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**REPORT OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE
OF THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Quito, 17-19 November 2015

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Quito from 17 to 19 November 2015.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

3. Representatives of the following associate members of the Commission were also present: Curaçao, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico and Sint Maarten.

4. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat was a representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

5. Also present at the Conference were representatives of the following United Nations entities: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Food Programme (WFP).

6. Also represented were the following specialized agencies of the United Nations: International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)-World Health Organization (WHO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

7. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Andean Community, Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE).

8. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, other civil society entities, and the business and academic world also attended.

¹ See the list of participants in annex 3.

B. AGENDA

9. The Chair submitted the provisional agenda² for consideration and it was adopted without amendment.
 1. Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Presentation and discussion of substantive issues: the data revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean.
 3. Discussion on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the working groups of the United Nations Statistical Commission (Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for post-2015 monitoring).
 4. Review and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2015-2025 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).
 5. Review and adoption of the operational guidelines and new strategic structure of the working groups for the biennium 2016-2017.
 6. Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2014-2015, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.
 - (a) Report of the working groups of the Conference.
 - (b) Information regarding subregional cooperation activities.
 - (c) Information regarding international cooperation activities.
 7. Consideration and adoption of resolutions.
 8. Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the biennium 2016-2017.

C. OPENING SESSION

10. At the opening session, statements were made by Yuri Chillán, Chief of Staff of the General Secretariat of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), as the representative of the organization whose headquarters were hosting the event; José Rosero, Executive Director of the National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC) of Ecuador, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC; Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; and Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador.

² LC/L.4050(CEA.8/1)/Rev.1.

11. The Chief of Staff of the General Secretariat of UNASUR welcomed the participants and said that the information society was vital for democracy, since it had enabled the bottom-up empowerment of citizens. He also underscored the magnitude of the digital divide, which minimized some people's potential to access to information and showed the need to combat poverty in the area of information and communications technologies. In that regard, the region's national statistical offices played a vital role, because the world was no longer divided into the haves and have-nots, but rather the knows and know-nots, meaning those with access to mass media, and those without it. Lastly, he warned that the mass generation of data was not synonymous with democratization, since information had to be available to all citizens, and that peoples needed accurate information to allow them to take the correct decisions.

12. The Executive Director of the National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC) of Ecuador, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, noted that the Conference was 15 years old and that it was an example of regional cooperation for developing and improving statistical good practices and recognizing standard conceptual frameworks. He also stressed that the heterogeneity of countries' statistical systems and institutional capacities meant that considerable work still needed to be done and significant constraints overcome in the field of statistics. There was a need to strengthen those systems and to secure their funding sources so that national offices would be capable of regulating statistical production and certifying its quality. Recalling that the Strategic Plan 2015-2025 would provide guidance for the Conference in addressing current challenges, not least monitoring for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, he highlighted the opportunity presented by the proliferation of data from new technologies, as well as the corresponding challenges in terms of confidentiality and formalization. In that context, he said that citizens and policymakers in the region could rely on committed national statistical offices that sought to innovate in processes and to jointly address the challenges of a world in constant flux, with ever-increasing demands.

13. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC remarked that statistics were a key issue in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a cornerstone of policy analysis and formulation based on empirical data. She praised the positive outcomes achieved by Ecuador, which despite the adverse external context had boosted public investment, diversified the production matrix and enhanced natural resource governance. In that regard, she explained that public policymakers needed statistical tools that allowed them to construct a new State-market-society equation. The complex contemporary reality required new instruments, with a need to go beyond traditional measures and develop measurements of distributive inequality and not only of poverty, taking into account specific regional features, for example. Lastly, she highlighted the importance of ensuring the autonomy and independence of national statistical offices to build the confidence of all stakeholders in statistical data, and recalled that the focus of statistical work was not only numbers, but people.

14. The President of Ecuador drew attention to the role of public investment in the economy, and reported on various initiatives that Ecuador had undertaken and the challenges it had encountered in that sphere. He said that statistics should be considered a public good, since they were a fundamental tool both for public policies and for accountability, and it was therefore necessary to earmark resources to facilitate the continuous production of information and legal frameworks that would guarantee the technical independence of national statistical offices. There was a need to break with conceptual inertia and transition to a path of new metrics that would challenge traditional measurement paradigms. To do this, national statistical offices should be transformed into the governing and coordination bodies of national statistical systems, thus guaranteeing the quality of the information produced throughout the entire system. He also stated the need to end the dependence of national statistical systems on censuses and sample surveys, and to complement these traditional sources with the massive use of data from administrative records. Lastly, he recalled that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development necessitated a statistical revolution to meet the demand for information arising from its implementation and monitoring.

D. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Presentation and discussion of substantive issues: the data revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 2)

15. A substantive seminar, entitled “The data revolution and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities for national statistical institutes”, was held with the chief aim of reflecting, with the directors and officials of the region’s national statistical offices and other statistical organizations, on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related statistical challenges.

16. The seminar was opened by the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC and the Officer in Charge of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

17. In a seminar presentation, the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and President of INEC of Ecuador noted the importance of the data revolution in the context of government development agendas in general and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in particular. The representative of UNFPA expressed the willingness of that organization to provide technical assistance to the countries and urged them to obtain statistically significant, sufficiently disaggregated information, especially in the age groups established for childhood, adolescence and youth. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC said that the scientific and technological change of recent decades had been the driver of the data revolution, whose impact would soon spread to the economic, political and social spheres.

18. In her presentation on the data revolution from the perspective of ECLAC, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC described the main characteristics of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its consequences for national statistical systems. In that context, she listed the chief aspects of the data revolution—the increase in the volume of information, generated at great velocity by a wider variety of producers, many of them in the transnational private sector—and the contribution of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to that process. She also called on stakeholders to harness the data revolution for the purposes of monitoring the indicators of the 2030 Agenda, by integrating new sources and methodologies with traditional ones, increasing openness, transparency and equity in the access and use of data and encouraging their utilization in processes of policy analysis, design and accountability. To achieve this, she recommended that partnerships be forged and strengthened between different national and international actors, while the Statistical Conference of the Americas should play a central role in consolidating national statistical systems and in shaping South-South and inter-agency cooperation mechanisms.

19. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made a presentation on recent advances in the data revolution in the context of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The MDGs had made an important contribution to this process, since they had strengthened the link between policies and empirical evidence and allowed efforts to be concentrated on national production, while also helping create a space for joint work between institutions and groups of experts, in order to improve data collection processes, methodologies and institutional capacities. He described the main lines of work of the Statistical Commission, such as developing indicators and estimation methodologies, coordinating the United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, modernizing production systems and establishing partnerships with other agents for the production and dissemination of statistics.

