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E C L A

Economic Commission for Latin America



**STRENGTHENING THE LATIN AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHIC CENTRE (CELADE)**

Note by the Secretariat



1. The decision adopted by the member countries of the Commission at the Tenth Extraordinary Session of the ECLA Committee of the Whole (Mexico City, 1975) and later ratified at the sixteenth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America (Port of Spain, 1975), marked a step of the utmost importance with regard to the permanence and institutional stability of CELADE, which from its inception until that time had operated under various institutional arrangements but had always been considered to be a project of limited duration.
2. By providing "that CELADE, an autonomous organization under the auspices of ECLA, be incorporated into the latter's system as a permanent institution with its own identity",<sup>\*/</sup> the countries demonstrated their desire to give permanent status to regional action in the field of population and they also adopted the first Regional Population Programme, an explicit mandate as regards technical assistance, training, research and support services, whose implementation was placed in the hands of CELADE.
3. After reaching this solution, which was satisfactory both from the formal and the operational point of view, the member countries, the Secretariat of the Commission and the Director of CELADE embarked on the first steps to fill the need to provide the Centre with sufficient budgetary resources to ensure its operation in accordance with the requirements identified by the countries themselves, both as regards the Latin American Regional Population Programme and the specific requests which they had presented to CELADE.
4. In keeping with this regional vocation, at each of the forums which have taken place between 1975 and the present time (sessions of the Commission, the Committee of the Whole, and the first Meeting on Population of the Committee of High-Level Government Experts) resolutions have been adopted calling upon the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the main contributor to CELADE within the United Nations system, to continue providing sufficient funds to ensure the fulfilment of the mandates and tasks entrusted to the Centre. More recently, at the Governing Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), many Latin American countries and countries from other regions have endorsed initiatives with the same goals.
5. At the same time, and in accordance with the permanent institutional status granted to CELADE, the countries recognized the need to provide for a stable nucleus of technical, support and basic services staff, to be included in the regular budget of ECLA.
6. In the budgetary experience of the past eight years, three following features are noteworthy:
  - a) The formation of a stable nucleus financed from the regular ECLA budget shows some progress, especially prior to 1980, although there is still a long way to go before there will be a sufficient number of staff members to ensure the accomplishment of the basic tasks. The efforts made recently by the Secretariat to secure an increase in the staff have not met with success. The contraction of the budget throughout the United Nations system makes it likely that, unless more energetic measures are adopted, this process will continue to be very slow and of limited scope;

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<sup>\*/</sup> Resolution 346 (AC.68).

/b) The

b) The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) is still the main and decisive contributor to regional activities in the field of population. Nevertheless, in spite of the governmental decisions adopted at various forums and meetings, not only have its contributions been reduced in real terms but also, and especially since 1980, its contributions have even gone down in nominal terms. Thus, the total contribution of US\$ 2 820 000 for 1980 has declined to US\$1 700 000 in 1984. The impact of this process on the size of the Centre is also telling: the number of experts financed by the Fund went from 27 in 1980 to 14 in 1984, while the number of technical and administrative support personnel fell from 89 to 26 during the same period. Tables 1 and 2 provide the corresponding information on a year-by-year basis;

c) The steps taken to obtain contributions from institutions outside the United Nations system and in particular from co-operation bodies in developed countries, have shown some encouraging results, even though of course such additional resources do not solve the central problem of financing a basic nucleus of staff, installations and services. Furthermore, the obtaining of this kind of resources is becoming increasingly subject to the existence of a stable main budget originating in the United Nations system which gives those donors guarantees with respect to the continuity of the basic activities and the effective use of the additional contributions for activities which are not part of the regular work. In other words, not only is the reduction in the financing originating within the system not being replaced by external contributions: it is even partly responsible for reducing the ability to negotiate with potential donors;

d) In recent years, moreover, the negotiation, information and evaluation machinery resources which were traditionally flexible has been becoming increasingly complicated, so that a considerable amount of the staff's time must be devoted to communication with those sources, thus making it necessary to adopt a more cautious position with regard to the differences between what is received and what is given. The available evidence shows that this situation, far from changing for the better, is bound to get worse in the years to come.

7. In addition to the situation described, there is also the fact that the set of priorities laid down by the majority of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for regional action, at least in the field of population, do not seem to evoke a similar response in the organs outside that geographical area responsible for fixing the action guidelines of the various technical and financial bodies of the United Nations system, which do not necessarily coincide with the priorities referred to and are even sometimes quite incompatible with them. This gives rise to serious problems when the support of these bodies is sought in connection with the implementation of regional activities in the field of population. In this respect, attention should be drawn to the importance of continuity and consistency in the attitudes taken to one and the same item by the delegations of the countries in the various forums in which they participate.

