



Comprehensive Development Plan

for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras
and south-southeast Mexico



United Nations

Summary

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Summary



United Nations

Alicia Bárcena
Executive Secretary

Mario Cimoli
Deputy Executive Secretary

Raúl García-Buchaca
Deputy Executive Secretary
for Programme Administration and Analysis

Sally Shaw
Officer in Charge, Documents and Publications Division

Work on this document was coordinated by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with the collaboration of Mario Cimoli, Deputy Executive Secretary.

The drafting group, which was directed by Alvaro Calderón, included Hugo Beteta, Miguel del Castillo, Ramón Padilla and Pablo Yanes, with the collaboration of María Castro, Marco Dini, Rebeca Gerardo-Tavira, Nicolo Gligo, Sebastián Herreros, José Manuel Iraheta, Zebulun Kreiter, Julie Lennox, Debora Ley, Jesús López, Jorge Mario Martínez, Rodrigo Martínez, Leda Peralta, Wilson Peres, Gabriel Pérez, Juan Carlos Rivas, Mônica Rodrigues, Indira Romero, Ricardo Sánchez, Jesús Santamaría, Nunzia Saporito, Humberto Soto, Octavio Sotomayor, Hugo Ventura and Francisco Villareal, all from ECLAC.

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Foreword

The main purpose of this document is to address the structural causes of northward migration from the countries of northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and south-southeast Mexico. This process is associated with factors such as poverty, inequality, unemployment and the impact of natural disasters. The scale and severity of the situation have only increased with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

It is therefore urgent to implement concrete strategies, policies and projects to make migration an option, not a necessity imposed by deprivation.

This means undertaking specific actions aimed at achieving economic growth with employment and attaining greater well-being, with a comprehensive vision and in the framework of a new development pattern.

On 1 December 2018, on the occasion of the inauguration of President Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico signed a declaration in which they laid the foundations of understanding for a new relationship between the four countries through a Comprehensive Development Plan. The four signatory countries expressed their willingness to deepen cooperation on development and migration to make human mobility a choice rather than an obligation, and requested technical support from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the design and implementation of the initiative.

Although this approach was already relevant at the end of 2018, now, in the light of the difficult lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more valid and more urgent.

In accordance with this mandate, ECLAC prepared a comprehensive proposal with guidelines for action based on local, national and subregional realities. The aim of the Comprehensive Development Plan is to contribute to ensuring that migration

in these countries is safe, orderly and regular and, at the same time, to tackle its structural causes in order to enhance people’s well-being and ensure that human mobility is a free choice.¹

On 20 May 2019, ECLAC submitted a Comprehensive Development Plan proposal centred on three components: analysis of the economic, social and environmental situation; identification of areas of opportunity; and formulation of policy recommendations. These recommendations were grouped under four pillars: (i) economic development; (ii) social well-being; (iii) environmental sustainability, climate change and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction; and (iv) comprehensive management of the migration cycle. The first phase of this initiative was implemented in constant consultation with the national authorities and with contributions from a number of institutions, in particular funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system (see the following diagram).

Diagram

Funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system that contributed to the Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

¹ The objectives of the Comprehensive Development Plan are compatible with those of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: to mitigate the adverse and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods in their countries of origin, to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face at different stages of migration by respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights and providing them with care and assistance; to address the legitimate concerns of transit and destination States and communities; to create conducive conditions that enable all migrants to enrich societies; and to facilitate their contributions to sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels. See United Nations, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (A/RES/73/195), 2019 [online] <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/195>.

On 12 September 2019, the Secretary-General of the United Nations established a special coordination mechanism, chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, to facilitate effective and integrated support by the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to the Governments of the four countries.

This document forms part of that mandate and seeks to streamline the process and to prepare an implementation agenda based on proposals stemming from the countries' needs and the experience of different regional and international institutions, in accordance with international human rights laws, with a view to influencing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The jointly prepared set of proposals is at the heart of this initiative, providing the impetus and realism that the Plan requires.