20. The Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and President of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas spoke about geospatial information management in the context of the data revolution. He reported on the actions undertaken within the Committee with a view to establishing a global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development, and emphasized the regional and global architecture that had been adopted to carry forward the initiative. He also described the goals and activities of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information and the uniting of efforts with the United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics. Lastly, he outlined the activities carried out by the regional groups and the project implemented in the Caribbean for the digital mapping of the subregion.

21. The Deputy Secretariat Manager at Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21) delivered a presentation on the roadmap for implementing a data revolution led by member States. She highlighted the main findings of assessments performed by various national statistical offices, in light of the new paradigm represented by the inclusion of big data in official statistics. On this particular point, she recommended the adoption of common frameworks and international standards in statistical production, the establishment of a common regional platform for the exchange of computing and informational resources, the promotion of innovation and capacity-building through processes undertaken jointly by countries, and the establishment of regional centres of excellence to support national statistical offices in the capacity-building process. Lastly, she called for the construction of a framework of common principles for Latin American and Caribbean countries in relation to big data, in an inclusive environment, with the ultimate goal of reporting on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its monitoring framework.

22. The Director of the Geostatistics Division of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia spoke about the modernization of the Geostatistics Information System as a strategy for integration with administrative records. As part of that process, he identified recent trends, especially changes at the user level such as collaborative work, participation in social networks and mobility; changes at the level of governmental institutions, such as the continuous improvement of the service, data analysis or open government projects; and technological changes such as the use of open-source software, open standards and the geospatial configuration of information.

23. The Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica described the challenges facing the Caribbean in relation to the data revolution and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, she highlighted the constraints imposed by the small size of States and the lack of available resources to address new challenges, which necessitated strategies to maximize funding through agreements with international organizations, the holding of forums and the formation of common working groups focused on the data revolution, as well as determining a minimum set of priority indicators as an initial step towards the development of the statistical systems envisaged under the 2030 Agenda.

24. In the following presentation, the Vice-President of the Demographic and Social Information Subsystem of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico described that country's experiences of using administrative records for statistical purposes, framed by the process of the data revolution. He highlighted three major groups of information sources: records maintained by the public sector and government agencies, records held by the private sector, and the information created by users on social networks. Lastly, he said that the main challenge was presented by the need for adequate human resources and institutional capacities to generate consistent, useful data on the basis of the fragmented records available.

25. The Director of Data-Pop Alliance then gave a presentation on the study “Big Data and National Statistics Systems in Latin America”, carried out in conjunction with DANE of Colombia, in which he drew a parallel between the current and past situations in relation to the data revolution. Big data was a new ecosystem that would allow the statistical community to retain its role as the legitimate custodian of knowledge and the creator of a deliberative public space to discuss and guide human development. He highlighted that the three “Vs” of big data (volume, velocity and variety) served four end purposes: describe, predict, prescribe and discuss. He also identified several obstacles to the effective leveraging of big data in the production of official statistics, such as institutional and cultural barriers to innovation and change, constraints on data access and completeness, technical challenges, human capacity gaps, methodological challenges and ethical and political risks.

26. The Regional Adviser of UNFPA referred to the role of international agencies in mobilizing the data revolution. He recommended that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development be taken as an opportunity to strengthen national statistical systems by developing new metrics that would enable the identification of potential target populations for public policies, linking them to the different dimensions of sustainable development and reinforcing critical processes such as the development of indicators and methodologies, guidance and coordination by national statistical offices, and capacity-building. He then called for a rapid, good-quality response to information needs, reducing dependence on survey-type statistical operations, and to address difficult-to-measure phenomena such as national and international mobility and spatial exclusion. Lastly, he recommended the exploration of non-traditional data sources, the improved use of geospatial data, and the seeking of approaches to address the challenge of disaggregation.

27. The seminar was closed by the Executive Director of INEC of Ecuador, who gave a statement on the implications of the data revolution for the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and for capacity-building processes.

28. In the substantive discussion, the representative of Brazil reported on an agreement between the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Institute (IBGE), UNFPA and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency to share their experience in the use of mobile devices for the capture of census data, for the 2020 census round in Africa. The representative of Peru called for the countries to intensify international cooperation and to forge partnerships for the joint adoption of new technologies, with a view to both acquisition and adaptation to the regional reality. He also recommended that the human resources training of national statistical systems be stepped up, and called for countries to be innovative in this area.

29. The representative of Ecuador highlighted the need to strengthen the institutional capabilities of national statistical offices and for closer cooperation at the regional level to share experiences in the use of big data. He also called for reflection on the links between national statistical offices and private producers of information, so as to avoid a potential dependency trap, and stressed the need for better statistical infrastructure, including the capacity for geospatial data processing, with a view to achieving complementarity and economies of scale.

30. The representatives of Costa Rica and Canada expressed support for the adoption of a joint strategy for research and the incorporation of new information sources into statistical production. The representative of Paraguay highlighted a new challenge for the statistical community, consisting in the tension between the immediacy of the data obtained from new sources of information and the quality and timeliness required of traditionally constructed data. In that regard, he invited the countries to reflect on the best way of integrating information from non-traditional sources, without losing sight of the rigour and validity of data.

31. The representative of the Bahamas raised some ethical and political questions concerning the use of crime data. The representative of El Salvador expressed concern over excessive private-sector involvement in the generation of public statistics, and said that guidelines needed to be agreed by the Statistical Conference of the Americas to regulate interactions between private initiatives and the public sector. The representative of Honduras mentioned the potential difficulty presented by big data and the data revolution for less consolidated national statistical systems, and advocated the development of incorporation strategies that would respond to the specific needs of States and societies.

32. The representative of the civil society organization Fundación Avina called for information systems to be strengthened on the basis of joint work between private organizations and the State, for improved civil society capabilities to make use of data, to foster open government initiatives that would give rise to citizen participation, and to promote experiences that would establish the design, analysis and follow-up of policies, based on empirical evidence, at the local level. The representative of another civil society organization, GEOCENSOS, illustrated some of the practical applications of big data for improving citizen security and for prevention in the event of natural disasters.

33. The representative of IMF called for a regional approach to the data revolution. The representative of FAO and the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC underscored the need to establish a regional training plan, benefiting from synergies and improving coordination between international agencies, as well as strengthening the governing role of national statistical offices within national statistical systems.

34. By way of conclusion, the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and representative of Ecuador called on the participants to understand that there was no single definition of the data revolution, which represented different aspects besides the increased volume of data and the velocity at which it is generated, which were the consequence of technological progress. The use of administrative records and the increased communication and use of statistics were also part of the data revolution. He advocated work to ensure transparency in the data generation process and in access to those data—including information from the private sector—by the various organizations that might require them.

