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PROPOSED UPDATING OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2015*

* This draft was prepared by the secretariat of the Conference and incorporates the comments and suggestions made by the countries. It will be submitted for the consideration of the members of the Statistical Conference of the Americas at its sixth meeting.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 is to guide the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in support of the development of official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, in accordance with the objectives established in United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000.¹

This document reassesses the main priorities identified by members at the meetings of the Conference and the trends emerging from various studies on the principal challenges facing the region's national statistical systems. These priorities and trends were taken into account in developing the proposal for the present strategic plan. The mission, vision, strategic goals, specific goals and main lines of action on which the Conference should focus its efforts from now until 2015 are defined in this proposal. The year 2015 was chosen as the reference for the strategic vision on the basis of the time frame associated with the Millennium Development Goals, which constitute a significant challenge for the region's national statistical systems given the need to develop an appropriate information system for monitoring progress towards the Goals. National statistical offices will also need to focus on conducting the 2010 round of censuses and implementing the System of National Accounts (SNA), both the 1993 SNA and the 2008 SNA recommendations, in all the countries of the region. These joint challenges will give rise to synergies in terms of regional and international cooperation. At its third meeting, the Conference recognized that those three challenges should constitute the guiding principles of the strategic plan over the next 10 years.

At its tenth meeting, the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC considered that, in view of the significant changes that had taken place in all spheres of human activity since the Strategic Plan had been drafted, it was necessary to update the plan taking into account the new challenges facing the region's national statistical systems and the activities required to overcome them.

At the first three meetings of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the need for the region to have an intergovernmental forum for coordination of the regional programme of work was confirmed, as well as the interest of the member countries in taking an active part in the design and implementation of the programme. Meanwhile, the growing incorporation of multilateral cooperation agencies and organizations also shows the importance of this forum for exchanging information and coordinating work programmes. The Conference should also be a significant forum for discussion of the substantive and emerging topics which are of concern to the statistical community in the region.

In accordance with the provisions of the resolution² that establishes it, the Statistical Conference of the Americas, in its capacity as a subsidiary body of ECLAC, has the following objectives:

- (a) To promote the development and improvement of national statistics and work to ensure that they are comparable internationally, bearing in mind the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations.
- (b) To promote international, regional and bilateral cooperation among national offices and international and regional agencies.

¹ Establishing the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (E/2000/INF/2/Add.2).

² Ibid.

- (c) To draw up a biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, to meet the demands of the countries of the region, subject to the availability of resources.

In consideration of the above, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC is resolved to give impetus to the fulfilment of its mandate to be “a subsidiary body of the Commission that shall contribute to the progress of policies on statistics and statistical activities in the countries of the region” (resolution 2000/7). For that reason, the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC shall provide the frame of reference for the Conference’s future biennial programmes of regional and international cooperation, in order to facilitate the effective accomplishment of the four strategic goals of the plan. Furthermore, efforts shall be made to achieve a close linkage between these biennial programmes of action and the programme of statistical work of the ECLAC system.

The Conference also recognizes the transcendental importance of United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6³ on strengthening statistical capacity, which concerns the development of national statistics systems in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

This resolution expresses the deep concern that “(a) there still exists in many countries a lack of adequate data to (i) assess national trends in the context of monitoring progress towards the realization of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and (ii) inform and monitor the implementation of national development policies and strategies, and (b) in many countries where data do exist, there is a lack of capacity to use them and, in certain cases where country data are available, they are not used to the extent possible.” The resolution also calls upon Member States, donor countries and organizations and the international statistical community to intensify their efforts to strengthen national statistical capacity, and in particular calls on international agencies, in accordance with the guidance provided by Member States through the Statistical Commission, to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators in order to enhance the database on all Millennium Development Goals.

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC will take the necessary action to ensure that its strategic plan allows multilateral and subregional organizations to coordinate their activities in the region in the best way possible. This coordination will focus on objectives and activities that clearly reflect national and regional priorities in relation to statistical development. These priorities will be specified in the Conference’s biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities. Its goal is to translate the priorities identified for each of the stages of progress towards the strategic goals into lines of activity and outputs.

