



Distr.  
LIMITED  
LC/REMP.2021/3  
29 July 2021  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH  
21-00442

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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS  
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Virtual meeting, 20 May 2021

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## A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date of the meeting

1. The executive meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was held virtually on 20 May 2021.

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries in their capacity as Presiding Officers: Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations system entity also attended: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

### Chair

4. The Presiding Officers, elected at the third session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, were as follows:

Chair: Peru

Vice-Chairs: Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Suriname and Uruguay.

## B. AGENDA

5. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Presentation of the report on the virtual dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective.
  - Report of the Chair.
  - Comments by the delegations.
3. Preparatory process of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
  - Report of the technical secretariat.
  - Comments by the delegations.

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<sup>1</sup> See the full list of participants in annex 2.

4. Place and date of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. Other matters.
6. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

## **C. PROCEEDINGS**

### **Opening session**

6. At the opening session, statements were made by Raul García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Silvia Loli Espinoza, Minister for Women's Affairs and Vulnerable Populations of Peru, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; and Harold Robinson, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

7. The Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of ECLAC highlighted the increasing importance of multilateral instruments to reduce inequality gaps in the region's societies in the pressing situation caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) health crisis, citing the examples of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He said the pandemic had exacerbated poverty, inequality, job insecurity and educational gaps, and increased the burden of paid and unpaid work, particularly affecting specific population groups. The challenges were considerable, so a call for greater collaboration was needed, with more commitment and a more ambitious road map in the 2030 Agenda and the Montevideo Consensus. The Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean offered an ideal opportunity to address the challenges proposed by those two instruments in relation to different population groups, such as children, adolescents, women, older persons, migrants, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons, and Afrodescendants. Indeed, the Conference could be a key mechanism to apply the principle of leaving no one behind.

8. The Minister for Women's Affairs and Vulnerable Populations of Peru, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, said the pandemic had widened existing gaps and had caused setbacks in the already extremely vulnerable situations of the populations specifically targeted by the agenda of the Conference. Despite the difficulties, the Conference, governments, civil society organizations and academic bodies, which had joined in the fight against the pandemic, had continued their work. During the health emergency, governments should focus especially on ensuring quality services for all without any form of discrimination. In that regard, it was imperative for the region to strengthen commitments to the priority measures of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and international instruments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda of the Conference had already been set and existing backlogs and new challenges had to be analysed. In addition to pursuing equality and social inclusion, actions should firmly combat gender violence, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, which were endemic ills in the region that the pandemic had exacerbated.

9. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNFPA said that despite the substantial obstacles imposed by the pandemic, efforts must be redoubled to avoid reversals and to maintain, deepen and even accelerate progress towards the intergovernmentally agreed goals and targets in the area of population and development. Particularly important were those originating from the agreements of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, which had been renewed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2014 and strengthened and expanded at the Nairobi Summit on the International Conference on Population and Development, in 2019. Recalling that countries of the region had met for the first time in the framework of the Conference in August 2013, he said that even in the challenging circumstances of the pandemic, the current meeting offered a terrific opportunity to assess progress, especially with a view to 2023, the tenth anniversary of the Conference. The pandemic presented countries with mutually reinforcing health, economic and social challenges that made the region's characteristic inequalities more apparent. To overcome those challenges, cooperation mechanisms among countries must be promoted, and he pledged UNFPA support for those efforts.

Presentation of the report on the virtual dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective (agenda item 2)

10. The Chair of the Presiding Officers reported on the virtual dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective, which had been held in the second half of 2020 and which, as Chair, she had been responsible for leading through the Ministry for Women's Affairs and Vulnerable Populations of Peru, with the support of the Presiding Officers, the technical secretariat and UNFPA. She said that five virtual dialogues had been held between August and December 2020, involving representatives of governments, civil society, academia and international agencies. The dialogues, which had focused on migrants, Afrodescendent populations, sexual and reproductive health challenges, persons with disabilities and the impact of the pandemic in the Caribbean, had a total of around 17,500 participants, including registered participants and those who joined through social networks, meaning that their reach was very broad and their audience very diverse.

11. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Cuba expressed his country's commitment to the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He described the pandemic situation in the country and the actions taken by the Government of Cuba to mitigate its impact on the population. He also referred to the negative effects of the blockade imposed by the United States on his country.

12. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said the pandemic had highlighted the region's structural problems and the strategic importance of the Sustainable Development Goals, progress towards which needed to be accelerated. The sanctions and coercive measures against his country were exacerbating the impact of the pandemic on its population.

Preparatory process of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 3)

13. A representative of the secretariat reported on the preparatory process of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Five key aspects of that process were: confirmation that the fourth session of the Conference would be held; preparation of the working document for the session; the activities of the working group on indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development; implementation of a virtual platform to contribute to regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development; and the timeline for submitting national reports and the draft second regional report on the implementation of the Consensus.

14. The representative of the secretariat said that the first aspect related to the date of the fourth session of the Regional Conference, the format of the session and the country to serve as the next Chair. The representative then presented proposed content for a technical document on the sociodemographic impacts of the pandemic in the region, with recommendations for recovery and reconstruction within the framework of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. It was imperative to resume the activities of the working group, making adjustments in accordance with current needs and conditions to the proposal formulated in 2019 for ongoing activities to define the pending metadata of the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The secretariat was continuing to develop the virtual platform with a view to having an initial version available in the third quarter of 2021. Work was also continuing on the document with proposed updates to its content. Lastly, regarding preparation of a timeline for submitting national reports and the draft second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, in line with the global cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, and with the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in early 2020 a preliminary proposal had been prepared. However, it would have to be reviewed and submitted for consideration by the member countries of the Conference, owing to the postponement of the fourth session of the Conference.

