

ECLAC 40 YEARS (1948-1988)

José Cayuela



**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
UNITED NATIONS
Santiago, Chile, 1988**

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Corrigendum

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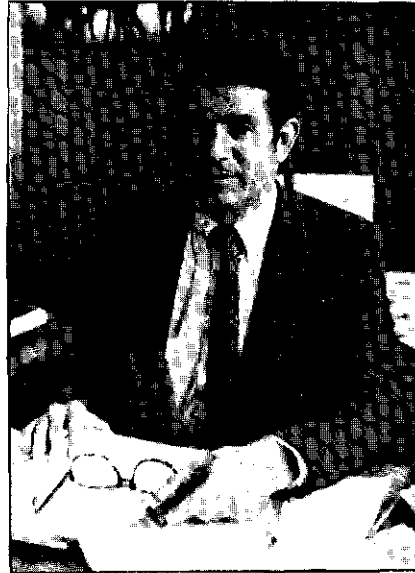
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NOTE

■ In 1988, ECLAC celebrated its fortieth anniversary, and to mark the occasion it has published this review of the first 40 years of the Commission as seen by an outside observer interested in its activities, vicissitudes and achievements, but not involved in them. This contribution has been prepared by José Cayuela, consultant to the Information Services of ECLAC, and is the exclusive responsibility of the author, whose opinions are not necessarily those of the Organization.



"...None of us would claim that the ECLAC Secretariat holds a monopoly of wisdom in the region, and much less a monopoly on the secret of promoting development. We have, however, the calling, the tradition, the resources, and the capacity for bringing together the best thinkers from within and without the region to propose directions, formulate proposals, and offer guidelines. We can play a catalytic role in encouraging debate; we can carefully monitor developments in the academic world within and without the region; we can learn lessons from our experiences in the different countries of the region; and we can distil the stimuli which we receive from various sources in the statements formulated to governments. As a result of these activities, our proposals are original and relevant to the region..."

(Gert Rosenthal, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; speech delivered at the ceremony held at the headquarters of the ECLAC Secretariat to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Commission.)

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CHANGES

IN THE

REGION

To recount the history of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is almost to describe the history of Latin America from 1948. The Commission, set up almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, has, directly or indirectly, received the impact of all the great events which have occurred in the economic, political and social scene of the region during the last 40 years.

Like the United Nations, of which it is a part, ECLAC has benefited from the fact that it is a collective entity, and is not dependent on any of the member Governments which make it up. This has given it stability and continuity but has not meant isolation or irrelevance. The much discussed "ECLAC philosophy" and the nature of its work have been moulded by the changing and ever-more-complex Latin American reality, both in the intra-regional sphere and in the relationship of Latin American and Caribbean countries with the outside world.

Even the map of the part of the world covered by ECLAC has been profoundly modified: in 1948 there were 17 independent republics in North, Central and South America and only three in the Caribbean: Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The remaining nations were dependent territories of France, Great Britain or the Netherlands. There were 25 founding States. Today, the Commission has 40 member States and five associate members. Of the 40 members, 20 are from the Caribbean or Central America. The five associated States are also in the Caribbean region.

A broad outline of the historical panorama of the region from the immediate postwar period reveals the pendular character of its political development. In February 1948, only six Latin American governments had been democratically elected: those of Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela. During the following decade, in historical events closely following upon one another, the populist régimes of Argentina (Juan Domingo Perón) and Brazil (Getulio Vargas) were overthrown. In 1952 one of the most notable revolutionary experiences of the continent began in Bolivia, while over a period of scarcely three years (1956 to 1958) Peru, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and Venezuela changed military régimes to representative democracies, and in Cuba a revolution triumphed and installed the first socialist régime in the region. Ten years later, starting in 1968, three profound structural reform programmes were attempted in Peru (1968 to 1975), Bolivia (1970 to 1971), and Chile (1970 to 1973), while there were coups d'état in Bolivia (1971), Ecuador (1972), Uruguay (1973), Chile (1973), Peru (1975), and Argentina (1976).

Another military insurrection, in Ecuador (1976), preceded a new era of civilian governments in the region. In 1979 Jaime Roldós was elected in Ecuador itself; followed by Hernán Siles Suazo in Bolivia (1982) and Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina (1983). Brazil and Uruguay returned to a system of free elections almost at the same time (1985), and the same occurred in Central America, in El Salvador (1984) and Guatemala (1986). Meanwhile, the overthrow of the régime of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua (1979) closed a dictatorial era of more than 40 years. The Falklands (Malvinas) war (1982) profoundly moved the region. As we approach the end of the decade there is a general trend towards the restoration of democracy.

These briefly outlined political and social changes occurred in a part of the world which has been subjected to equally significant changes in the economic field. After sustained (although unequal in nature and intensity in the different countries) growth in the 1950s, a period of structural reform began. This was the period of the Alliance for Progress and of efforts towards integration: the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) (subsequently the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)), the Andean Pact, and the Central American Common Market (CACM). First in 1973-1974 and then in 1979-1980, the price of petroleum increased phenomenally and finally, after the abundance of foreign financial resources in the 1970s, the reverse occurred --financial restrictions and the inability of the apparently most solvent countries to service their foreign debts, especially after 1982.

In these 40 years, Latin America's population increased from 150 million in 1948 to almost 400 million at the end of 1985. When the first ECLAC Survey appeared in 1948, the exact population of Latin America was not known. The figure mentioned, 150 million, was an estimate, since many countries had not carried out censuses for years and others had never done so. The first Executive Secretary of ECLAC, the Mexican Gustavo Martínez Cabañas, complained in the Economic Survey of Latin America (1949) that "work was hampered by the scarcity of statistical data in some of the countries, by the difficulty of obtaining recent information and by the lack of comparability among available figures, because of differences in methods of compiling data and in the periods covered".

Martínez Cabañas could have added that the Latin American countries were very cut off from each other. There were no reliable and prompt communications systems and interregional trade was insignificant.

Nevertheless, series and indexes indicate that the region has made considerable progress in economic and social development during these 40 years: gross domestic product has steadily increased, except for sporadic fluctuations in some countries. The rates of illiteracy, infant mortality and life expectancy, the increase in the volume of exports, and above all the change in their composition show that most Latin American countries are making steady progress.

Nevertheless, some of the problems which ECLAC identified at its foundation still remain; especially the deterioration in the terms of trade, that is, the relationship between the prices received for primary products (and even some manufactures) which the region exports and the prices paid for the manufactures imported from more developed centres. The implicit transfer of resources generated by this phenomenon has been compounded since 1982 by the explicit transfer of financial resources caused by the fall in net capital inflow (loans and investments) and the increase in net payments of profits and interest. The latter alone have meant a net outflow of more than US\$130 billion between 1982 and 1986. These imbalances cause situations which aggravate inequalities in income distribution and perpetuate the extreme poverty of large sectors of the Latin American population.

This situation confirms the original analyses made by ECLAC and their relevance in the much more complex world of 1988. Forty years ago Raúl Prebisch denounced the asymmetric functioning of the relationship between the industrialized, developed countries and the countries on the periphery with their backward productive structures. To correct that asymmetry he postulated the need to promote industrial development in the periphery, based on import substitution, preferential treatment by industrial countries for imports of manufactures from developing economies and financing to compensate for

shortfalls in the foreign exchange earnings of these countries.

Over time, the original centre-periphery scheme has been greatly modified. Today it is obvious that there is not one but several industrial and developed centres in the world and that it is not now possible to speak of "the" periphery, but rather of countries or groups of countries more or less backward in development and which remain in a profoundly unequal and unjust relationship with the centres. Nevertheless, the steady deterioration of the terms of trade and the magnitude and terms of repayment of the external debt, show that there is still a long road ahead. The scenarios have changed profoundly, significant progress has been made, but basically the same problems remain for the region as a whole.

Looking back on this forty-year period, it can be stated that the most important contribution of ECLAC has been the development of a collective awareness of economic and social development in Latin America, unrestricted, however, by narrow regionalism. Indeed, the original concept specifically established the need for Latin America to approach modernization by decisively opening up to the rest of the world.

A former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Enrique Iglesias, recalled that the Commission "grew out of the need felt by a group of men to begin to identify common problems in Latin America for the purpose of co-operating with the rest of the world and among themselves ... (in order to) explore the path of unity within the Latin American diversity ..."

Basically, this was an effort to give regional expression and dimension to ideas and experiences which had been developed over years, in universities, government offices and in the first industrial establishments of the then relatively more advanced economies of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico. Putting

the accent on industrialization, making the State apparatus a lever for development, protecting infant industries —these ideas were all being discussed or already being implemented. What ECLAC —and particularly Raúl Prebisch— did, was to rationalize and systematize ideas which already existed in some countries, at least incipiently, since the 1930s, when the great crisis in the industrial and financial centres also rocked Latin America. Prebisch himself, the creator of the Argentine Central Bank, recognized that the core of his ideas came out of his experience with respect to his country's exports of wheat to what was then "the capital" of the world economic centre: Great Britain. This showed that the original ECLAC ideas were based on reality; soon they were to be permanently exposed to contact with this changing reality.