Given the plan’s long time frame, it was decided that a mechanism should be established to provide for a detailed, ongoing assessment of the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the plan. To that end, the Executive Committee will take the necessary steps to ensure that several intermediary reports and a final report are prepared.

In view of the above, the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities is a key element in attaining the aims of the Conference. This programme shall summarize the specific aims for a two-year period, which should be consistent with one or more of the four strategic goals and contribute to achieving them. Furthermore, in accordance with the specific goals, the programme should contain clear guidelines to direct and promote the concrete actions of the countries, international, regional

³ E/2006/INF/2/Add.1, 22 August 2006.

and subregional organizations and the various coordination and cooperation entities established for these purposes, such as working groups and expert committees.

In the discussions at the previous meetings of the Conference and in various regional studies carried out to assess the current situation, countries have referred in particular to the need to raise the coverage, quality and transparency criteria of national statistics to the level of the best international practices and to use them as a basis to develop a reputation for the excellence of official statistics among the users, economic stakeholders, social actors and decision makers.

It has also been noted that, in certain cases, the national statistical offices of the region carry out their functions in a precarious institutional and legal framework, without sufficient information technology and human and financial resources, and efforts would have to be made to remedy that situation. Reference was also made to the need to improve the way in which the work of multilateral, regional and subregional organizations is coordinated with national and regional priorities in terms of statistical development.

In view of this situation, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC considers it essential to submit to the Governments of the region the necessary recommendations to ensure that the national statistical systems reach an adequate institutional level in order to carry out completely the function incumbent upon them in the new millennium, in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. It should be emphasized that official statistics are a public good and that the State therefore has the institutional and economic responsibility of ensuring that the processes of production and dissemination are adequate for the needs of society and individuals.

It would be necessary in particular to promote more appropriate legal and budgetary frameworks in order to facilitate the performance and strengthening of the national statistical systems, as well as to define more clearly the role of national statistical offices and other institutions. Similarly, measures should be adopted to improve the technical training of regional statisticians and encourage research projects in the area of statistical methodology.

An essential point in this regard is the adoption of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Conference with the aim that the code will become an instrument that, in accordance with national realities, promotes the strengthening of institutions, professional independence and quality of official statistics, and encourages adequate provision by the State of the human, financial and technological resources necessary to fulfil the mission of national statistical systems.

In another area, new demands for information are emerging as a result of changes in the economic and social structure accompanying the development process in the countries of the region, and the challenges presented by globalization. Moreover, the statistical products of the region must meet the most rigorous standards in terms of quality, timeliness and integrity. Along these lines, the region should set goals both for the level of development of its statistical capacity and for the processes of regional harmonization and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the best practices available at the international level.

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC acknowledges that the diversity of situations in the member countries of the region means that convergence towards that goal of regional excellence will take place in stages, while there is a huge potential for making use of the experiences and progress achieved in each of the countries of the region. The Conference should therefore encourage countries and the different stakeholders in national statistical systems to participate in its work.

B. STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2015

1. Mission

The mission of the Statistical Conference of the Americas is to be the intergovernmental body that coordinates the promotion of the development of the official statistics of Latin America and the Caribbean countries, encourages the strengthening of national statistical offices and national statistical systems, contributes to the improvement of technical quality through human resources training and the statistical development of each country, and promotes international, regional and bilateral coordination and cooperation and the harmonization of statistics at the regional and subregional levels.

2. Vision for 2015

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC will consolidate its position as the most significant stakeholder and supporter of regional and international cooperation and coordination in order to make sure that they meet the priorities identified by the countries.

Thanks to the work of the Conference, in 2015 the region will be recognized for significantly enhancing national statistical systems, particularly in terms of narrowing gaps in performance between countries of the region. The improvement will be based on well-qualified human resources, increased compliance with the highest international standards and greater quality, efficiency and public credibility of its statistics.

The working groups of the Conference, which are composed of experts from the countries and have the technical and financial support of international bodies, will be the main channel through which the Strategic Plan of the Conference is carried out.