Discussion on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the working groups of the United Nations Statistical Commission (Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for post-2015 monitoring)
(agenda item 3)

35. The representative of Mexico recalled the terms of reference issued by the United Nations Statistical Commission for the formation of the Inter-Agency Expert Group, notably the leadership of States members in the process, the strengthening of the lead role of national statistical offices and the role of regional and international agencies as observers to provide technical advice to the Group. He outlined the Group's mandate, which included developing an indicator framework and a list of indicators, providing technical support for implementation and the use of harmonized definitions and appropriate methodologies, among other aspects. Lastly, he reported on planned activities, the progress of the tasks entrusted to the group, the activities carried out to date, and their outcomes in terms of the progress and development of indicators and methodologies.

36. The representative of Ecuador reviewed the initial advances of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for post-2015 monitoring, which was responsible for the monitoring phase of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and whose main objective was to provide strategic leadership for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The High-level Group had only recently begun to hold meetings, since part of its work depended on the outcomes reached by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The High-level Group had worked on defining its terms of reference, especially in terms of providing strategic leadership, creating monitoring and data reporting mechanisms, fostering capacity-building, partnership and coordination, identifying priority areas for funding, providing technical assistance on the opportunities and risks presented by the process, and organizing the World Forum on Sustainable Development Data in 2016.

37. In the subsequent discussion, the representatives of Uruguay and Paraguay highlighted the difficulties arising from the urgency of the deadlines for responding to the consultation mechanisms on the indicators, especially when responses needed to be articulated by organizations external to the national statistical offices. The representatives of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay also expressed doubts that the indicators and targets were actually fit for their intended purpose. The representatives of Argentina and Paraguay also asked that the metadata corresponding to the developed indicators be prepared as a matter of urgency.

38. The representative of Cuba stated the need to precisely define the concepts that underpinned the indicators, as well as the methodology for obtaining them, and requested that the follow-up framework have sufficient flexibility in order to obtain the indicators. She also asked for greater efforts to involve decision makers in the setting up of working groups, a request supported by the representatives of Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

39. The representative of El Salvador said that the first working group for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Central America (CENTROSTAT) had been established, and that El Salvador was analysing the possibility of including the targets of the 2030 Agenda in five-year development plans. Similarly, the representative of Guatemala said that CENTROSTAT was the ideal sphere to account for the differences between national statistical offices, and requested that ECLAC provide technical support for the statistical work to be carried out by CENTROSTAT.

40. The representative of Brazil expressed concern regarding the number of indicators that remained unresolved and the deadline that the United Nations Statistics Division had set itself for their resolution. He welcomed the development opportunity that that 2030 Agenda represented for national statistical systems, without ignoring the challenge that they posed in terms of production, and requested that the Statistical Conference of the Americas adopt a declaration with a view to ensuring that governments endow their national statistical offices with greater capacity and resources. The representative of Jamaica explained that the secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was working to adapt the indicators to the member countries of the Community, and highlighted the joint efforts with UN-Women for the implementation of the SDGs on gender affairs.

41. The representative of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC stressed the importance of the meetings of the Working Group on Gender Statistics, highlighted the work done in face-to-face meetings on the indicators that should be considered under Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda and in the development the time-use classification for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL), and insisted on the need for further efforts to mainstream gender indicators.

Review and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2015-2025 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (agenda item 4)

42. The representative of the secretariat said that the Strategic Plan was central to the coordination of the regional programme of activities carried out by Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, since it included the priorities put forward by member countries and defined the main action lines of the Conference. The new Strategic Plan 2015-2025³ had been drafted following a process of reflection and consultation initiated at the thirteenth meeting of the Executive Committee, at which the delegations had had the opportunity to discuss criteria for the preparation of the document, and continued at the fourteenth meeting of the Executive Committee, at which successive versions of the document had been analysed by the member countries.

43. The representative of the secretariat then presented an evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015, recalled the events leading up to its adoption, and then detailed the evaluation methodology and the difficulties encountered in the evaluation, since originally the Plan did not have targets or commitment periods for the stated goals. As a result, the evaluation had chiefly analysed the Plan's role as a planning instrument and frame of reference for the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, based on the opinions of relevant actors in the statistical community, the focal points of the working groups and the review of agreements adopted at the meetings of the Executive Committee and conferences. The main findings of the evaluation pointed to the recommendation that a plan of activities be drawn up for the period 2015-2025, which would allow baselines, targets and deadlines to be established for each of the proposed goals. In that context, he suggested a closer, more regular monitoring of the plan's achievements and targets, as well as a greater alignment between the work plans of the groups and the Strategic Plan. Lastly, he recommended the increased dissemination and visibility of the Plan.

44. In the subsequent discussion, the representatives of several member countries proposed changes in the wording and structure of the Strategic Plan. Several United Nations agencies and international organizations also offered contributions regarding the text.

45. The representatives of ECLAC took note of the different observations and proposals by the countries, and undertook to include them in the final version of the Strategic Plan. In particular, they undertook to include a more ample definition of the data revolution. It was agreed to simplify the mission of the Strategic Plan so that it could be conveyed with ease and greater concision. Under the first strategic goal, it was decided to add a specific goal regarding the strengthening of the governing role of national statistical offices within statistical systems. It was agreed to add the concept of geographical linkage to that of geographical integration within specific goal 3, and to amend the reference to national statistical culture in specific goal 4. Under the second strategic goal, it was decided to include a mention of other institutions that produce official statistics; it was also decided to change the expression "framework for the quality of statistical data" to "framework for ensuring the quality of statistical data", and to draft a new specific goal, which would refer to promoting the innovation of alternative concepts and metrics. Under the third strategic goal, a reference to the subregional context would be explicitly included. Lastly, it was agreed to include a reference to evaluation with higher periodicity than originally stated and to the adoption of a qualitative and quantitative baseline.

46. At the proposal of the Chair of the Executive Committee, the Conference adopted ad referendum the Strategic Plan 2015-2025, subject to the inclusion of the aforementioned changes.

³ LC/L.4070(CEA.8/4).

Review and adoption of the operational guidelines and new strategic structure of the working groups for the biennium 2016-2017 (agenda item 5)

47. As follow-up to the agreement adopted at the fourteenth meeting of the Executive Committee, the representative of the secretariat presented a review of the operational guidelines for the working groups.⁴ He said that it was important for the working groups to be more closely aligned with the new Strategic Plan and confirmed that the existing working groups, whose programme of work had been adopted at the seventh meeting of the Conference, would have their term extended until the next meeting of the Executive Committee in 2016.