"... when ECLAC was created in 1948 and I was offered the position of Executive Secretary, I did not want to accept because when I was very young and an Argentine civil servant, I had had the opportunity to be associated with the League of Nations and I did not like the idea of having to work under the sway of Anglosaxon orthodoxy nor of wasting my time in an international organization. I therefore turned down—I thought definitively—the great honour offered to me. The Secretary-General then had the good sense to choose a man who, in spite of his youth, had distinguished himself in the Mexican delegation by his intelligence, his energy, and his sense of balance: Gustavo Martínez Cabañas. I owe him my profound gratitude, because even though he knew that I had refused to participate in this task, with a tenacity perhaps typically Aztec, he went to Buenos Aires to convince me that I should go to Santiago for a few months to write the introduction to the first Economic Survey of Latin America. There I warmed to the task and when Martínez Cabañas was invited to play a leading role in the technical assistance organization which was starting up at United Nations Headquarters and I was once again offered the post of Executive Secretary of ECLAC, I accepted, recognizing my lack of imagination at having rejected it before. I do not hesitate to say that the experience of ECLAC, although it has brought me many troubles and difficulties, has been the task that has given me the greatest number of satisfactions in my life ..."

(Raúl Prebisch, former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, in his speech on the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Commission in Quito, Ecuador, March 1973.)

two

FROM THE

BEGINNING TO

CONSOLIDATION

ECLAC was established at the sixth session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which began on 2 February 1948 and ended on 25 February. The initiative came from the Government of Chile, in a proposal made by its delegate Hernán Santa Cruz at the fifth session of the Economic and Social Council which began in Geneva, Switzerland, on 19 July 1947. The proposal of Santa Cruz called for the establishment of a commission to study the problems of economic and social development in Latin America. The Commission would "study the measures necessary for facilitating joint action for promoting economic process in the countries of Latin America and raising the level of economic activity, as well as maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of these countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world ... and participating in the application of these measures".

The Chilean delegate also argued that most of the countries of the region faced serious economic imbalances largely as a result of situations created by the Second World War and that these imbalances were the main cause of the low standards of living of their populations and frustrated the desire of this rich and promising region to contribute to the recovery of the countries directly affected by the war and to the general welfare of other parts of the world.

The initiative was not well received by all nations. The idea of creating a special organization for promoting the development of Latin American countries was not among the priorities of the Council members. It was opposed, for different reasons, by the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and

Czechoslovakia. Altogether, eight of the 18 member countries of the Economic and Social Council were against the Chilean proposal. The most serious opposition came from the two great Powers, victors in the Second World War. The United States was against it because it preferred to keep the discussion of Latin American problems within the Pan American Union, and specifically in the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES). The Soviet Union was opposed because it thought that the commission would duplicate the work of other agencies of the United Nations. It was also argued that a parallel could not be established between the situation faced by Latin American countries and that of nations devastated by the war, such as those in Europe and some in Asia and the Far East. Lastly, it was pointed out that the reconstruction commissions created by the United Nations for these regions would be only transitory. Canada and New Zealand rejected the search for "regional approaches" to solving world problems. Other members of the Council were concerned with protecting their influence in a region in which they still had colonial enclaves.

Chile, with the firm support of the Latin American countries, rejected these arguments, basing its position on various points which would subsequently become the bases of action by ECLAC:

- 1) The economic backwardness and the extremely low standards of living in the region were as serious as the problems faced by the countries devastated by the war.
- 2) Latin America had the same rights as other regions to the technical and financial resources of the United Nations.
- 3) The other regional commissions would end up dealing with economic development and would become permanent organizations.

"The great Powers never violate their economic principles; if these principles don't suit them, they simply change them ...!"

(Raúl Prebisch, former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, in a speech during the ceremony commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the first session of ECLAC, 1978.)

4) The war had seriously affected the Latin American economies, especially as regards the terms of trade of their principal export products.

5) Latin America had made a very significant contribution to the victory of the allies by providing them with strategic materials and food at frozen prices.

6) There would be no overlapping with inter-American organizations nor would ECLAC have a regionalist orientation, because the regional problems would be studied in relation to the world economy.

This line of thought was supported by two European political figures: Pierre Mendes-France, who later became Prime Minister of France, and David Owen of Britain, then Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations. With their influence and the backing of the Latin American bloc, approval was obtained for a resolution proposed by the Cuban delegate to establish an *ad hoc* Committee charged with considering the factors bearing upon the establishment of an economic commission for Latin America within the framework of the United Nations. The *ad hoc* Committee was made up of Chile, China, Cuba, France, Lebanon, Peru, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela. The idea was supported by countries with weak economies such as Egypt and

Lebanon, which were advocating the creation of an economic commission for the Middle East.

The *ad hoc* Committee was to start consultations with other interested organizations, both within the United Nations and outside it. The most important consultation was with the ninth Pan-American Conference and, in fact, the decisive impulse for the creation of ECLAC came from the Director-General of the Pan-American Union, the Colombian Alberto Lleras Camargo, when he sent the chairman of the *ad hoc* Committee, the Venezuelan Carlos Eduardo Stolk, a copy of the resolution of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) stating that the Council "resolves to support the immediate establishment of the proposed economic commission for Latin America".

In the negotiations within the *ad hoc* Committee, Santa Cruz had given assurances to the European countries with interests in Latin America as colonial powers, that their active presence in the Commission as member countries would be welcome. The Soviet Union also asked to be a member State, but its request was rejected by the majority of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (12 against, 3 in favour, and 2 abstentions). Finally, at its 153rd meeting held on 25 February 1948, the United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted by 13 votes to 0, with 4 abstentions, resolution 106(VI), which delineated ECLAC's field of action, duties and responsibilities.

The resolution defined the purposes of the Commission within the spirit which guided the Latin American delegates and which was to be the basis of ECLAC's future work: to promote economic development by maintaining and strengthening the relationships among the countries of the region and between the latter and the rest of the world; to carry out research and study on economic and social questions of interest to the region; to

"During its first 15 years ECLAC was, and today continues to be, a unifying factor for Latin American countries. By concerning itself with the problems of the region and its place in world relations, with the participation of the United States and also of three European nations, the esprit de corps, and the defence of its own identity notably strengthened awareness of its common interests within the international scene ..."

(Hernán Santa Cruz, former Regional Director of FAO for Latin America and one of the founders of ECLAC, in "La CEPAL, encarnación de una esperanza de América Latina", Cuadernos de la CEPAL series, No. 50, Santiago, Chile, 1985.)

compile, evaluate and disseminate economic, technical, and statistical information and to stimulate co-operation with other organizations specializing in development questions both in Latin America and within the United Nations Organization.

Thus came to fruition an historic effort by the Latin American countries to create a specialized and autonomous organization which, though regional, would be open to the rest of the world and whose purpose would be to study the problems of the region's economic and social development and to seek definitive solutions to them.

Article 16 of the resolution left it to the judgment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council whether to maintain ECLAC or to dissolve it, depending on the results of a special review of its work to be carried out in 1951 at the latest. The United States, determined to maintain everything related to Latin American development within the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) of the Organization of American States, insisted that ECLAC duplicated the functions of that Organization and tried to convert it instead into a

regional organization of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the unanimous decision of the Governments of Latin America and the determined support of David Owen overcame all resistance. ECLAC itself, at its fourth session held in Mexico City in May-June 1951, proposed that the work of its Secretariat should become permanent. This was ratified by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in resolution 414 of September 1951.

The historical sequence which led to the establishment of ECLAC illustrates the predominant sentiment in the region immediately after the postwar period. Four of the most zealous countries in promoting the initiative —Chile, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela— were exceptional in that they had democratically elected governments in a continent dominated by military régimes. In the year of ECLAC's foundation, 1948, the Chilean government supported the United States at the height of what was called "the cold war". Yet, in one of those paradoxes typical of Latin American history, it was precisely the Government of Chile which took the initiative in creating an organization strongly opposed in Washington yet promoted by all the Latin American Governments as a means of creating a forum independent of the world's big economic centres.

The ideal they pursued was the creation of an autonomous line of economic thought suitable to their common status of exporters of cheap raw materials and importers of ever-more-expensive manufactures. They also felt instinctively that together they could better face the rest of the world and hoped, by industrialization, to move out of the stagnation to which they had been led by the depreciation of their exports of agricultural and primary products.

The person appointed to direct these modernizing and autonomist ambitions in ECLAC was the Argentine economist, Raúl Prebisch. As a university professor he

was, according to his own account, a follower of the neo-classical doctrines. However, as a consultant to Latin American governments in his specialty as a banker, he came into direct contact with the problems of the region and in ECLAC he found a forum broader than Latin America where he could mould the ideas formed from his own experience and mix them with other influences from the developed world.