/Table 1

Table 1

CELADE: NUMBER OF POSTS BY SOURCE OF FINANCING AND DUTY STATION, 1984 a/

Sources of financing and category	Total	Santiago	San José	Duty station	
				Port of Spain	ECLA Santiago <u>b/</u>
<u>Experts</u>					
Regular budget	7	6	1	-	-
UNFPA	14	11	2	1	-
Netherlands (associate experts)	2	-	2	-	-
CELADE/Canada Programme	1	1	-	-	-
<u>Total</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	-
<u>Administrative staff</u>					
Regular budget	5	4	1	-	-
UNFPA	26	17	7	-	2
CELADE/Canada Programme	1	-	1	-	-
Other sources	10	8	2	-	-
<u>Total</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>11</u>	-	<u>2</u>

a/ As of 31 May 1984.b/ Staff paid with CELADE resources and employed in the ECLA Documents Reproduction and Distribution Section.

Table 2

TOTAL UNEPA CONTRIBUTION AND CELADE STAFF FINANCED WITH THESE FUNDS, 1976-1984 <sup>a/</sup>  
 (Dollars)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Budget	2 416 540	2 373 210	2 337 350	2 672 000	2 820 850	2 716 200	2 100 000	1 800 000	1 700 000
<u>Staff</u>									
Experts	42	27	27	28	27	20	16	14	14
Technical and administrative support staff	134	98	95	83	89	55	35	32	26
Research assistants and programmers	24	18	15	16	17	10	9	9	6
Secretaries, administrative support staff, etc.	110	80	80	67	72	45	26	23	20
<u>Total</u>	<u>176</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>40</u>

<sup>a/</sup> As of 31 March 1984.

8. In examining the repercussions of the situation described in the preceding paragraphs, it must be borne in mind that CELADE is the only United Nations regional body devoted to technical assistance, training and selective research in support of advisory services in the field of population in Latin America. Moreover, the member States of the Commission have on a number of occasions reaffirmed the regional vocation of the Centre and have given it specific mandates in fields considered to be of high priority. However, for some time UNFPA has not only been reducing its annual contributions to the operating costs of CELADE but has also been advocating that the Centre should be financially independent from the Fund and maintaining a policy of uncertainty concerning future contributions. For all these reasons, the Secretariat considers it necessary to draw the countries' attention to the need to establish a strategy for the diversification of resources which will allow CELADE to fulfil the mandates entrusted to it for the next few years.

9. In view of the foregoing, the following types of action are suggested:

a) To consolidate and stabilize the sources of financing within the United Nations system and to take the following steps, inter alia, to this end:

- i) To obtain four new professional posts and five support services posts within the next three years, to be financed out of the regular budget of ECLA. To achieve this objective it will be indispensable for the member States of the Commission, working through their competent bodies, to make their views known in an effective and timely manner in the decision-making bodies which govern the budgetary component of the United Nations;
- ii) To ensure, through resolutions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, that UNFPA makes an annual budgetary contribution which is reflected in a stable amount for professional posts, support services, administrative expenses and fellowships, instead of basing its contribution on yearly projects.
- iii) To accelerate the fulfilment of General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 37/214 concerning the decentralization of population activities from the central bodies of the Secretariat towards the regional commissions. Thus far, with respect to Latin America, this decision -which is aimed at achieving greater effectiveness in the operation of the system and in the utilization of its resources- has not yet been implemented.

b) To adopt new ways and means of co-operation, with the direct presence of those Latin American and Caribbean countries which deem this advisable, including the following suggested measures:

- i) The provision of financial support for the operation of the Centre by those countries wishing and able to do so through contributions to be administered by ECLA. In so far as possible, these funds will be applied to expenses originating in the donor countries, such as travel costs incurred in carrying out technical assistance missions, fellowships for national courses, etc. A portion of these contributions could be made in kind or

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in the form of services. In order to facilitate the adoption of timely and flexible mechanisms with respect to the availability and use of the contributions, it is suggested that the countries entrust the Executive Secretary with making the relevant arrangements;

- ii) The strengthening of CELADE's capacity for co-operation with the countries through the incorporation of national technical experts and specialists for periods ranging from three months to one year. Sufficient professional skills in the field of population are available in many countries which could be temporarily utilized by CELADE. This would promote the advanced training and the acquisition of experience by young professionals as well as broadening the Centre's opportunities for co-operation in such fields as teaching, the execution of specific projects, data processing, and comparative studies of demographic variables and their relationship to the development processes taking place in the region. To this end, and under agreements which would be formalized in accordance with the procedures of the United Nations, the institutions of the national specialists' and technical experts' countries of origin would commit themselves to continue to pay their salaries and their social benefits under the respective social security systems. CELADE, for its part, will seek to supplement the remuneration received by these technical experts and specialists by assimilating them into the category of experts on mission.