48. In the discussion that followed, doubts were raised over the feasibility of producing progress reports within the proposed time frames and in two languages. It was also proposed that the presentation of the report of the working groups to the meetings of the Conference solely include substantive matters and activities. A request was also made to limit the number of groups, with a view to greater efficiency in the use of resources. Comments were made in relation to the automatic closure of working groups, and whether it was appropriate to close groups that had achieved good results. The advisability of promoting the creation of management tools for the Executive Committee, which might improve with practice and use, was also emphasized.

49. As regards the evaluation of work, various country representatives suggested that criteria and targets should be established to facilitate the follow-up of the groups' results. Moreover, it was stated that it would be useful to establish the reasons why some working groups were not delivering results, to distinguish situations where this was justifiable from those where a lack of progress was due to insufficient activity.

50. Special attention was paid to the requirement of securing financing for the groups' activities. Some countries suggested that this information should not be required in proposals to form working groups, while others supported its inclusion. In that regard, it was suggested that proposals for the formation of each working group should identify possible funding sources, without any requirement for resources to be approved or committed prior to the start of activities.

51. Lastly, the document was adopted with some amendments, referring to the adoption of six-monthly periods for the presentation of progress reports, the implementation of evaluation criteria, and the identification of possible funding sources by working group proponents.

Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2014-2015, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 6)

52. Under this agenda item, the coordinators of the working groups and task forces reported to delegations on progress in implementing their programmes of activities and on the fulfilment of the targets and outputs pledged for the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

⁴ LC/L.4080(CEA.8/5).

Working Group on Censuses

53. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela described the progress achieved in the framework of the Working Group on Censuses. As well as recalling the group's general and specific objectives, he provided up-to-date information on its member countries and the focal points for each country. Funding problems had meant that just one workshop was held in accordance with the programme of activities for the 2014-2015 biennium, while a second workshop had been held but with different objectives to those originally envisaged. He also reported on a survey that was conducted on the status of the 2020 census round and national needs.

54. During the ensuing comments, the representative of Ecuador reported on the experience of his country, which was aiming to make the transition to population censuses using administrative records after the 2020 round. The representatives of Paraguay and Peru called for the working group to be strengthened in view of the challenges presented by the next census round. The representative of Chile called on the countries to participate in the activities of the working group, considering its importance, and to make efforts to fund the planned activities.

Working Group on the Harmonization of Poverty Statistics.

55. The delegation of Colombia reported on the activities of the Working Group on the Harmonization of Poverty Statistics. During the previous biennium, in respect of monetary poverty, a system had been designed for the classification of income variables in accordance with the proposals of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Canberra Group on Household Income Statistics. Based on this system, information gathered from the countries in questionnaires had been analysed and a document prepared on how income was addressed in household surveys. In respect of multidimensional poverty, the group had made progress in the preparation of a basic document to select the dimensions that this indicator should include.

56. In the round of comments, the representative of Canada referred to the working group's difficulties in obtaining information from the countries, and questioned whether the group should continue to exist. The representatives of Costa Rica and Ecuador stressed the importance of the group's continuation, considering the need for the harmonization of income measurements and the advisability of working on the income poverty methodology. Lastly, the Chair of the Executive Committee underscored the need for statistics on income poverty and multidimensional poverty in order to monitor the targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

57. The representative of Argentina described the formation, objectives, history and recent name change of the Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. She also referred to the specific activities implemented in the recent period for the fulfilment of the working group's objectives, which would include a joint document to take stock of its activities and the lessons learned in the MDG monitoring framework.

58. In the time set aside for statements by the countries, the representative of Mexico highlighted the need for better communication between the members of the working group, should it continue to exist, and the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. He recalled the need to propose a regional monitoring framework, which was a task that might be entrusted to the group. The representative of Brazil suggested a new structure with three working groups to follow up on the SDGs, and a prior survey

in the different countries to find out which statistical products could measure the proposed indicators in each area. The representative of Costa Rica said that consideration should be given to the volume of work and to establishing the way in which groups with similar objectives would interact. The delegation of Panama suggested that communication could be improved by appointing more than one focal point, which was opposed by the representative of Argentina. The representative of Canada asked that the Executive Committee be responsible for defining how to verify the monitoring of the SDGs, and that the Working Group on the Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals be closed.

Working Group on National Accounts

59. The representative of Peru presented the progress report of the Working Group on National Accounts and provided a summary of the formation of the group, its member countries, its general and specific objectives, and the activities it had carried out between 2010 and 2015. He also highlighted the problems that the working group had faced in the performance of its tasks, and its main challenges for the future. In the time allotted for comments, the representative of El Salvador made the request that new metrics be included among the challenges for development, which was supported by the representative of Ecuador. The representative of Jamaica underscored the need to consider certain technical aspects for the implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008.

Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies

60. The representative of the Dominican Republic reported on the activities of the Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies. He described the member countries and objectives of the working group and drew attention to a set of special approaches that had been developed during joint work. He also reviewed and evaluated the progress of planned outputs for the biennial programme of activities, and indicated the planned activities which were in the process of being developed and would be implemented in the subsequent biennium, with the support of different international organizations. In the round of comments, the representative of Mexico underscored the importance of including gender statistics in work of the working group, while the delegation of Colombia expressed satisfaction at the progress of that work.

Working Group on Labour Market Indicators

61. The representative of Chile delivered the report of the Working Group on Labour Market Indicators, referring to the member countries, objectives and scope of the group, as well as the activities planned for the biennium. For the period 2014-2015, five targets were set relating to the detection of gaps in harmonization, constructing indicators on decent work and informality, analysing the challenges and impacts of new definitions on the workforce, and the study of new related issues. Lastly, he commended the group' progress, having completed 96.8% of its planned work, and suggested challenges for the months ahead.

62. In the round of comments, the countries acknowledged the working group's coordination and participation efforts. The representative of ILO highlighted the group's schedule compliance, its participation in the meetings of ILO in Geneva on behalf of the region, efforts to secure financing and the contribution of countries involved in the working group.

Working Group on Institution-building

63. The representative of Colombia reported on the progress made by the Working Group on Institution-building. As well as recalling the member countries and chief objectives of the working group, he described its activities, which had included the exchange of experiences under the modality of South-South cooperation, a monitoring and evaluation workshop on the implementation of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, a diagnostic study and workshop on statistical planning, and a financing proposal for the future activities of the working group.

64. During the comments, the representative of Spain stressed the importance of peer assessment, while the representative of Ecuador underscored the need for a pool of regional experts on institution-building. Other countries shared their experiences of issues such as the permanent financing of activities, difficulties in obtaining information from firms owing to legal restrictions, and the deficiencies in administrative records that limited their usefulness for statistical work. The representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs said that an experienced adviser in the area would soon be available to support the work of the countries, while the representative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) urged the countries to make use of the TASK evaluation tool.