In his address to the meeting held, during the fifteenth session of the Commission in Quito in March 1973, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of ECLAC's foundation, he summed up the way in which its way of thinking had been formed: "ECLAC" --he said-- "was not born as a systematic body of doctrine; the doctrines were developed in response to a changing and ever-more-complex reality ..." the intention being "to get away from the facile seduction of the theories conceived in the large centres...".

Although Prebisch was not the first Executive Secretary of ECLAC, his personality and his theories marked the institution from the beginning. In one of the first documents, the "Economic Survey of Latin America" of 1949, known since then as a kind of ECLAC manifesto, he put forward ideas which were original at the time, in language which subsequently became an indispensable part of the economic and social academic literature of the region. He spoke of the large centres where technical progress was generated and "the vast and heterogeneous peripheral areas of the new system" in which Latin America was situated. He denied the virtues of what the industrial countries considered "the ideal system of division of labour" and claimed the right of the region, especially after the suffering caused by the great economic depression of the 1930s, to use its industrial potential, "to offset, by means of internal development, the manifest

failure of the external incentives which until then had driven the Latin American economy...".

His ideas inspired an entire generation of young economists who found in Prebisch a teacher and a catalyst capable of synthesizing their own ideas and experiences. With Prebisch, personalities such as the Brazilian Celso Furtado, the Chilean Jorge Ahumada, the Cuban Regino Botti, the Mexican Víctor Urquidi, and the Venezuelan José Antonio Mayobre formed a staff which made ECLAC an intergovernmental academic forum, by virtue of its status as a United Nations organization. In ECLAC ideas were formulated which most of the Latin American governments used for defining their development strategies.

Possibly the high point for ECLAC in that pioneering phase occurred at a conference which became famous: the Fourth Special Meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) of the Organization of American States, held at Quitandinha, in Petropolis, Brazil, in November 1954. The central document, entitled "International Co-operation in Latin American Development Policy", was prepared by the Executive Secretariat of the Commission and outlined six objectives of ECLAC policy: development planning; accelerated industrialization; tax and agrarian reform; technical co-operation; trade revitalization for the promotion of regional integration, and new approaches to foreign investment. The report concluded by recommending the creation of an Inter-American development fund. From that time on, each one of these proposals was thought of as an *idée-force*: that is to say, as ideas destined to become instruments of action and tools of development.

"ECLAC, UNCTAD, and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning were born of the great Latin American struggle to escape from mental bondage."

(Ex-President of Costa Rica José Figueres, in a speech at the meeting commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of ECLAC, Quito, Ecuador, March 1973.)

That meeting, which was amply and decidedly backed by the government of the host country, Brazil, shaped the future action plan and consolidated ECLAC.

The most notable characteristic of ECLAC in its early years was its relationship with the governments of the region. The work was technically oriented: the experts, either in individual or team missions, gave courses, provided technical assistance, remained months in the field creating statistical systems or perfecting existing systems. At the headquarters in Santiago, Chile, Latin American leaders and academics found an island of economic and social reflection, invaluable in an area where instability and uncertainty made these tasks a luxury. Both the ideas and the economic approaches used by the ECLAC experts brought about a decisive change in the curricula of most of the schools of economics in the continent. Until the 1950s, there were few schools of economics and these mostly taught classical economics and the history of economic thought. Now, however, they began to include practical aspects and subjects such as national accounts, mathematics and statistics. There was a kind of recycling of academics or functionaries who remained for more or less long periods participating in the work of the Commission—using its infrastructure as the only documentation centre in the region, or attending specialization courses—and later returned to their countries to occupy high positions in government service or in the academic field.

The *idées-force* themselves were enriched and better defined by this contact with reality and practical applications, factors to which Raúl Prebisch had always given much importance. The original basic theories about the centre-periphery relationship and industrialization were expanded to include the need for development planning; for regional economic integration as a means of overcoming the smallness of local markets and creating better conditions for negotiating with the centres; for greater attention to the urgency of making structural reforms in the tax and landholding systems in order to achieve balanced development; and for a more equitable distribution of wealth and income. All this put ECLAC in the vanguard of Latin American economic thought and gave rise to an original philosophy or conception of development.

For the Commission, the 1950s was a period during which theories were elaborated, while at the same time the ideas on which its work was founded were analysed in greater depth and refined through practical applications and increasing contact with the governments of the region. It was also a period of expansion of the institution's interests, particularly in the fields of regional integration and co-operation. As Prebisch himself pointed out in a speech at the meeting commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of ECLAC, the idea that import substitution was the only mechanism for promoting industrialization was not an unshakable dogma, and substitution could not be a simple, straightforward affair either. In more advanced countries or countries with very large markets, substitution produced undeniable results. In others, however, it led to certain excesses, with their resulting imbalances, while in the smallest or most backward countries it proved unworkable. Foreseeing this, from the beginning steps were taken to encourage regional trade and to develop a Latin American common market,

starting with the small countries. The idea was that each one would have fewer but larger-scale industries.

At the fourth session of ECLAC held in Mexico in 1951, it was agreed firstly to create a regional office in Mexico itself, which would act as a co-ordinating and consulting organization in Central America and the Caribbean and, secondly, encouragement was given to the Central American ministers of economy, who showed interest in integrating the economies of the subregion. Against this background, the Central American Economic Co-operation Committee was formed. The ECLAC Secretariat prepared a series of reports for the Committee, which held its first meeting in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in August 1952. An important part of the work of integration was done in the Mexico Office, under the guidance of its Director the Mexican Víctor Urquidi. Basing their work on the Secretariat studies, the Central American countries discussed a draft multilateral free trade treaty and a draft industrial integration régime for Central America. This culminated, first, in June 1958, in the signing of the Multilateral Treaty and the Agreement regulating the integration of Central American industry, and subsequently, in December 1960, in the signing of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration, the principal legal instrument of the Central American Common Market.

The General Treaty included all the provisions of the Treaty and Agreement of 1958; one of its clauses provided for the establishment of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, which was created in 1961.

The Central American integration experience can be considered one of ECLAC's greatest successes. Thanks to the mechanisms that were put into place from 1958 onwards, intra-regional trade soared from US\$30 million in 1960 to more than US\$1 billion in 1980. Most important, however, from the economic point of view was

the fact that 90% of this trade was in manufactured goods: i.e., the type of development advocated by ECLAC.

Later, in 1975, the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee comprising 16 Caribbean member countries of ECLAC, was established. Its secretariat is located in the Commission's regional office in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The efforts to promote Central American integration preceded ECLAC's attempts to promote a Latin American common market, and were more successful. The Central American countries felt from the beginning that the greatest advantage to be derived from their relationship with ECLAC was the perfecting of co-operation and integration mechanisms to permit them to overcome the limitations imposed by their small geographic and demographic size. In South America, on the other hand, the industrialization experiences of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay put the accent on import substitution policies at the national level. These regional-level plans were a little slow in getting off the mark, and it was not until November 1955 that a trade committee was created by the governments of the region as a permanent subsidiary organ of ECLAC. The Committee asked the Organization to appoint a group of experts to design the structure of a regional market capable of stimulating the development of Latin American industries (especially basic industries) and reducing costs through economies of scale based on wider markets. The group of experts held two preparatory meetings: the first in Santiago, in February 1958, and the second in Mexico, in February 1959. A document containing 12 clauses was prepared which specified the modalities of a free trade area. Finally, on 18 February 1960, the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay signed the Montevideo Treaty, which established the Latin American Free Trade Association. It was later signed by

Colombia and Ecuador (1961), Venezuela (1965), and Bolivia (1966).

The objective of ECLAC, which provided consulting services to the Permanent Executive Committee and to the secretariat of LAFTA, was to develop a common market which could be immense by the end of this century: 400 million people. LAFTA was also intended as a mechanism for successfully negotiating with the major centres of the developed world.

Nevertheless, the experience has not been entirely satisfactory, among other reasons because governments have been little disposed to liberalize regional trade and effectively integrate their economies. In spite of the fact that the countries which signed the Montevideo Treaty accounted for 90% of regional trade, the tariff negotiations were slow and arduous and this impeded progress towards integration in Latin America. In 1980, in an effort to tailor the original objectives to suit more modest realities, a new treaty was signed establishing the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). Trade among the countries expanded from US\$570 million annually in 1960 to US\$8.1 billion in 1984, which represents a substantial figure and gives an idea of what could be achieved, given that regional trade with the rest of the world climbed from US\$7.3 billion annually to US\$90 billion in the same period.

"The work of ECLAC is precisely the creation of an awareness by Latin America of its situation halfway through the twentieth century ..."