All Governments in the region will be well informed about the importance of statistics in the design and assessment of public policies, which will result in a stable and increasing flow of financing for the functioning of national statistical systems and statistical offices. The national statistical offices will thus have access to common assets in terms of knowledge, methodology and technological developments, which will enable them to respond to the requirements of their authorities in a timely manner.

3. Values

The Statistical Conference of the Americas will be guided by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in a special session held from 11 to 15 April 1994,⁴ and the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted by the Conference at its sixth meeting held in Bávaro, Dominican Republic, from 16 to 18 November 2011.

⁴ See document E/1994/29.

4. Strategic goals, specific goals and lines of action

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC has outlined the following strategic goals, specific goals and lines of action:

Goal 1: To strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users.

This strategic goal encompasses the following specific goals:

1. Promote the dissemination and implementation in the countries in the region of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to national circumstances.
2. Strengthen the relationship with users through permanent monitoring of their needs and assessment of their levels of satisfaction, and the establishment of accessible and timely mechanisms of dissemination.
3. Promote the development of official statistics as a public good among governments, economic stakeholders, social actors and other decision makers, their use in the design, follow-up and assessment of public policies, and measurement of the impact of the strategic role of national statistical offices in public policies and society.
4. Promote inter-agency cooperation within national statistical systems for the purpose of standardizing methodologies and strengthening the statistical instruments used by the various actors in accordance with international standards.

In order to achieve these goals, the following lines of action should be undertaken:

1. Draw up and implement an action plan to promote the adoption of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean in the countries and implementation of the institutional principles in accordance with national realities.
2. Through the implementation of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, develop and promote performance assessment mechanisms for national statistical systems and implement a system whereby the Conference can track the progress made.
3. Use the Knowledge Transfer Network to gather and disseminate information on the legal frameworks governing national statistical systems and national statistical offices, as well as best practices in terms of organization and strategic management.
4. With the help of the Knowledge Transfer Network, form networks of legal and administrative experts from the countries of the region for all matters relating to statistical legislation.
5. Compile and disseminate experiences on processes relating to statistical certification and guarantees in the countries of the region.

6. Promote the use of surveys, workshops and other mechanisms to strengthen relations with users, as well as the creation of a database of strategic user satisfaction surveys to obtain information about user needs and satisfaction levels, the use of information and unmet demand.

7. Establish networks of experts in the dissemination of information, mainly to address the issue of ensuring timely access to information.

Goal 2: To promote the training of staff in producing high-quality statistical information, managing national statistical systems and carrying out research into statistical methodology.

This strategic goal encompasses the following specific goals:

1. Promote an awareness and identification of institutional training needs and develop strategies for maintaining and strengthening the work skills required to gather, produce, validate and disseminate statistical information and for management.

2. Consolidate and boost the operation of the Knowledge Transfer Network of the Conference as an effective and efficient means of disseminating the best knowledge available and the most appropriate mechanism for coordinating the training activities of the working groups of the Conference.

3. Promote the harmonization of the statistics training programmes offered by training centres within member countries of the Conference, subregional centres and international organizations.

4. Encourage cooperation on lines of statistical research that are relevant for the region and on the adoption of technologies to support and enhance statistical processes.

In order to achieve these goals, the following lines of action should be undertaken:

1. Carry out an action plan to transform the Knowledge Transfer Network into a main hub for the region for training and the transfer of knowledge relating to official statistics, to enable it to act proactively with all working groups on training activities and identifies sources of funding for training projects.

2. With the support of the Knowledge Transfer Network, identify, prioritize and document institutional training needs and the professional skills required to produce information for statistical purposes and strategic management.

3. Design medium-term training programmes to build skills across related thematic areas regarding the use of basic and specialist concepts required by the national statistical institutes in the region.

4. Implement horizontal and regional cooperation activities to exchange experiences on the different models and practices for managing human resources for gathering, validating, managing and producing statistical information in various institutional settings.

5. Through the Knowledge Transfer Network and in coordination with the working groups, organize networks of experts in the various statistical spheres and mobilize them to respond to the interests of the countries.