Working Group on Environmental Statistics

65. The representative of Mexico presented the progress report of the Working Group on Environmental Statistics, and said that IDB had approved a project submitted to the Initiative for the Promotion of Regional Public Goods, which was in the early stages of implementation. In that context, he outlined the activities completed during the biennium and the main challenges for the coming months. In the statements by the countries, the representative of Ecuador reported that his country was working to implement the Framework for the Development of Environmental Statistics of the United Nations Statistics Division, and offered to share Ecuador's experiences with the region. The representative of El Salvador requested the support of the working group to establish a domestic office for the management of environmental statistics. The representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) offered his organization's assistance to the working group, together with the use of its open data system and environmental data reporting system.

Working Group on International Classifications

66. The progress report of the Working Group on International Classifications was presented by the representative of Mexico, who summarized the group's activities during the biennium. These included the translation into Spanish of the implementation guide for the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC, Rev. 4) and of the Central Product Classification (CPC, version 2), as well as the comments on the Spanish translation of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). He also described the South-South cooperation activities carried out and the efforts to disseminate the new classifications, and commented on the activities planned for the coming months.

67. In the round of statements by the countries, the representative of Costa Rica requested that the working group develop tools for implementing the classifications in institutions other than national statistical offices. The representative of Colombia called for the working group to also engage in the area of social classifications. The representative of Paraguay reported on the functioning of a similar group within the framework of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), and expressed willingness to collaborate with the working group. The representative of Guatemala asked the working group for technical support so that the National Institute of Statistics of Guatemala could perform its newly assigned role as the compiler and guarantor of official classifications in that country.

Working Group on Agricultural Statistics

68. The representative of Brazil reported on the progress of the Working Group on Agricultural Statistics. Activities included the adoption of a plan of action for the implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, the adoption of the project submitted to the Initiative for the Promotion of Regional Public Goods of IDB to improve statistics in the sector, and an initial workshop for setting up and planning the project.

69. In his speech, the representative of Ecuador recommended the improvement of communication channels between the members of the working group and urged them to use innovative technologies to improve agricultural surveys, since these technologies could contribute to reducing costs and to obtaining continuous data. The representative of Brazil called for the working group to harness the benefits of new communications technologies and thus avoid the costs implied by face-to-face events, and for the improvement of continuous measurements in particular. The representative of Colombia placed himself at the countries' disposal to share experiences such as Colombia's recent agricultural survey, which had included the use of satellite images, administrative records from land registries, and data from agricultural associations. The representative of FAO acknowledged the efforts of the members of the working group and said that the lack of communication had been due to a lack of funds available to the countries and to her organization for convening face-to-face events.

Working Group on Gender Statistics

70. The representative of Mexico reported on the activities of the Working Group on Gender Statistics during the biennium, including two meetings of experts and international specialists on time use and unpaid work, the submission of the classification of time-use activities for Latin America (CAUTAL) for adoption by the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the drafting of a conceptual review paper on poverty and time use and the online dissemination of statistical information and analysis by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean. Technical meetings were held at the international level for the implementation of the SDGs, and the working group participated on behalf of the region in various international forums.

71. In the statements by the countries, the representative of Canada called for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in all activities carried out by all working groups. The representatives of the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico gave an account of progress made in the implementation of gender statistics. It was also suggested that technicians from other departments be included in gender statistics meetings to share the importance of incorporating international recommendations. The representative of IDB offered his institution's cooperation on a project for improving gender statistical systems. Lastly, the classification of time-use activities for Latin America (CAUTAL) was adopted by consensus.

Working Group on Household Surveys

72. The representative of Ecuador presented the activity report of the Working Group on Household Surveys. Activities included the regular updating of the digital library, which compiled the technical documents of surveys in each member country, an assessment of integrated household survey systems, and the organization of a regional workshop on the structure of these systems and the use of longitudinal surveys, in conjunction with ILO. During the comments, the representatives of Canada and Ecuador called for the more in-depth study of issues related to statistics on household accounts, and for the future activities of the working group to include the systematization of best practices in this area. The

representative of Peru requested the group's cooperation in developing the satellite account of unpaid work and domestic work.

73. The representatives of Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador reaffirmed the value of this type of survey for underpinning the diagnosis and evaluation of the population's well-being. The representative of Guyana shared that country's experience of improvements in its household survey system, and the representative of Paraguay highlighted the goal of enhancing household surveys in light of the new requirements presented by the SDGs. The representative of Brazil requested his country's inclusion in the working group, called for the design of integrated survey systems to be disseminated in the region, and suggested that thematic subgroups be organized.

74. The representative of ILO invited the countries to strengthen household surveys to improve labour statistics, which are critically dependent on the quality of these surveys. The representative of UN-Women requested that consideration be given to the participation of the most relevant ethnic groups in surveys, and the representative of FAO requested that the inclusion of the subjective module on food security be taken into account.

Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence

75. The delegation of Panama reported on the progress of the activities of the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence, notably the analysis of information gaps, the design and application of an instrument to analyse problems in the harmonization of statistics between different countries, and the holding of workshops and dissemination activities on the use of information, including an online statistical platform. Further to that report, the representative of UNICEF, as technical secretariat for the Group, referred to the reflection and strategic planning process carried out within the Group to strengthen collaboration between institutes in the face of the new challenges raised by the Sustainable Development Goals in terms of measuring childhood indicators and defining the Working Group's new strategic priorities for the next biennium on issues such as child discipline, early childhood development and children with disabilities. He also suggested that it would be desirable to have several focal points so as to adequately cover the different areas affected by statistics on childhood and adolescence. In the subsequent statements, the representative of the Dominican Republic shared his positive experience of conducting a childhood survey, using the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) methodology in collaboration with UNICEF. Lastly, the representative of Mexico described the experience of that country of creating a technical committee for the improvement of statistics on childhood and adolescence.

Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice

76. The representative of Mexico reported on the activities carried out by the Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice, recalling its formation, general objective and activities carried out between March and October 2015, as well as those planned for the coming months. In the subsequent statements, the representative of El Salvador requested that his country join the group as a participant, in light of existing security problems. The representative of Argentina shared her country's experiences in working with administrative records in the area of public security and justice, and the representative of Peru highlighted the efforts of the working group to implement the international classification of crime for statistical purposes. Lastly, the representative of Costa Rica requested that the working group's thematic area include reflection on the suitability of surveys and records for measuring phenomena related public security and justice.

Task Force on Quantification of South-South Cooperation, Task Force on Disability Statistics and report of the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN)

77. The report of the working groups of the Conference was followed by the presentation of the activity reports of the Task Force on Quantification of South-South Cooperation, the Task Force on Disability Statistics, and the Knowledge Transfer Network, by the representatives of Colombia, Mexico and Colombia, respectively.