(Antonio Ortiz Mena, ex-President of the Inter-American Development Bank, in his address to the meeting commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of ECLAC, held in Quito, Ecuador, in March 1973.)

The integration movement showed that the political will of the ECLAC member countries was decisive for the success of efforts to increase and rationalize regional trade. After the LAFTA experience, the Governments of Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia carried out negotiations which resulted in the signing of the Cartagena Agreement (1969). A step forward had been made and 20 years after the creation of the Commission, its member countries had acquired the ability to formulate and implement development plans which they would have had difficulty in doing without the pioneering work of ECLAC.

three

THE

MATURE

YEARS

The 1960s began with conflicting signs for the future of Latin America and hence of ECLAC. LAFTA seemed to be making a reality of the cherished goal of the economic integration of South America and Mexico. The Central American Common Market appeared to be healthy and to be developing vigorously. On the other hand, in South America, Brazil's vigorous growth was accompanied by serious imbalances and Argentina's development efforts were not yielding the expected results. Chile was trying to make adjustments, but these failed to control its unprecedented inflation and instead provoked serious social tensions among urban workers and -for the first time- among rural workers as well. In the North of the continent, the return to democracy coincided with the emergence of a social, economic, and political phenomenon without precedent in the region: the Cuban revolution.

This scenario, which was so much more complex and diversified than that of 1948, presented ECLAC with enormous challenges. The Commission, which never lost its pluralistic character as a United Nations organization, became indirectly involved in the major conflicts convulsing the region. The horizon of ECLAC's thinking seemed to grow even broader with the integration efforts. On the other hand, social problems had broken out with a virulence unforeseen by the founding thinkers. They had supposed that industrialization, regional integration, and modifications to the imbalances of the centre-periphery schema would automatically lead to modernization, an improvement in the standard of living, enhanced status and training of workers, and the alleviation of social conflicts. This is what had occurred in the great industrial countries of the European, North American, and Asian

centres. In Latin America, however, the growth achieved at an unequalled rate in what was still not yet referred to as the Third World was not accompanied by justice in income distribution, nor by more generalized well-being. The agrarian problem, which ECLAC had concluded was an obstacle to industrial development, soon became a problem in itself, precisely because it gave rise to extreme social injustice.

In another of the paradoxes which have characterized the Commission since its creation, the change in circumstances at the end of the 1950s was destined to provide the opportunity of putting into practice many of the original proposals: now, however, not only with the support of the United States, but at the urging of that country's government to formulate a global development programme for the region.

As Executive Secretary of the Commission, Raúl Prebisch accepted the invitation to formulate new plans, based to some extent on the original *idées-force*. He participated actively in the drawing up of the Punta del Este Charter (August 1961), which established the Alliance for Progress. For this programme collaboration was sought from the OAS and ECLAC as well as from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), another institution for which provision had been made in the original plan and which was founded in 1959. Among its proposals, which were rapidly accepted and implemented, was the creation of the Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development (ICAD), with the participation of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Inter-American Committee on the Alliance for Progress (CIAP) and the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAIAS).

During this period agrarian and tax reforms were carried out and planning committees were formed whose studies and reports were indispensable for obtaining

financial assistance from Alliance organizations. The Punta del Este Charter seemed to be an historic opportunity for diffusing and implementing the ECLAC philosophy and thus making it authentically Latin American. The social question and the urgency of introducing structural reforms in the economies of the region became priorities.

Raúl Prebisch was very active in encouraging the new interests. He had reached retirement age, but his retirement in the fullness of his capacity for original thought and for creating institutions was unthinkable. Having completed his task of transmitting ideas and experiences in the Alliance for Progress, he returned to his traditional field of activity: economic development and international co-operation for promoting it. He was convinced that in this new stage the social aspect must be emphasized in the elaboration of proposals and that the necessary structural reforms were inconceivable unless they were supported by technically sound instruments and programmes. Having obtained resources from IDB and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), he presented as the central theme of the eighth session of the ECLAC Committee of the Whole (Santiago, Chile, February 1962) the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES). Its two main functions, within the ECLAC organization, would be:

- 1) to provide, at the request of governments, training and technical assistance services in the countries and territories of the region, and

- 2) to carry out research on planning techniques.

All the courses which until then had been conducted by ECLAC were transferred to the Institute. The study of social problems was expanded and, later, under the influence of José Medina Echavarría, sociology was introduced as a special discipline and soon developed into

a major area of study. ILPES was converted into a solid tool for disseminating and implementing the original ideas of ECLAC, conducting courses and providing advisory services at headquarters and in the countries which requested the services of its teachers and researchers, who adopted a common and coherent approach in imparting their ideas. Whereas, originally, the discussion centered on relations between the centre and the periphery, industrialization through import substitution, and integration, now the focus was on integral development, development planning, and structural reform. As had happened before the environment —Latin American reality— continued to mould and update ECLAC thinking.

The ILPES team of economists and sociologists actively formulated development plans based on structural reforms. In the courses offered at ECLAC headquarters, or in missions to countries where they were requested to provide advisory services, they discussed or applied "the matrix", made up of a combination of the original ECLAC proposals and the structuralist notions conceived in the 1960s. In ILPES the proposals of a number of researchers and professors of economics were combined with the ideas of a group of distinguished sociologists.

In the midst of this great development of academic work and technical co-operation, the prestige of the Commission within the United Nations gave the experts of the region much more confidence in using the collective weight of their countries in negotiations with the countries of the centre.

In view of the imminent holding of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which had been called for 1964, two meetings were organized (May 1963 in Mar del Plata and January 1964 in Brasilia) at which an important document was drawn up: "Latin

America and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development", which was the starting point for the establishment of "the Group of 77".

At the Conference itself, held early in 1964 in Geneva, the developing countries voted as a block and laid down a platform which seemed to have been taken from the original ECLAC texts. They demanded that the industrial countries provide preferential tariffs for imports from the under-developed or developing South and that they agree to hold negotiations for stabilizing the terms of trade and giving them a positive trend. The designation of Raúl Prebisch as the first Secretary-General of UNCTAD was no more than just recognition of his pioneering work on these questions.

The Geneva Conference highlighted the need to establish a new international economic order, but this never progressed much beyond the stage of words, as Prebisch later admitted:

"I did not succeed —he wrote in 1983, in his important paper "Five Stages in My Thinking on Development—" and this constitutes clear proof that the North was not willing to act, nor was the South inclined to undertake the major structural transformations which were required to pave the way for economic development and social equity. While the problems remain essentially the same, they have been aggravated by the crisis currently affecting the centres ..."

The next question which Prebisch could not fail to ask himself was, why were the transformations which he himself and ECLAC had been advocating for two decades not occurring in the periphery (or rather in "the peripheries"), and specifically in Latin America?

To attempt an answer it is indispensable to look again at the events in the region from the mid-1960s. The Alliance for Progress lost its drive partly because the centre of United States geopolitical interest had shifted to

South-East Asia. There was relatively less urgency on the part of Latin American governments to carry out the structural reforms recommended by the Alliance and by ECLAC. On the other hand, in those countries, such as Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela, where some of these reforms were carried out, it was observed that these in themselves did not automatically lead to the much-desired development. This phenomenon which was increasingly evident in the case of agrarian reform, was also observed in countries such as Brazil, which had made great efforts to industrialize.

In Chile, the host country of the ECLAC Secretariat, the reformist euphoria began to give way to consideration of other approaches, since the structural changes and inadequate industrial development had only increased expectations of even more profound transformations. In a word, the economic efficiency which could be measured in terms of the significant growth indexes of the region since the postwar period had not been accompanied by the indispensable social efficiency.

This can be seen in the profound change in the agendas of the periodic meetings of the Commission. Subjects were introduced such as income distribution, the integration of youth and women into the development process, technology transfer, the deterioration of the environment, and the study of sectors not yet integrated into the economic and social system.

The concern of the Commission's experts was now not only for purely economic aspects of development, but also for the complexities of societies as different as those of Mexico, Argentina or Venezuela. Attention was called to the heterogeneous economic structures and the complexities of the urban sectors arising as part of the development process, and it was noted with concern that marginalization resulted from the incapacity of the new

industries to absorb rural labour. The documents of the Commission and, afterwards, the articles in *CEPAL Review* (directed by Raúl Prebisch since 1976) warned of the growing trend towards the concentration of economic power and consumption.

In the first number of the *Review*, corresponding to the first half of 1976, the then Executive Secretary, Enrique Iglesias, repeated the warnings he had given in a document issued the previous year:

"Of the increase of US\$100 in the average per capita income (in Latin America) during the 1960s, only two dollars reached the poorest twenty per cent of the population. This is clear enough proof that we cannot be proud of what has been happening in the distribution of the benefits of progress. Today there are rather more than 300 million Latin Americans. Of that number, about 100 million live in conditions of extreme poverty, and of these 100 million, some 65 million live in rural areas, cut off from markets and lacking even the minimum of culture which would enable them to glimpse the possibilities of a different way of life from that which they have followed for generations."