This document incorporates the contributions to the Comprehensive Development Plan on which the United Nations system is working or that it proposes to take forward. There are both individual actions and actions coordinated between two or more funds, programmes or specialized agencies. Individual actions include: (i) those that are currently being implemented and are related to Comprehensive Development Plan proposals; (ii) actions and programmes that will come into operation in the 2020–2021 period, have financing and possess significant synergies with Comprehensive Development Plan objectives; and (iii) new projects to be incorporated into the set of proposals as they come on stream. In the case of coordinated actions, funds, programmes and specialized agencies at the regional level will form issue-based coalitions around the four Comprehensive Development Plan pillars.

Since its inception, the Comprehensive Development Plan has recognized the importance of the efforts and outcomes of the integration process deployed in Central America, in particular by the regional bodies and institutions of the Central American Integration System (SICA). For decades, Central America has been making significant efforts and has been allocating resources to deepen ties and promote integration between the countries in the subregion, which has resulted in the emergence of various institutions and spaces for dialogue and cooperation. In addition, the Central American regional space has mechanisms for liaising and cooperating with its neighbours, especially Mexico, such as the Tuxtla Mechanism for Dialogue and Coordination, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project and the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle.² The Comprehensive Development Plan is aligned with these efforts and builds synergies in such areas as cooperation on trade facilitation, energy integration and managing the risk of extreme weather events.

History has shown that the Central American countries are capable of building agreements with innovative integration processes, as well as of entering into cooperation commitments with other Latin American countries, in particular Mexico. This new, ECLAC-coordinated, collective proposal wholeheartedly embraces the spirit of the

² In 1996, the Tuxtla Mechanism for Dialogue and Coordination was formalized as a space for political dialogue, the consolidation of peace and democracy and the promotion of cooperation between Mexico and the Central American countries. Subsequently, the Puebla-Panama Plan, which in 2008 became the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project, consolidated the spirit of cooperation between Central America and Mexico and Belize, Colombia and the Dominican Republic subsequently joined it. Since 2008, within the framework of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Tuxtla Mechanism for Dialogue and Coordination, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project has become a space for cooperation that facilitates the exchange of experiences and good practice, consensus- and capacity-building and the identification of resources to tackle regional priorities.

Contadora Act for Peace and Cooperation in Central America and the principles of the Esquipulas Accords, with an emphasis on peace, justice, solidarity, development, international cooperation and respect for the sovereignty of States. Those two eras of diplomacy should serve as inspiration for the new relationship that El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico are seeking to forge in order to address jointly the development challenges of the twenty-first century, including human mobility.

In recent years, human mobility (migration and forced displacement) from northern Central America has been at its most dramatic and complex, with the number of migrants in transit, returnees, unaccompanied minors and asylum-seekers having increased, as has the number of complete families and high-visibility caravans transiting through those countries and Mexico. Faced with this reality, which has raised human mobility to the highest priority on political and development agendas, the United Nations system is seeking to coordinate and generate actions that help to address the migration cycle comprehensively (origin, transit, destination and return), from a perspective that is not only humanitarian, but also economic, social, environmental, and centred around human security and human rights.

In parallel, on 14 August 2019 the nine state governments of Mexico's south-southeast region (Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Veracruz and Yucatán) signed the Oaxaca Pact. Within the framework of the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO) and its Commission for the Comprehensive Development of the South-Southeast Region, these states will coordinate to attract growth and development and to mitigate poverty. The Oaxaca Pact provides for the creation and rehabilitation of railway, road connectivity, port and energy infrastructure projects. As the Comprehensive Development Plan is aligned with and complements and boosts the Oaxaca Pact, the Plan's actions in Mexico will focus on these nine states.