Information regarding subregional and international cooperation activities

78. To conclude the activity reports, cooperation reports were presented by each of the subregions into which the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas are organized. Statements were given by the representative of the Andean Community, the representative of Paraguay on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Central American Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System (CENTROESTAD). Lastly, the representatives of UNFPA, IDB, IMF, PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, UN-Women, FAO, ILO and PARIS 21 shared their respective reports on the international cooperation activities that they had carried out during the previous biennium in different areas of regional statistics.

Consideration and adoption of resolutions (agenda item 7)

79. The Conference adopted the Mitad del Mundo Declaration, as set forth in annex 1, and the resolution whose text is reproduced in annex 2.

Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the biennium 2016-2017 (agenda item 8)

80. In keeping with the provisions of resolution 2000/7 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the Conference elected the following Executive Committee for the biennium 2016-2017:

Chair: Mexico

Members: Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Spain and Uruguay

Closing session

81. In the closing session, statements were given by José Rosero, Executive Director of the National Statistics and Census Institute (INEC) of Ecuador, in his capacity as outgoing Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, and Félix Vélez Fernández Varela, Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico, in his capacity as incoming Chair of the Executive Committee.

82. The outgoing Chair thanked the Executive Committee, the secretariat of ECLAC and all participating countries for their efforts, noting that the Conference had addressed issues of transcendental importance such as the data revolution, the use of administrative records and the leadership of national statistical offices. He also welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Plan and the Mitad del Mundo Declaration, as well as the appointment of the new Executive Committee, and congratulated the Chair elect.

83. After expressing thanks for Mexico's nomination to chair the incoming Executive Committee, the representative of that country thanked Ecuador for hosting the meeting and acknowledged in particular the work of the Statistics Division of ECLAC throughout the Conference.

Annex 1

**MITAD DEL MUNDO DECLARATION OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

We, the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in Quito on 19 November 2015, on the occasion of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas:

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to generating good-quality statistics for monitoring national agendas and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Urge* the governments of the region to bolster their commitment to sustaining and strengthening national statistical systems, establishing legal frameworks to ensure the professional independence of national statistical offices, consolidate the leading role of official statistics and guarantee the necessary human, technological and financial resources;

3. *Highlight* that it is indispensable to use and facilitate access to a broader range of information sources and take advantage of administrative records and other non-traditional sources, including geospatial information, preserving data confidentiality and consistency with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

4. *Recognize* the need for metrics that go beyond traditional measurement paradigms and that contribute to the process of designing, monitoring and evaluating public policy;

5. *Call upon* the international community to channel resources towards efforts to strengthen national statistical systems through cooperation, technical assistance and financial support;

6. *Urge* the member countries to develop plans to foster the culture of statistics among different stakeholders in society;

7. *Request* the secretariat and the Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to distribute the Declaration to all member countries of the Conference;

8. *Also request* the Chair of the Conference to present this Declaration to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-sixth session, to be held in 2016.

Annex 2

RESOLUTION 9(VIII)

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, at its eighth meeting, held in Quito from 17 to 19 November 2015,

Bearing in mind Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000, in which the Council approved the proposal on the establishment of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as one of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission,

Bearing in mind also that the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 provides that the Executive Committee shall have the following duties: carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Conference; draw up, every two years, a biennial programme of activities of regional and international cooperation on statistical matters, to be submitted at the regular meeting of the Conference; follow up the implementation of the agreements reached at the Conference and the tasks entrusted to it by the Conference, particularly the biennial programme of activities; and decide on the documentation required for its meetings,

Taking into account resolution 70/1, adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which establishes the commitment of the United Nations Member States to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals,

Having considered the report on the implementation of the 2014-2015 biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Conference,¹

Having considered also the proposed Strategic Plan 2015-2025² and the review of operational guidelines for the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas,³

Taking into account the growing importance of and need for reliable, high-quality and timely statistics for the exercise of transparency, for the accountability of public authorities and for the assessment of public policy advances, as key elements of institution-building in the region,

Taking into consideration the agreements adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session,

Taking into consideration also the resolutions adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-fifth session,

Taking into consideration further the views expressed and the contributions put forward by the Governments of the States members of the Conference and by the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations represented at the meeting,

¹ LC/L.4081(CEA.8/6).

² LC/L.4070(CEA.8/4).

³ LC/L.4080(CEA.8/5).

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the working groups of the United Nations Statistical Commission (Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring)

1. *Acknowledges* the work carried out by the member countries of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring and urges them to continue representing the region in the global process of defining and applying the global monitoring framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Recognizes* the need to work together, within a new governance framework, to prepare a regional implementation plan with a view to gradually covering the information requirements deriving from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

3. *Also recognizes* the importance of the regional space as an apt platform for the statistical monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and highlights that the Conference is the appropriate intergovernmental body to conduct such monitoring in the region;

4. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as secretariat of the Conference, to prepare a proposal for a regional statistical monitoring framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

5. *Urges* the international community and the General Assembly to strengthen the role of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as secretariat of the Conference, by providing additional resources with a view to creating capacities through institution-building, training and exchange of experiences, as well as by incorporating a geographical perspective into the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

6. *Recognizes* the need to work together to develop an outline for a governance mechanism for the treatment of private data in official statistics;

Strategic Plan 2015-2025 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

7. *Thanks* the secretariat for preparing the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015⁴ and the Strategic Plan 2015-2025;

8. *Adopts* the Strategic Plan 2015-2025, with the observations and suggestions as agreed, to guide the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in support of the development of official statistics in the region;

Operational guidelines and new strategic structure of the working groups for the biennium 2016-2017

9. *Adopts also* the revised operational guidelines for the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, with the observations and suggestions as agreed;

⁴ LC/L.4082(CEA.8/7).

10. *Takes note* of the topics identified as highly relevant for the establishment of working groups for the period 2016-2017 and requests the countries concerned to prepare a draft programme of activities to be submitted for adoption by the Executive Committee at its fifteenth meeting;

11. *Recognizes the importance* of using geospatial information for measuring and monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and requests the secretariat to prepare a proposal on incorporating such information into the work of the Statistical Conference of the Americas;

12. *Requests* the secretariat to make contact with the various relevant stakeholders and prepare a proposal for a regional programme to meet the statistical training needs of the member countries;

13. *Also requests* that the working groups recognize the need to include cross-cutting topics in their activities;

14. *Urges* countries to invest in new information and communications technologies, with a view to facilitating exchange and the participation of countries in the working groups and other forums for the coordination of activities in order to increase opportunities for participation beyond face-to-face meetings;

15. *Agrees* to extend the term of the working groups until the fifteenth meeting of the Executive Committee and mandates the Executive Committee to adopt the Biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities 2016-2017 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas;

Criteria for the formation of the Executive Committee

16. *Thanks* the Executive Committee for preparing the criteria for the formation of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the biennium 2016-2017⁵ and endorses those criteria for use in defining the formation of the Executive Committee in future;

17. *Requests* the Executive Committee to prepare a proposal on geographical distribution for the formation of the Executive Committee;

Biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities 2014-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas

18. *Endorses* the report on the implementation of the 2014-2015 biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas⁶ and welcomes the progress made by the working groups, task forces and the Knowledge Transfer Network;

19. *Thanks* the international organizations for their support and collaboration in helping to carry out the activities of the working groups, by serving as technical secretariats or by providing financing for planned activities;

20. *Reiterates* the call to countries to generate synergies between the Statistical Conference of the Americas, other subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and subregional bodies, with a view to strengthening statistical systems in the region;

⁵ LC/L.4068(CEA.8/3).