He then observed:

"This then, is the twin economic and social challenge facing the region. ECLAC, faithful to the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and to the humanistic tradition, has never forgotten that the economy must be placed at the service of mankind and of society, and not vice-versa."

It is important to point out that these warnings by the Secretariat were made when some experts euphorically thought that the abundant external financing then available would help to significantly alleviate the imbalances of the region. ECLAC, on the other hand, in

its biennial meetings held to analyse the integral development of the region, warned repeatedly that the structural problems, far from having been resolved, had grown worse. In its diagnoses, at least three crucial questions were distinguished: 1) regional growth was not vigorous enough to redress social imbalances; 2) the transformations made were not reasonably self-sustaining; and 3) foreign economic relationships continued to be asymmetrical, accentuating the vulnerability of the region and contributing, moreover, to the creation of very inequitable social structures.

In the midst of this situation of growing complexity, it became increasingly difficult to formulate concrete proposals. As a United Nations organization, ECLAC carries out a technical mission in the field of economic and social development. It does so, however, by responding to the needs and requirements of the governments. It is up to the governments to accept or reject its recommendations and, if they accept them, to then implement them according to existing political and social conditions. The requirements of each country are today much higher than 40, 30, or 20 years ago. The more developed countries have experts with highly sophisticated, professional training in a broad range of social sciences. Naturally, they are thoroughly acquainted with the specific problems of their countries. Moreover, contentious issues such as the volume of the external debt and the sacrifices inherent in the dilemma of whether or not to pay it require decisions based on contingent and political considerations.

This is what the Commission has been calling for, taking advantage of its autonomy as a United Nations organization. In an article published in the December 1986 number of *CEPAL Review*, former Executive

"From the viewpoint of economic development, the first half of the 1980s has been lost for most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Unfortunately, if the present economic and social conditions persist, many of them will also have to lose the second half, for the declines registered in the last five years in per capita income are so marked that it will be difficult for the region to recover by 1990 the level which it had already reached in 1980."

(Norberto González, former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, in an article published in CEPAL Review, No. 30, December 1986.)

Secretary Norberto González, urged the Latin American governments to seek fundamental solutions:

"The external debt lies at the very centre of the present crisis. It may be recalled firstly that in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole the interest payments on the debt currently absorb no less than 36% of total exports, and secondly that between 1982 and 1985 the region transferred US\$106 billion abroad: a sum equivalent to over a quarter of the total external debt.

The enormous economic cost represented by the debt service can seriously compromise the economic, social and political stability of the countries. Consequently, in dealing with the debt problem it must be borne in mind that it is not just of a financial or economic nature. For this reason, many countries of the region, and especially those comprising the Cartagena Consensus, have stressed the urgent need to restore growth in the Latin American economies and have put forward concrete emergency ideas for avoiding a further deterioration of the present situation. The truth is that if development is subordinated to debt servicing requirements, the

consolidation of democracy in the region will be jeopardized.

Tackling the debt problem calls for a dialogue among the four groups of agents involved: the governments of the debtor countries, the international private banks, the international financing agencies, and the governments of the creditor countries.

Moreover, in the dialogue and related international negotiations, the debt must be linked with other financial and trade aspects, since otherwise the asymmetrical nature of the adjustment causes its burden to fall entirely on the debtors, thus increasing its recessive impact."

This critical and constructive attitude of the Commission was recognized by the President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, who, in inaugurating the twenty-first session in Mexico City (17-25 April 1986), invited ECLAC to resume "its historical legacy and the great tradition of clear and independent thinking which it has developed in the course of its history, and provide an up-to-date conceptual framework that is appropriate to the problems of the region".

This call to action by the Mexican President signified a reaffirmation of the full relevance of ECLAC to the formulation of the broad lines of regional economic development policies. In response, the Commission consulted many governmental and academic authorities in Latin America, and brought them together in a series of seminars held between September and November 1986. The result was the Special Conference in Mexico City, held from 19 to 23 January, 1987. The document presented at that meeting was entitled "Latin American and Caribbean Development: Obstacles, Requirements and Options" and contains an analysis of

the principal questions facing the region and consequently ECLAC on the eve of its fortieth anniversary.

It begins by warning that the present crisis is "the deepest and most prolonged that the region has experienced in the last half century". It cautions that because of the diversity and heterogeneity of the economies of the different countries there are no universal remedies for overcoming the crisis and that solutions will not occur spontaneously, but require the participation of governments and societies and that the performance of the international economy as a whole must be taken into account. It makes it clear that the impulse will have to come from the internal energy of each country or, better still, from the region collectively organized. It suggests that this effort will have to rely on four "essential pivots": 1) the reduction or at least reasonable control of inflation without incurring exaggerated social costs or bringing on prolonged recession; 2) an increase in domestic savings and investment levels, in view of the growing difficulty of effecting savings on the external account and supporting this by, among other possible policies, the discouragement of both private and public non-essential consumption and the reduction of military spending; 3) modernizing and transforming productive structures to make them more efficient, increasing production, creating employment and reducing costs, and in general enabling them to compete both in the domestic and international arenas, and 4) achieving the above objectives having regard to the equitable distribution of income and "the growing demand to establish and consolidate democratic and participatory processes".

The document lists as "the main obstacle to expansionary adjustment and recovery" the terms of

servicing the external debt of Latin America and Caribbean, which consumes (with significant differences from one country to another) between 34% and 40% of the foreign exchange generated in the region and about 25% of domestic savings. It indicates as possible solutions to this problem a renewed —but difficult— access to external sources of finance and, above all, a great effort to increase the export of goods and services and to replace imports by domestic substitutes. It views as indispensable the promotion of regional unity, attaches great value to the political backing which some governments are giving to integration and highlights the agreements recently adopted between Argentina and Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, and Brazil and Uruguay.

This document presented at the Mexico Conference is the most eloquent expression of all the difficulties and challenges facing ECLAC. On the one hand, the Commission must respond to the requests of governments for advisory services and general orientation in circumstances that are more complex and diverse than at the time of its foundation, using the growing and sophisticated technical capacity of the specialists of each country. It must simultaneously bring its proposals up to date and preserve their historical identity, while maintaining a long-term view but without ignoring the ever-greater need for short-term analyses. Moreover, it must make its recommendations with due regard for the dimension of equity in economic development: a theme which is present in all current ECLAC documents.

To sum up, it seeks to propose an integral development style which is also original and equitable. To the old themes of imbalances in the centre-periphery

relationship, the continuing deterioration of the terms of trade, and the need to reap the benefits of industrialization have been added the dimension of social justice and the need to make economic adjustments within participatory and democratic systems. It is urgent to discuss fully such questions as the functions of the State and the integration of these functions with those of the private sector; the changing role of the State, both in the redistribution of wealth and in its role as the motor of integral development; and the relationships between technology transfer and agricultural and industrial development.

ECLAC must do all this within a Latin American vision, which gives it its unique advantage. Without lapsing into a narrow regionalist approach, its membership of the universal United Nations system gives the Commission a global and comparative perspective of Latin American development. It is increasingly true that generalizations are impossible, and that today it is much more ludicrous than it was 40 years ago to compare, for example, Brazil with Haiti. It is also still true, however, that no Latin American government alone can perform the tasks of analysis and compilation of information, which ECLAC carries out, precisely in order to compare the situations of the countries and to place them in a perspective that is both regional and global. This permits it to transmit experiences and to warn against errors or excesses already committed by others, making it a kind of machine for producing services: information, advisory assistance, training, research, and teaching. It does this adopting a Latin American approach and with the desire to promote unity and prepare the countries of the region for participating in world forums with common positions

reached after ongoing and non-exclusionary deliberations. This is the role that ECLAC has played and continues to play today.

"The United Nations in its definition of integral development and in the International Development Strategy, and ECLAC in its evaluations of this Strategy over the last decade, have placed particular emphasis on the need to view economic development in its broad social perspective ... in our opinion, in spite of the turbulence and confusion typical of the times in which we live, these objectives continue to be the same ones which this institution has maintained from its inception: that is, to achieve a style of development which creates more material goods and services and simultaneously permits the participation of each individual in the construction of the society in which it is his lot to live, and which guarantees both an equitable distribution of the fruits of progress and liberty, the most propitious environment for personal self-fulfilment ..."

(Enrique V. Iglesias, former Executive Secretary of ECLAC; address delivered at the twentieth session of the Commission, held in Lima, Peru, March-April, 1984.)

**THE
CHALLENGE
OF TODAY**

ECLAC is one of the five regional economic commissions established by the United Nations in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Western Asia (Middle East) and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is an organ of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and its work is determined by the member Governments. Forty years after its foundation it now has 40 member countries and five associate members. Thirty-three of its members are developing countries of the region and seven are industrialized North American and European countries. Its internal structure is comprised of the Secretariat of the Commission, the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE). Its headquarters is in Santiago, Chile.