On the occasion of the inauguration of President Alejandro Giammattei of Guatemala on 15 January 2020, the ECLAC Executive Secretary reported on the Comprehensive Development Plan's progress to the President of Guatemala and the foreign ministers of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. In bilateral meetings with the ECLAC Executive Secretary, the countries' presidents and foreign ministers appointed institutions and officials to prioritize Comprehensive Development Plan projects and programmes in their respective countries. Subsequently, ECLAC officials visited the four countries and worked with the designated officials and their staff to establish linkages between the Comprehensive Development Plan and national development plans, Government plans and national goals and priorities. High-level officials in each country prioritized, selected and developed the initiatives contained in the Comprehensive Development Plan.

The proposals in the Comprehensive Development Plan are innovative responses designed to renew and strengthen the relationship between northern Central America and the states of south-southeast Mexico. The proposals relaunch and scale up regional integration, building on existing achievements.

Effective implementation of the regional, national and local projects in the Comprehensive Development Plan will be a result of the actions of: national and local governments; regional integration institutions; private-sector and civil-society representatives; funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system; international financial institutions; and donors of the funds needed to implement this agenda.

Against this backdrop, this document charts a path towards an economically efficient, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable style of development that meets the pressing demands generated by long- and short-term situations. It fosters economic development in countries of origin to enhance people's well-being, founded on a human security and human rights approach. The proposal identifies innovative responses based on renewing and strengthening the relationship between northern Central America and Mexico, relaunching and scaling up integration. Adopting this perspective, the Comprehensive Development Plan:

- Incorporates a human rights and human security approach (employment, income, education, social protection, public safety and livelihoods).
- Puts people's human rights at the centre.
- Strengthens national efforts and priorities.
- Proposes development policies for lagging areas.
- Values, protects and capitalizes on the subregion's natural wealth and cultural diversity for the benefit of its population.
- Explores synergies and promotes regional integration.
- Includes human mobility within a vision of sustainable development.
- Incorporates a comprehensive view of the migration cycle (origin, transit, destination and return).
- Re-examines matters relating to governance, institution-building and the creation of safe spaces in the cities and places of origin and the transit spaces of migrants in order to analyse and address them.

The pre-pandemic diagnosis already revealed the structural problems posed by economic development, welfare and social protection, environmental degradation and vulnerability to disasters, as well as the strong pressures that all this implies for forced and unsafe migration. As mentioned earlier, all these factors have worsened in the current context, where neither events, nor possible exit scenarios, nor the final toll of this major crisis can be predicted.

The complex reality of human mobility in this subregion stems from economic reasons, violence, the pursuit of family reunification and pressures arising from global warming. It encompasses regular migration, irregular migration, internal displacement and the movement of unaccompanied minors, refugees and asylum-seekers. It is not a short-term phenomenon but rather a structural condition.

As all the indicators show, these structural determinants have worsened and deepened as a consequence of the pandemic, to levels that would have been difficult to predict just a few months ago. It is therefore no exaggeration to point out that a social process with the characteristics of a humanitarian crisis is now compounding the already complex mobility phenomenon.

In his presentation of "Policy Brief: The impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean," António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, warned that the entire region is experiencing the worst economic, health, social and humanitarian

crisis in a century.³ That is the scale of the challenge that lies ahead. For the four countries involved in the Comprehensive Development Plan, this would lead to a sharp decline in economic growth, a significant increase in poverty and extreme poverty, violence and greater inequality, as the ECLAC COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean has been pointing out.⁴

Just to give an idea of the depth and momentum of the process we are experiencing, ECLAC has estimated that the economies of all four countries will experience negative growth in 2020: -8.6% in El Salvador, -2.5% in Guatemala, -8.0% in Honduras and -9.0% in Mexico.⁵ This weak economic performance is expected to be accompanied by a sharp increase in poverty throughout this subregion: 6.5 percentage points in El Salvador, 3.0 percentage points in Guatemala, 4.2 percentage points in Honduras and 7.6 percentage points in Mexico.⁶ All this is compounded by the fact that, even before the health crisis, these countries had the highest poverty rates in Latin America and the Caribbean. Historically, several of the nine Mexican states involved in the Comprehensive Development Plan have had the highest poverty rates in the country.