⁶ LC/L.4081(CEA.8/6).

Censuses

21. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the varied activities organized in connection with censuses and vital statistics, including the seminar *Sharing Experiences on Developing the Censuses for the 2020 Round*;

22. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System for the Countries of South America, especially with regard to the importance of statistics in general and of vital statistics in particular for the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with regard to the need to produce good-quality vital statistics on maternal mortality;

23. *Expresses its satisfaction also* with two initiatives designed, first, to assess the status of the 2020 census round and identify technical assistance needs and, second, to evaluate and improve vital statistics, and urges countries to cooperate on these initiatives;

24. *Commends* the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre - Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on holding the 2015 edition of the intensive regional course on demographic analysis, thanks countries, and especially the national statistical offices and ministries of health for the interest demonstrated and the efforts undertaken to train staff in order to strengthen the production and analysis of sociodemographic information, welcomes the presence of participants from civil registry offices in the course and urges international organizations to continue supporting this important activity;

25. *Reiterates* the call to countries to make efforts to improve administrative records, in particular with a view to ensuring the availability of reliable, timely information for public policy purposes and to complementing the methods used to conduct censuses, especially with respect to vital statistics;

26. *Welcomes* the holding and convening capacity of the second session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2015, and urges countries to explore the potential of the Operational guide for the implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, in particular with regard to the strengthening of sociodemographic information systems and staff training on demography, population and development;

27. *Welcomes also* the development of REDATAM7, a software tool of great use for disseminating large databases, such as those concerning population censuses, birth and death statistics and other sources of demographic information, which are of fresh relevance in the framework of the data revolution;

28. *Welcomes further* the censuses corresponding to the 2010 round conducted by various countries, reiterates the importance of carrying out those censuses in any countries that have not already done so without delay, of taking advantage of synergies between countries and of incorporating, to the extent possible, the recommendations emanating from the activities of the Conference in census exercises, and requests the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean to continue supporting the countries in planning and analysing their population and housing censuses and to promote activities to continue identifying and evaluating the lessons learned from the 2010 round, with a view to applying them in the next census round;

Harmonization of poverty statistics

29. *Underscores* the central importance of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and urges countries to strengthen the measuring instruments that will allow for proper monitoring of the commitments undertaken;

30. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the activities carried out by the Working Group on the Harmonization of Poverty Statistics to prepare a comparative framework of the household income flows used to measure poverty and to systematize indicators of deprivation in housing habitability as a relevant dimension of multidimensional poverty;

31. *Calls upon* the member countries of the Working Group to provide the support needed for the successful conclusion of the outstanding activities and to incorporate the expenditure perspective in its future research activities;

Monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

32. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the progress made on preparing a publication presenting an overview and outlook that compiles and systematizes the achievements, lessons learned and outstanding challenges with respect to monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the context of the activities carried out by the Working Group on Monitoring of Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals since it was established;

33. *Urges* the countries of the region to take advantage of best practices and lessons learned in the monitoring and follow-up process of the Millennium Development Goals with a view to ensuring proper monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and taking advantage of the experience gained in defining the strategy for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the framework of the Conference;

National accounts

34. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the varied activities carried out by the Working Group on National Accounts in the last two years;

35. *Reiterates* the importance for experts on national accounts in the region to discuss, at the upcoming Seminar on National Accounts of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the future activities and the composition of the Working Group, with a view to preparing inputs for the discussions at the fifteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas;

Measurement of information and communications technologies

36. *Values* the varied activities organized by the Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies in the last two years with a view to obtaining tangible results in the field of harmonized statistics on information and communications technologies and on the use of these technologies in the health sector;

37. *Takes note* of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2018), adopted at the fifth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, and reaffirms objective 23 on promoting the measurement of access to and use of information and communications technologies at the national and regional levels;

38. *Supports* the commitment of the Working Group to taking part in the discussions and activities of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, a subsidiary body of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, created pursuant to resolution 672(XXXIV);

39. *Takes note* of the support, already expressed by the Working Group, for strengthening the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a useful tool for promoting information and communications technologies, and its online forum for fostering dialogue among institutions at the regional level;

40. *Welcomes* the efforts made by national statistical offices and requests the directors of those institutions from the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to lend their indispensable support, through their focal points, to ensure the fulfilment of the tasks of the Working Group, and appreciates the collaboration of government institutions from different sectors and the technical and financial support provided by international and regional financing and cooperation agencies;

Labour market indicators

41. *Values* the work carried out by the Working Group on Labour Market Indicators to provide opportunities for technical discussions on how countries approach new International Labour Organization recommendations and their impact on the main labour market indicators, as well as to analyse the conceptual and methodological aspects of measuring informality statistics and identify statistical gaps in respect of the proposed standards;

42. *Welcomes* the approval of the project entitled “Regional adaptation of new international guidelines for measuring labour statistics through the design of questionnaires and methodological guides” submitted to the Regional Public Goods Initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank, which sets out to design methodological guides and harmonized questionnaires that can be used by all countries in the region;

43. *Highlights* the importance for the countries of the region of strengthening their labour statistics systems, with a view to incorporating the new international recommendations on measuring employment and labour underutilization, and takes note of other topics relevant to regional statistical cooperation, such as the review of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), the effects of the new population projections on estimations of labour market indicators and the construction of gross flow statistics for analysing labour market dynamics;

Institution-building

44. *Values* the active participation of the countries in disseminating, monitoring and evaluating compliance with the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular with regard to executing overall assessments, developing South-South cooperation, completing the questionnaire on the Code and attending regional training on statistical planning;

45. *Thanks* the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia, in its capacity as coordinator of the Working Group on Institution-building, for its efficient management of the Group's resources, the Inter-American Development Bank for the financing provided and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for its support in carrying out the activities planned for the biennium;

46. *Agrees* to establish a formal partnership for the permanent funding of monitoring and evaluation activities on compliance with the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to improve the quality of statistics in the region, and invites countries and international organizations to support the consolidation of this partnership;