The Commission has a Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, set up in 1966 to serve the English-speaking Caribbean countries. There is also a subregional office in Mexico City to serve Mexico and Central America, and offices in Bogotá, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Washington.

ECLAC is financed out of the regular budget of the United Nations, but also receives direct contributions from some member countries and indirect support for conducting meetings of experts or courses and for undertaking special missions.

Basically, the ECLAC work programme is organized around the decisions taken by its members at the sessions of the Commission that are held every two years in one of the member countries; at the meetings of the Committee of the Whole, and at those of its auxiliary bodies. The

Committee of the Whole meets annually at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The auxiliary bodies of ECLAC are the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN), created in 1971 to analyse the implementation in the region of the International Development Strategy; the Central American Economic Co-operation Committee, established in 1951 to contribute to the integration of the national economies of the five Central American countries which are members of ECLAC; the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee, founded in 1975 with purposes similar to those of the previously mentioned organization and concerned with member countries in the Caribbean; the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, created in 1977; and the Regional Council for Planning set up in 1974 as a governmental body to set the directions for the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).

With respect to intra-regional co-operation, ECLAC has contributed to the establishment of institutions such as the Latin American Association of Capital Goods Producers (ALABIC); the Latin American Association of Export Credit Insurance Agencies (ALASECE) and the Latin American Iron and Steel Institute (ILAFSA). Special emphasis has been placed on the compilation of information to support the efforts of governments in the economic and social fields. A determining role is played in this work by the Latin American Economic and Social Documentation Centre (CLADES), which has established a wide network of national, subregional and regional documentation centres employing a common methodology.

As an integral part of the United Nations organization, ECLAC works in close co-operation with

other specialized agencies of the United Nations system. In the field of industrial development it collaborates with UNIDO; in agriculture and food with FAO; in the environment with UNEP and in the field of human settlements with UNCHS. It also collaborates with the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, with the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT), the Universal Postal Union, the Pan American Health Organization, the Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREALC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Moreover, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 32/197, ECLAC is an executing agency for regional, subregional, intersectoral and interregional projects financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Through these projects, ECLAC promotes technical co-operation among the developing countries of the region and between them and countries outside the region.

Throughout its 40 years of existence, ECLAC has been widening its original field of action. From the beginning it has been the main centre for elaborating Latin American economic and social thought. Later, with the establishment of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), its work was enriched and diversified. Today its work is carried out in a wide range of disciplines which include: economic development; social development and the integration of women into development; international trade and studies of Latin American international relations; regional co-operation; natural resources and energy and water resources; transport and communications, including intergovernmental maritime

matters; industrial development and technology; agricultural development; statistics and quantitative analysis; economic projections; transnational enterprises; development and the environment; human settlements; information and documents and publications. The following is a summary of the work of each one of these divisions of ECLAC.

Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE)

The objectives of CELADE are to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the region in the field of population studies by assisting the Latin American and Caribbean countries in enhancing their self-sufficiency and promoting horizontal co-operation. It also provides the countries with regional services which they do not wish to develop in isolation. In order to achieve these objectives, within the framework of a multidisciplinary approach to questions of population and development, CELADE provides technical assistance, training, and information and technology transfer services, and undertakes case studies of specific interest to the countries of the region.

The technical co-operation work of CELADE is supported by applied research and is directed mainly to the study of the relationships between population and development in specific countries and to analysing, evaluating, and projecting demographic trends. Thus, for example, on the basis of these studies, CELADE helps the countries to measure infant mortality in health programmes using simple low-cost techniques; to determine fertility levels and trends in different geographic and socioeconomic groups; to estimate international migration in the countries of the region; to

evaluate the factors which influence the process of population redistribution, and to examine the possible impact of development policies, using microcomputerized interactive models.

CELADE also develops specialized computer programmes adapted to the needs of the region, including a microcomputer-based system for obtaining disaggregated data on population and housing, which are indispensable for sectoral planning. It provides regional services using its data base of population documents on Latin America and the Caribbean, and carries out an extensive programme of publications in order to help satisfy the needs of the region for scientific and technical literature in the field of population and development.

During its 30 years of existence, CELADE has trained a large number of Latin American and Caribbean professionals in population and related disciplines. The training methods and the course content have been adapted over the years to suit the circumstances and the needs of the countries. At present, the training activities of CELADE are concentrated in two broad areas—training professionals to work in the field of population and development, and the training of key groups in order to equip professionals to make correct use of population data and to take account of population aspects in their specific work areas.

The Centre makes projections and studies of demographic trends and of the interrelationships between population and development which are useful for formulating and evaluating demographic policies in the region. It also helps Latin American and Caribbean countries in the electronic processing of censuses, surveys, and demographic statistics, and has established a system for the compilation, storage and retrieval of population information. The CELADE work programme, approved by the member countries of the Commission, is carried

out from its headquarters in Santiago, with the support of an office in San José, Costa Rica, which concerns itself with the Central American and Caribbean countries. Since January 1985 there has been a joint ECLAC/CELADE Population Unit in the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, which serves to strengthen and extend the scope of CELADE's population activities in the English-speaking Caribbean. In August of the same year a demographer of long experience in CELADE was seconded to the ECLAC office in Buenos Aires to serve the needs of the countries of the River Plate Basin.

Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES)

The Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning was created to take over the tasks and expand the activities carried out by ECLAC until 1961 in the field of development planning, concentrating on the areas of training, provision of advisory services, and research. It was formally established by resolution 220/AL.52, of June 1962.

The intention of the member Governments was to establish a permanent and autonomous institution within the ECLAC system, closely linked to national planning agencies to provide support for the planning and co-ordination of public policies.

In March 1975, the member Governments decided to add to the work of ILPES the function of technical secretariat of the System of Co-operation and Co-ordination among Planning Bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean (SCCOPALC). This decision was fully backed by the ECLAC Committee of the Whole. Moreover, UNDP has supported the Institute since its

creation and is currently financing the project "The elaboration and dissemination of new techniques in public policy planning and programming", which is to be implemented over the period 1987 to 1990.

The Latin American and Caribbean Governments directly participate in the management of ILPES. They provide the guidelines for its work through the Regional Council for Planning, made up of ministers or heads of planning of the 37 member Governments. Its Presiding Officers are made up of the representatives of seven member countries who meet regularly to approve and evaluate the Institute's work programmes. At its fifth meeting, the Council approved the New Institutional Project of ILPES, which regulates the participation of the governments in the management and financing of the organization. It was determined that ILPES should concentrate its activities in the following fields: planning and economic policies; planning and public sector projects; social programmes and policies, and regional planning and policies. The priority themes are: harmonization of the short, medium and long-term decision-making processes; the effect on planning of the new international insertion of the region's economies; the impact of the crisis on the society and the internal space of the countries, and the role of the State in Latin America and the Caribbean in the near future from the point of view of the planning and co-ordination of public policies

Economic Development Division

The work of the Economic Development Division is centered on two general areas: following the economic evolution of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, and undertaking special studies on certain key economic policies and processes and on the development prospects

of the region. Based on these studies, the Division produces a series of important periodical publications: "Preliminary overview of the Latin American economy", which appears in December of each year and describes the basic trends in the evolution of the principal economic indicators of the region during that year; annual booklets which analyse in depth the economic trends in each Latin American and Caribbean country during the previous year; the "Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean", which contains the country studies that had previously been published as booklets, together with a more complete and systematic analysis of the economic evolution of the region as a whole, as well as one or more special studies of particular aspects of economic policy; and the "Economic panorama of Latin America": a report which appeared for the first time in October 1985 and which describes the basic outlines of the economic evolution of the main countries of the region during the first half of the year, on the basis of the most recent current statistics.

In addition to attaching great importance to the examination and interpretation of current trends in the region, the Division carries out in-depth studies of certain problems and policies which are vital to the process of economic development in Latin America. In recent years these studies have focussed, *inter alia*, on the analysis of the programmes of adjustment, stabilization, and foreign debt renegotiation and on the form which these should take in order to facilitate, rather than limit, the processes of expansion and structural transformation of the economies of the region.

Social Development Division

The objectives of this Division are the integration of the social and economic dimensions into the regional

development strategy. It seeks ways of overcoming the phenomena of social segmentation and marginalization, following the guidelines of the Regional Programme of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s aimed at implementing the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade. Its functions include the analysis of population census data for the years 1960, 1970 and 1980 related to changes in the levels of education, employment, urbanization, and social stratification. Particular attention has been given to the problems of integrating working class youth and women into development. The study of the cultural, political and social expressions of development styles in the region has been broadened to provide the governments and national social organizations with diagnoses, documentation, and instruments for implementing policies. This work has culminated in the publication of several books and documents either directly by ECLAC or in co-operation with prestigious publishing houses of various countries.