6. Create distance-learning training platforms on official statistics based on coordination between the training centres of the national statistical institutes of the member countries of the Conference, the subregional centres and international organizations.
7. Disseminate standards and nomenclatures through the Knowledge Transfer Network and the various virtual platforms available within the national statistical systems.
8. Promote on-site training and horizontal cooperation with the help of international financing, as part of efforts to encourage technical assistance and training in relevant areas.
9. Disseminate the achievements and progress made in statistical methodology by means of an online bulletin on the research being conducted in the region.
10. Establish agreements with universities to include subjects relating to the production and management of national statistical information on academic curricula, to tap scientific research in areas of interest for statistical development and to support scientific research by providing information for studies.

Goal 3: To promote the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information in the region.

This strategic goal encompasses the following specific goals:

1. Promote cooperation and the exchange of experiences on worldwide best practices and methodological documents useful for the region in terms of the production of statistical information, particularly as regards the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean and its principles relating to statistical processes and products.
2. Promote the implementation of the 2010 round of censuses in the countries of the region and the use of census data for public policy purposes.
3. Encourage the development and use of administrative records as an important source for the production of official statistics.
4. Support cooperation projects designed to generate the statistical data and information required by the countries to monitor the indicators measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.
5. Support the implementation of the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) in all the countries of the region, as well as the adoption of the recommendations contained in the 2008 SNA, in accordance with a regional schedule of stages.
6. Promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the production of economic, social and environmental statistics in all countries in the region, consolidating the progress made with regard to violence, time use and satellite accounts for unpaid work, and paving the way for other areas such as measuring informal work and the informal sector.
7. Promote cooperation projects and initiatives to ensure that, according to their circumstances, countries have relevant statistics and indicators in emerging areas such as the environment, information and communications technologies, governance, public security and justice.

8. Encourage the exchange of experiences and methodologies concerning the development of the integrated household survey system.
9. Support and promote the production of agricultural statistics and statistics on the services sector in the region through surveys and censuses.
10. Promote the concept of satellite accounts and methodologies and experiences in relevant thematic areas, in accordance with the national accounts central framework.
11. Promote the measurement of well-being and of the progress of societies.
12. Encourage awareness and sharing of experiences among countries in order to make the best use of information and communications technologies to strengthen and optimize the production and dissemination of statistics and indicators.

In order to achieve these goals, the following lines of action should be undertaken:

1. Draw up and execute an action plan to promote the implementation of the principles of statistical process and products set forth in the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, in keeping with the situation in each country.
2. Promote inter-agency coordination to facilitate access by entities forming part of the national statistical system to information contained in administrative records relating to matters such as tax, social security and public security, for use as a relevant source for the production of official statistics.
3. Promote the development of national plans to strengthen administrative records and ensure that they identify key strategic statistical operations.
4. Compile reference materials on methodologies, including information on countries' best practices for the production of statistical information, and automate and disseminate these materials through the Knowledge Transfer Network.
5. Hold workshops and encourage different forms of cooperation that allow a sharing of experiences concerning the dissemination of the findings and the use of data from the 2010 round of censuses.
6. Develop and implement an action plan to consolidate and systematize the production of statistics to monitor progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
7. Support the implementation of time-use surveys to measure women's total work burden, especially unpaid housework work, and coordinate efforts to systematize the monetary value assigned to it in the national accounts with a view to ensuring international comparability based on shared methodologies.
8. Coordinate efforts to conduct statistical research in the region, focusing on emerging issues such as the environment, governability and well-being and development.