Place and date of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 4)

15. Under this agenda item, the representative of Mexico said that civil society networks and organizations had expressed concern over the virtual format limiting their full participation in the session of the Conference.<sup>2</sup> In her view, conditions were not right for a face-to-face meeting in 2021. She therefore suggested considering the civil society proposal and postponing the fourth session of the Conference until mid-2022, with a view to holding an in-person meeting. The Chair said that it was difficult to achieve a truly participatory process in the virtual meeting format. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNFPA said civil society organizations played a crucial role and it was important to be able to hold the session of the Conference face-to-face.

16. The secretariat offered to host the fourth session of the Conference at ECLAC headquarters, which would reduce organization costs for the country serving as Chair, and called for preparations to be made to hold the session in a hybrid format, which would include both face-to-face and online participation. The representative of Uruguay supported the secretariat's proposal and reaffirmed her country's commitment to the Conference and to the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The representative of Jamaica agreed with the proposal to postpone the session until 2022 and to hold it in a hybrid format at ECLAC headquarters. Some representatives said that it was necessary to start early with preparation of the fourth session of the Conference. The Chair expressed support for the secretariat's proposal to hold the session in a hybrid format at ECLAC headquarters in the first half of 2022. The Presiding Officers agreed to hold the fourth session of the Regional Conference in the first half of 2022, on a date to be decided, at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, in a hybrid in-person and virtual format. The secretariat would consult, as necessary, with the Presiding Officers to secure a proposal regarding the member country that would assume the chairship of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in time for the fourth session of the Regional Conference.

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<sup>2</sup> By letter dated 19 May 2021 to the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, the technical secretariat of the Conference and UNFPA.

Other matters (agenda item 5)

17. Under this agenda item, the representative of Mexico proposed including in the agreements a paragraph requesting that UNFPA and the other competent agencies, funds and programmes should continue contributing, as appropriate, to the implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The proposal was accepted and incorporated into the text of the agreements (paragraph 7).

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 6)

18. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the agreements contained in annex 1.

**Closing session**

19. At the closing session, the Chair of the Presiding Officers welcomed the reactivation of the institutional framework of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. She said that was an important achievement given the severe difficulties and enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, she reaffirmed the commitment of the countries of the region to the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and its full implementation. In that regard, active and decisive participation by civil society organizations and academia was crucial, as was the collaboration of international organizations. Before closing the meeting, she again thanked ECLAC, in its capacity as technical secretariat, and UNFPA, for their support for the activities carried out by the Chair.





## Annex 1

**AGREEMENTS**

*At their executive meeting held virtually on 20 May 2021, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,*

*Considering* the postponement of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development of Latin America and the Caribbean and related commitments because of the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Taking into account* the virtual dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective, organized in 2020 by the Chair of the Regional Conference on Population and Development with the support of the technical secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund, agreed to:

1. *Hold* the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean during the first half of 2022, on a date to be decided, at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, in a hybrid in-person and virtual format;

2. *Urge* the countries to make every effort to send high-level, inclusive, diverse and pluralistic official delegations to the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, including representatives from ministries and national offices engaged with the population and development agenda, as well as representatives of civil society organizations and academia involved in the process of implementing the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development;

3. *Request* the secretariat to prepare, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, a document on the sociodemographic impacts of the pandemic in the region, with recommendations for recovery and reconstruction within the framework of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, to be presented at the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

4. *Request* the working group on indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development to report on the progress of its activities at the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

5. *Request* the secretariat to present the website of the virtual platform to contribute to regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, including a proposal for updating its content, at the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

6. *Ask* the Chair of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, with the support of the secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund, to prepare a proposed timeline for the submission of national reports and of the regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus, in line with global cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, and with the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

7. *Request* the United Nations Population Fund and the other competent agencies, funds and programmes to continue contributing, as appropriate, to the implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development;

8. *Commend* and thank the Chair, the secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund for organizing the wide-ranging and wide-reaching virtual dialogues held during 2020;

9. *Also commend* the secretariat for the preparation of the reports on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective,<sup>1</sup> and invite the secretariat to disseminate them as widely as possible among countries, civil society organizations, academia and the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations;

10. *Thank* the Chair, the secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund for organizing this virtual executive meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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<sup>1</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “The impact of COVID-19: an opportunity to reaffirm the central role of migrants’ human rights in sustainable development”, *COVID-19 Reports*, Santiago, 2020; “Challenges for the protection of older persons and their rights during the COVID-19 pandemic”, *COVID-19 Reports*, Santiago, 2020; “People of African descent and COVID-19: unveiling structural inequalities in Latin America”, *COVID-19 Reports*, Santiago, 2021; “Persons with disabilities and their rights in the COVID-19 pandemic: leaving no one behind”, *COVID-19 Reports*, Santiago, 2021; ECLAC and others, “The impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples in Latin America (Abya Yala): between invisibility and collective resistance”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2020/171), Santiago, ECLAC, 2021.

## Annex 2

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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## **B. Sistema de las Naciones Unidas United Nations system**

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