International Trade and Development Division

This Division operates over a wide field which includes the external economic relations of the region as a whole and of the individual ECLAC member countries.

The work programme for the 1988-1989 biennium includes four subprogrammes. The first subprogramme, entitled Latin America and the New International Economic Order, emphasizes international economic negotiations, with the basic purpose of suggesting possible lines of joint action to strengthen the region's negotiating power. It also covers activities aimed at identifying and formulating concrete proposals for consolidating the region's capacity for joint action in the trade of basic commodities, manufactures and services, and for

evaluating the negative impact of the growing protectionist pressures on the countries of the region. This subprogramme also encourages domestic policies for promoting exports of Latin American manufactures and, at the same time, examines the economy of certain basic commodities of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean.

The second subprogramme comprises a number of systematic studies of the economic relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with the main developed countries (both market-economy countries and centrally-planned economies), in order to investigate the nature of the specific problems of these relations and to propose solutions which can be negotiated either bilaterally or multilaterally.

The third subprogramme covers aspects related to the international monetary and financial system; to the effects of certain macroeconomic policies on Latin American and Caribbean economies, and to regional and interregional financial co-operation.

The fourth subprogramme is concerned with economic integration and regional co-operation, as well as with economic co-operation between Latin America and the Caribbean on the one hand and the developing countries and regions of Africa and Asia on the other. The economic crisis which affects the region, the high level of external indebtedness, and the protectionism of the developed centres make it necessary to reinforce the economic, integration and co-operation links among the countries of the region in order to correct the deterioration in its form of insertion in the world economy and to revitalize its economic and social development.

The fifth subprogramme is related to economic integration and co-operation among the Caribbean countries.

The Division regularly carries out research which is published in the form of books. In these and other activities it collaborates with international co-operation organizations such as ALADI and with other agencies of the United Nations system such as UNDP and the World Bank. Recently, co-operation agreements have been signed with the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), and the Cartagena Agreement.

Within the framework of the Division's agreement with the Programme of Joint Studies on the International Relations of Latin America (RIAL), research, seminars, and high-level meetings are conducted with the participation of organizations specializing in international relations, diplomats, and officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the region.

Natural Resources and Energy Division

In the area of natural resources, the work programme gives priority to the fostering of horizontal co-operation in respect of water and mineral resources, to the study and development of marine resources and to regional co-operation in the peaceful use of outer space. With regard to mineral resources, support has continued to be given to the Latin American Mining Organization (OLAMI), created in April 1984 with the sponsorship of the Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mines and the collaboration of the Colombian Mining Corporation (ECOMINAS) and the Association of Study, Planning and Research Offices and Enterprises (TECNIBERIA) of Spain. In the mining and metallurgical sector, the Division has also co-operated with the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) and with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI).

In the field of ocean resources, during this period two broad lines of work have been consolidated: the dissemination and analysis of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and assistance in the formulation of ocean-related policies at the request of interested countries.

Within the framework of the activities of the natural resources programme, studies were also carried out on horizontal co-operation in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The energy resources programme has been developed in close collaboration with the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE). Reports have been prepared on the status of and prospects for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the region.

ECLAC/FAO Joint Agriculture Division

Collaboration between ECLAC and FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) in the economic and social aspects of food, agriculture, and rural development goes back to the very beginning of the Commission. Between 1949 and 1957 the then Joint Agriculture Programme was broadened and consolidated, and the ECLAC/FAO Joint Agriculture Division was established and took responsibility for formulating and carrying out the activities on food and agriculture related to the programme.

In recent years this programme has covered four complementary lines of activity: the crisis, the adjustment process, and their effects on agriculture; food policy in the context of economic policy; agricultural policies, and rural development and support to agricultural planning.

These areas of activity have included the carrying out of numerous national case studies on the basis of which regional analyses were made which represent intensive conceptual and empirical efforts, supported by a large and important group of high-level national technicians of recognized capacity and experience. In addition to publishing the results of its analytical work and its proposals, the Joint Division has participated in the design, organization, and conduct of courses and seminars designed to provide training in agricultural planning and rural development programming.

Statistics and Quantitative Analysis Division

The ECLAC Statistics and Quantitative Analysis Division is the United Nations focal point in the region for promoting and implementing the agreements reached by the member countries in the Statistical Commission of the United Nations.

The Division's activities are thus aimed at establishing statistical systems which permit the comparative examination of development problems at the international level. To this end, it carries out methodological research, acts as a forum for the Directors of Statistics and for the experts in various specialized areas, and maintains the most comprehensive data bank of Latin American statistics in the region.

More recently, the Division has been transferring to the region the most up-to-date computer technology compatible with the limited resources of the countries. Without doubt, this will help to significantly improve the timeliness of information and to facilitate the access of public and private users to information.

Economic Projections Centre

The ECLAC Economic Projections Centre was set up early in 1965 in response to the growing importance that was being attached to prospective studies.

Among other functions, the Centre evaluates the medium- and long-term development process of the region. These studies are used to support the Secretariat's position in its presentations to the Committee of High-Level Government Experts (CEGAN).

In addition, prospective studies based on these appraisals are prepared for the examination and proposal of alternative scenarios for the economic and social transformation of the countries of the region.

In the area of research, analyses are undertaken of the methodologies and projection models developed in different organizations and academic centres. Finally, the Centre carries out co-ordination and technical diffusion activities among public and private organizations in the region that are working in this subject area.

Transport and Communications Division

This Division deals with all aspects of land, sea and air transport systems in the region and works closely with the specialized agencies of each country. One of the main objectives of its work is to facilitate international trade. It therefore supports the efforts of the United Nations Statistical Office to promote the introduction of a uniform system of maritime transport statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean. Recently it has given assistance, for example, to the merchant marines of Mexico and Ecuador in reviewing their existing statistics. Together with the Latin American Railways Association, the Division is also implementing a project for promoting the exchange of

experience between the member railway companies on information systems for improving their management techniques and practices. The project aims to complete the development of a microcomputer-based marshalling yard control system for small railway companies. International rail transport projects are also being developed to facilitate or improve merchandise trade between Latin American countries and the export of goods from land-locked countries, such as Paraguay and Bolivia, through the ports of neighbouring countries. Similar projects are also being carried out in co-operation with ALADI, the Board of the Cartagena Agreement and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), particularly in the area of customs agreements. Numerous seminars have been held and studies undertaken on road maintenance and on urban transport systems. In 1986, ECLAC entered the field of telecommunications for the first time, hosting a seminar on telecommunications and its impact on the economic and social development of the region.

Since 1987, the Division has been involved in programmes related to cargo and passenger transport within the framework of agreements between ECLAC and the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay. It has also taken part in activities in which it has received assistance from the Government of the Netherlands and the Government of the Soviet Union.

Joint ECLAC/UNIDO Industry and Technology Division

In collaboration with UNIDO, this Division is seeking to promote greater awareness on the part of the Latin American and Caribbean countries of the regional industrialization process. ECLAC's experience in this

field, which was central to its first concerns and projects, has permitted it to make comprehensive diagnostic studies of the present situation and to propose restructuring programmes designed to address the needs of the region and the outside world. At the end of 1984, in co-operation with UNIDO, the Regional Programme on Industrial Restructuring was begun. Its main purpose is to provide the governments with analytical information on trends in industrial and technological restructuring in developed countries, to evaluate its repercussions on the Latin American industrialization process, and to assist governmental organizations in the elaboration of adjustment strategies and policies. One of the Division's most important projects is related to capital goods, in both technological and manufacturing aspects, with particular emphasis on the possibilities which the process of regional integration opens up in this area. The Programme on Science and Technology seeks to strengthen the scientific and technological capacity of the developing countries. Recently a regional project, "Co-operation for Promoting Technological Development in Latin America", has been initiated with the co-operation of the Government of Italy, with emphasis being placed on small and medium-sized industry. The Division periodically publishes a Report on Industrialization and Technological Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Joint ECLAC/UNCHS Unit on Human Settlements

The activities of this Unit were begun in January 1985, as a result of an agreement reached between the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS). Since then, both institutions have

been developing a programme which includes the preparation of studies and publications; dissemination and teaching activities, including the organization of seminars and workshops; and participation in conferences and meetings, as well as tasks related to technical co-operation. Particular attention has been given to the analysis of community and local government participation in development and to questions such as urban planning and management, administrative decentralization, and the design and execution of local urban development projects. The Unit has studied the consequences of makeshift urban settlements, the supply of housing, infrastructure, and services. It attaches particular importance to the analysis of the metropolitanization process and the serious problems facing the big cities of the region.