47. *Urges* the Working Group to include in its future work other elements of institution-building, as indicated in paragraph 2 of the Mitad del Mundo Declaration of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

Environmental statistics

48. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the varied activities carried out by the Working Group on Environmental Statistics in the last two years;

49. *Takes note* of the progress achieved on the project "Development and strengthening of official environmental statistics by creating a regional framework in Latin America and the Caribbean", in the framework of the Regional Public Goods Initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank and of the success of the Development Account tranche 9 project "Strengthening statistical capacities for building macroeconomic and sustainable development indicators in Latin American, Caribbean and Asia-Pacific countries";

50. *Reiterates* the importance of environmental statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals;

International classifications

51. *Welcomes* the activities carried out by the Working Group on International Classifications in the last two years and, in particular, the progress made towards the adoption or adaptation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 4, the Central Product Classification, Version 2, the International Standard Classification of Occupations, 2008, and the International Standard Classification of Education, 2011, as well as towards the identification of challenges and solutions;

52. *Values* the work carried out by the Working Group to support countries in the adoption or adaptation of classifications of activities, products, and occupations, by translating relevant documents into Spanish, promoting horizontal collaboration between countries, coordinating with organizations preparing regional classifications, and engaging with the international organizations that are custodians of classifications and that have prepared documents for the adoption, adaptation or updating of classifications;

Agricultural statistics

53. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the adoption of the Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics by the Global Steering Committee of the Strategy at its meeting on 22 June 2015;

54. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the progress made on the project “Developing a methodology for implementing agricultural statistical systems in Latin America and the Caribbean” in the framework of the Regional Public Goods Initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank, recognizes that the required consultations are being duly carried out, and requests that a regional workshop be held in February 2016 to present the regional evaluation and the conceptual framework for a regional integrated system of agricultural and rural statistics;

55. *Reaffirms* the important contribution of the project to the implementation of the Global Strategy in the region and draws attention to the urgent need to mobilize additional resources in order to achieve the full implementation of the Regional Action Plan;

Gender statistics

56. *Underscores* the statistical challenge presented by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and calls on countries to redouble their efforts to produce gender statistics and indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals on time use and unpaid work, violence against women, and participation in decision-making, as well as on multidimensional poverty measurement and the use of information and communications technologies, which are priority areas in the activities of the Working Group on Gender Statistics;

57. *Commends* the efforts made by the Working Group to prepare a time-use classification for Latin America (CAUTAL) with a gender focus and adapted to the regional context, including its inter-agency work in recent years, and adopts the classification of time-use activities for Latin America⁷ as presented to the Conference at its eighth meeting;

58. *Welcomes* the progress made by the Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies towards consolidating a list of indicators on the use of information and communications technologies and gender and encourages all working groups to include gender statistics in their work;

59. *Urges* countries to allocate resources to national statistical offices for developing collection mechanisms and disseminating gender statistics;

Household surveys

60. *Welcomes* the organization of the “Regional workshop on household surveys in Latin America: current situation and outlook”, held in Santiago in October 2015, as a forum for sharing the progress made on implementing household surveys in the region, on measuring income and employment, and on using longitudinal samples;

⁷ LC/L.4083(CEA.8/8).

61. *Recognizes* the value of household surveys as an essential source of information for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and urges countries and the working groups of the Conference to continue modernizing and enhancing the integration and efficiency of household survey processes and integrating into the analysis information from relevant administrative records and new methodologies;

Statistics on childhood and adolescence

62. *Welcomes* the activities carried out to identify information gaps in respect of child protection, children with disabilities, early childhood development, indicators on sexual behaviour and HIV prevention among adolescents, as well as to define harmonization problems between the estimates used by international bodies and those use at the national level;

63. *Also welcomes* the holding of workshops to strengthen capacities with respect to standardized methodologies for gathering information on childhood and adolescence and promoting the use of existing data;

64. *Highlights* that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains multiple targets relating to childhood and adolescence, and that countries will therefore be called upon to respond to new demands for information on this topic;

Statistics on public security and justice

65. *Acknowledges* the contribution of the Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice to preparing the standardized questionnaire of the Latin America and the Caribbean Crime Victimization Survey Initiative and calls upon the countries of the region to use it;

66. *Thanks* the countries that participated in the feasibility tests and in defining the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and reiterates the importance for countries to progressively adopt the classification in order to improve the quality and availability of data on crime and criminal justice;

67. *Urges* the member States of the Conference to address the priorities established in the regional road map for improving the quality and availability of statistics on crime and criminal justice in Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to strengthen statistical systems on crime and criminal justice in the region;

Quantification of South-South cooperation

68. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the progress made by the Task Force on Quantification of South-South Cooperation towards defining a standard measurement of expert-hours, consolidating data collection methods for measuring South-South cooperation, and defining standard units for measuring grants, and urges the task force to continue making progress in these areas for consideration by the Executive Committee at its fifteenth meeting;

Disability statistics

69. *Welcomes* the activities carried out by the Task Force on Disability Statistics to define a consensus-based work plan and to administer the funding needed to execute it;

Knowledge Transfer Network

70. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the active participation of the countries in the new activities of the Knowledge Transfer Network, led by Colombia, and invites them to continue collectively creating opportunities for exchanging knowledge, disseminating information more widely and ensuring that regional information is kept up-to-date through the website of the Network;

Subregional cooperation

71. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the productive subregional cooperation activities carried out by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians of the Caribbean Community, the Central American Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System, the Andean Statistical Committee of the Andean Community and the Specialized Statistical Meeting of the Southern Common Market;

72. *Thanks* Statistics Canada for the organizing the Forum on Strengthening Statistical Management Practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, which constituted an extraordinary contribution to reflections and regional action on institution-building, as well as for the financial support provided to hold the Forum;

73. *Thanks also* the United Nations Population Fund, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the German Agency for International Cooperation for organizing the substantive seminar “The data revolution and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities for national statistical institutes” and for the financial support provided to hold the seminar;

74. *Urges* the international community to channel resources towards efforts to strengthen national statistical systems through cooperation, technical assistance and financial support;

75. *Values and expresses gratitude* for the work of the National Statistics and Censuses Institute of Ecuador and for the efforts and dedication its Executive Director, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Conference during the biennium 2014-2015;

76. *Thanks* the President and the Government of Ecuador, and in particular the National Statistics and Censuses Institute, for the excellent organization of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and for the hospitality extended to the participants;

77. *Adopts* the Mitad del Mundo Declaration of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex 3

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
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**D. Organismos de las Naciones Unidas
United Nations bodies**

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Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (UNFPA)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

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Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA)/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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J. Organizaciones no gubernamentales Non-governmental organizations

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