but were offered the work, with no optional alternatives and without being consulted even for the physical location of any given project.

94. As regards obstacles for carrying out rural development programmes, the following were mentioned at the Mexico Consultation: absence of appropriate institutions and defects in existing legislation; opposition of the groups affected by the changes advocated by rural development; lack of access of the rural population to productive means and resources; unfavourable terms of trade for rural inhabitants; absence of suitable communication between technicians and rural residents; foreign trade policies of developed countries as regards agricultural products; institutional duplication; lack of rural participation in the planning and execution of rural development programmes; defective ancillary systems; limited financial resources, etc.