Joint ECLAC/UNEP Development and Environment Unit

The function of this Unit is to co-ordinate and promote conceptual and operational efforts for achieving the incorporation of the environmental dimension into development management. Its work is carried out through studies and research and through activities to promote horizontal co-operation, advisory services and training. In this regard, it supports initiatives that are concerned with specific eco-systems: wet tropical regions; high-altitude ecosystems, cold zones, arid zones and metropolitan areas. In collaboration with ILPES and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), courses and seminars have been carried out on the incorporation of the environment into the planning process. Projects concerned with the relationship between tourism and the environment have also been undertaken in support of the

Action Plan for the Caribbean of the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. In the area of technical assistance, projects have been developed with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Paraguay.

Joint ECLAC/CTC Unit on Transnational Corporations

The mandate of this Unit is to enhance the negotiating capacity of Latin American countries *vis-à-vis* the transnational corporations. The objective is twofold: to maximize the contribution of these enterprises to development and to minimize their negative influence. The Unit has carried out both high-level macroeconomic tasks and more specific and concrete research. Some of the areas covered have been foreign trade, the regional financial crisis and the foreign investment crisis. Recently, and for the first time in the history of the Unit, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations in New York designated the ECLAC Unit the executing agency of the Interregional Project on Transnational Banks.

Latin American Economic and Social Documentation Centre (CLADES)

The priority task of this Centre in the field of information is to promote interrelationships among countries, institutions, and specialized sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also concerned with establishing linkages between all of these and international or regional organizations, as well as with each other.

Beyond its technical support functions, CLADES formulates policies to guide ECLAC members, starting

from the principle that, in the modern world, information is an indispensable tool for development. It therefore seeks to rationalize and make optimum use of the resources of the Latin American countries in the information field. A wide network of national, subregional and regional documentation centres using a common methodology has already been set up. Moreover, through an extensive programme of courses, seminars and workshops, significant progress has been made in the areas of research, training and technical assistance for the benefit of the ECLAC member countries.

ECLAC's written work

ECLAC's activities as an intergovernmental forum, as a centre for reflection and research on development problems, and as an organization for technical support and co-operation give rise to a wide range of documents and publications in Spanish, English, and occasionally in French. These serve to disseminate throughout the region and outside of it both what has come to be called "the ECLAC philosophy" and the technical work of the Commission. As an example, in the two-year period 1986-1987 ECLAC produced more than 500 documents of direct interest to member countries and specialized institutions, together with more than 60 substantive publications directed both to these users and to the general public, as well as innumerable information notes and bulletins and numerous bibliographical works of great value to specialists.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

The present Executive Secretary of ECLAC is the Guatemalan economist Gert Rosenthal, who assumed the post on 1 January 1988.

His predecessors in this office were:

—	Gustavo Martínez Cabañas	(Mexico)	1949-1950
—	Raúl Prebisch	(Argentina)	1950-1963
—	José Antonio Mayobre	(Venezuela)	1963-1966
—	Carlos Quintana	(Mexico)	1967-1972
—	Enrique V. Iglesias	(Uruguay)	1972-1985
—	Norberto González	(Argentina)	1985-1987

HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL

The ECLAC headquarters in Santiago currently has 557 staff members from the following countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Guatemala, Guyana, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Since it was set up in 1948, ECLAC has held twenty-two sessions. These were originally held annually, but as from 1951 they were held every two years. The locations have been as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - June 1948 | Santiago (Chile) |
| - May-June 1949 | Havana (Cuba) |
| - June 1950 | Montevideo (Uruguay) |
| - May-June 1951 | Mexico City (Mexico) |
| - April 1953 | Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) |
| - August-September 1955 | Bogotá (Colombia) |
| - May 1957 | La Paz (Bolivia) |
| - May 1959 | Panama City (Panama) |
| - May 1961 | Santiago (Chile) |
| - May 1963 | Mar del Plata (Argentina) |
| - May 1965 | Mexico City (Mexico) |
| - May 1967 | Caracas (Venezuela) |
| - April 1969 | Lima (Peru) |
| - April 1971 | Santiago (Chile) |
| - March 1973 | Quito (Ecuador) |
| - May 1975 | Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) |
| - April-May 1977 | Guatemala City (Guatemala) |
| - April 1979 | La Paz (Bolivia) |
| - May 1981 | Montevideo (Uruguay) |
| - March-April 1984 | Lima (Peru) |
| - April 1986 | Mexico City (Mexico) |
| - January 1987* | Mexico City (Mexico) |
| - April 1988 | Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) |

*Special Conference.

MEMBER STATES OF ECLAC

	<i>Date of accession</i>
**Antigua and Barbuda	11 November 1981
*Argentina	25 February 1948
**Bahamas	18 September 1973
**Barbados	9 December 1966
**Belize	25 September 1981
*Bolivia	25 February 1948
*Brazil	25 February 1948
*Canada	25 February 1948
*Chile	25 February 1948
*Colombia	25 February 1948
*Costa Rica	25 February 1948
*Cuba	25 February 1948
**Dominica	18 December 1978
*Dominican Republic	25 February 1948
*Ecuador	25 February 1948
*El Salvador	25 February 1948
*France	25 February 1948
**Grenada	17 September 1974
*Guatemala	25 February 1948
**Guyana	20 September 1966
*Haiti	25 February 1948
*Honduras	25 February 1948
**Jamaica	18 September 1962
*Mexico	25 February 1948
*Netherlands	25 February 1948
*Nicaragua	25 February 1948
*Panama	25 February 1948
*Paraguay	25 February 1948

*Peru	25 February 1948
**Portugal	27 July 1984
**Saint Kitts and Nevis	23 September 1983
**Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	16 September 1980
**Saint Lucia	18 September 1979
***Spain	3 August 1979
**Surinam	4 December 1975
**Trinidad and Tobago	18 September 1962
*United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	25 February 1948
*United States of America	25 February 1948
*Uruguay	25 February 1948
*Venezuela	25 February 1948

Associate members

Aruba
British Virgin Islands
Montserrat
Netherlands Antilles
United States Virgin Islands

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- * Founder member (member of the United Nations when resolution 106(VI) of ECOSOC was adopted).
- ** Date of admission to the United Nations, which is considered the date of accession to membership of the Commission.
- *** Date of adoption of resolution 1979/63 of the Economic and Social Council, under which this country was admitted as a full member of ECLAC.



"Raúl Prebisch" Conference Room,
United Nations Building, Santiago.



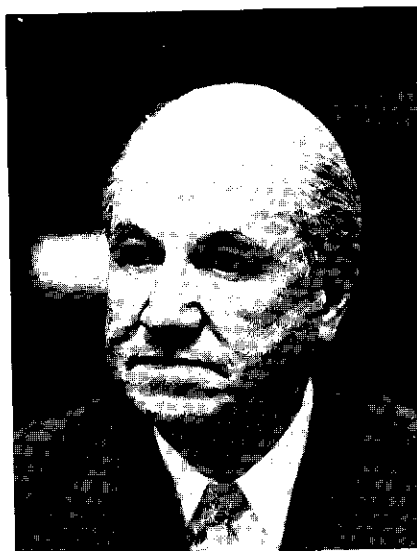
1948 - 1988

ECLAC

Former Executive Secretaries of ECLAC.



Gustavo Martínez Cabañas
(Mexico), 1949-1950



Raúl Prebisch
(Argentina), 1950-1963



José Antonio Mayobre
(Venezuela), 1963-1966



Carlos Quintana
(Mexico), 1967-1972



Enrique V. Iglesias
(Uruguay), 1972-1985



Norberto González
(Argentina), 1985-1987



First ECLAC headquarters building in Santiago, Chile, Pío X street.



Raúl Prebisch lays the foundation stone for the construction of the "United Nations Building", ECLAC headquarters, in Santiago (13 May 1961).



The "United Nations building" —ECLAC's headquarters in Santiago, Chile— was inaugurated in 1966. According to its architect, Emilio Duhart, "The building was planned as a house and as a monument: The house, as a symbol of the community of nations; the monument, as a visible expression of the spiritual and social aspirations of the Latin American peoples."



Pope John Paul II prays for an "economy of solidarity" in his message to the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean during his visit to ECLAC on 3 April 1987.



"ECLAC's success —both in interpreting developments in the countries of the region and in disseminating its own thinking— is based on its capacity to view development problems in the context of the geographical area of action of the Commission. Its genuinely Latin American and Caribbean vocation not only explains the originality of its thinking, but also confirms the wisdom of the decision to introduce into the United Nations a regional approach to the complex and multifaceted issues of economic and social development.

"The ECLAC's contribution to Latin American development is not limited, however, to its fruitful reflection and thought, but also includes its considerable contributions to the development of the countries of the region through its action-oriented activities. Thus, the Commission promotes important intra-regional co-operation initiatives, provides information, advisory and training services to countries, permanently monitors trends in the world economy and analyses the repercussions of such trends on the countries of the region, and finally, offers a meeting point for facilitating dialogue and co-operation at all levels."

(Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations in his message of greeting on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of ECLAC, February, 1988.)

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