9. Update the diagnostic on the development of the System of National Accounts in the countries and its technical and institutional linkages with the production of economic statistics and define the priority stages for implementing the System of National Accounts (1993 SNA) and the new recommendations (2008 SNA) throughout the region.
10. Prepare and implement an action plan to develop statistics on natural resources and the environment and encourage the implementation of a minimum set of common sustainability indicators for the region as a whole.
11. Prepare and implement an action plan to develop statistics on information and communications technologies and encourage the implementation of a minimum set of common information and communications technology indicators for the region as a whole.
12. Identify a minimum set of official, complementary indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the region as a whole, which the countries are in a position to produce and monitor in a harmonized manner.
13. Analyse methodologies and share experiences on the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment, incorporating the gender perspective.
14. Exchange experiences and best practices on integrated household survey systems and form networks of experts on housing surveys.
15. Exchange experiences and best practices for the development of short-term economic statistics and encourage the implementation of a minimum set of short-term economic statistics for the region as a whole.
16. Exchange experiences and best practices for the development of agricultural statistics and prepare a document containing technical, logistical and financial recommendations for conducting agricultural censuses.
17. Promote the development of alternative methodologies for measuring well-being and the progress of societies, which includes analysing the applicability of the recommendations of the Commission of Experts of the President of the General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System and the Latin American Conference on Measuring Well-being and Fostering the Progress of Societies, held in Mexico City from 11 to 13 May 2011.
18. Exchange experiences on statistics on the integration of production that take into account the increasing globalization of the world economy and the global division of production.
19. Promote the production of indicators of public participation and organization in the management of matters regarded as pertaining to the public domain.

Goal 4: Promote coordination and cooperation between the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and international agencies.

This strategic goal encompasses the following specific goals:

1. Develop a biennial programme for the regional, subregional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation activities aimed at achieving the goals of the Conference as defined in this Strategic Plan and the recommendations of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
2. Support and strengthen bilateral cooperation between the member countries of the Conference in an effective and efficient manner, especially for the countries that are relatively less developed in terms of statistics.
3. Promote the development of a regional programme to harmonize statistical information in key areas based on medium-term projects, fostering bilateral and horizontal cooperation between member countries of the Conference, especially countries that are less developed in terms of statistics, and making use of technical assistance from international organizations in accordance with the needs and priorities of countries.
4. Encourage international, technical and financial cooperation pursuant to the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability, with special emphasis on the commitment of donors to use country systems and procedures to the maximum extent possible and avoid, to the maximum extent possible, creating dedicated structures for day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects and programmes.
5. Urge international agencies to improve the coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the Human Development Index, avoiding imputation unless specific country data are available for reliable imputations following consultations with concerned countries and through transparent methodologies.
6. Promote the development of channels of communication between national statistical offices and the different United Nations bodies and other international organizations, to encourage the proper use of official statistics, prevent duplication of efforts and resources and eliminate discrepancies between national figures and those used by such organizations and bodies.

In order to achieve these goals, the following lines of action should be undertaken:

1. Implement an integrated biennial programme of regional and international cooperation to align the cooperation activities of the Conference, subregional bodies, ECLAC and other international agencies in the region with the priorities of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015, with due consideration for the decisions of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
2. Establish mechanisms to seek sufficient resources from international cooperation and financing agencies to support the implementation of the plans of activities of the different working groups of the Conference.
3. Draw up an inventory of the regional, subregional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation activities and projects designed to achieve the goals of the Conference as defined in this strategic plan and keep this database up-to-date.
4. Identify and develop tools and indicators for facilitating and monitoring progress towards the aims and targets related to inter-agency coordination in the region.

5. Request information from international agencies on the measures they have taken to improve coverage, transparency and reporting on all indicators of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Human Development Index and the imputation methods used, where applicable. This information will be submitted to the Conference for analysis.
6. Further the establishment and functioning of working groups, expert committees and other forms of organization that support cooperation between countries in order to implement the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities and the specific mandates of the Conference in relation to statistics.
7. Promote ever-greater integration among programmes on statistical development and institution-building in the region, ensuring that they reflect the priorities established by the Conference and the specific needs of each subregion and the countries.
8. Ensure that the mandates of the different working groups, expert committees and other forms of organization of cooperation between countries and agencies include provision for harmonization in the production, integration and dissemination of the relevant statistical data, through the regional use and implementation of the methodologies, guidelines, classifications and procedures approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission.
9. Identify channels of communication between the national organizations producing statistics and the different United Nations agencies for matters relating to the Millennium Development Goals and indicators, with a view to promoting better coordination between countries and agencies and minimizing statistical discrepancies between different sources.