If the outlook was already complex before the pandemic, now it is even more serious, making the need to act even more urgent. There is a real risk that the post-pandemic period will confront us with less dynamic economies, more impoverished populations and more polarized societies— and this risk should not be underestimated.

We therefore consider the human security approach underpinning the Comprehensive Development Plan to be of the greatest importance— only with a comprehensive vision (that places people at the centre and allows them to access essential livelihoods and meet their various human needs, while guaranteeing them a life free from violence and helping to build a culture of peace) will it be possible to achieve development objectives and, in so doing, transform human mobility from a necessity to a free choice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare our weaknesses and this global event has revealed that a style of development based on deepening inequalities, increasingly insecure social reproduction, environmental degradation and weakened multilateralism and international cooperation is unsustainable.

This awareness underlies the different assumptions that the world will not and should not be the same after the pandemic and that, consequently, it is high time to discuss the foundations of a new regime of accumulation, a different welfare and social protection system, a new global environmental agreement and a global, regional and subregional governance commensurate with the challenges we face as a species and as a planet.

A closer look reveals that these are the objectives defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose validity and relevance is evident, although the conditions for achieving them have now become much more complex and adverse. It is important to emphasize that this is a crisis of uncertain outcome.

³ See United Nations, “Policy Brief: the Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean”, 2020 [online] https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_lac.pdf.

⁴ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean: economic and social impact”, 2020 [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/covid-19>.

⁵ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2020 (LC/PUB.2020/17-P), Santiago, 2020.

⁶ See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Addressing the growing impact of COVID-19 with a view to reactivation with equality: new projections”, *Special Report COVID-19*, No. 5, 2020 [online] https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45784/S2000470_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

There is a range of possible futures that depend on the immediate responses of Governments and society to the pandemic, as well as on its long-term consequences. This is the time to consider how to use economic stimulus packages in rebuilding economies and society to support a long-term change towards greater social equality and towards sustainable and inclusive practices. By taking a short-term approach, we are gambling with the long term future. How we recover is just as important as the recovery itself. The following assertion by the United Nations in the policy brief presented by the Secretary-General in July 2020 is therefore of paramount importance:

Recovery from the pandemic should be an occasion to transform the development model of Latin America and the Caribbean while strengthening democracy, safeguarding human rights and sustaining peace, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁷

This can be summed up in the concrete and powerful proposition:

In Latin America and the Caribbean, building back better implies building back with equality.⁸

While these assertions are important for the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, they are of particular relevance to the four countries involved in the Comprehensive Development Plan because many of the structural problems requiring solutions are both widespread and concentrated in these particular countries.

We start from the premise that signs of exhaustion of the prevailing style of development (including increasing flows of migrants and refugees) were there before the pandemic and that its serious economic and social effects will persist afterwards. COVID-19 has intensified and accelerated a crisis that had been evolving for years.

Although common challenges are observed across the subregion, the magnitude of the effects will differ and, to a large extent, will reflect each country's response to containing the health crisis and tackling the consequences of a socioeconomic crisis exacerbated by the external shock stemming from a crisis in the economic and environmental model. The effects will also be influenced by such factors as each country's economic structure, institutions and history and the way in which it is integrated into the global economy.

However, one cannot fail to note that it is very difficult to find solutions and ways forward solely within the framework of national structures. Deepening international cooperation and strengthening integration are crucial to designing a new development model. The Comprehensive Development Plan therefore brings together the four countries as a subregion that needs to strengthen its ties, cooperation and integration, particularly with south-southeast Mexico.

It is important to reassess the role of integration at a time of far-reaching changes that are shaking the foundations of the economy, society and international relations. These changes call for more and better integration and a framework of respect for multilateralism and international rules that facilitate achievement of the SDG targets and the economic and social development of small economies such as

⁷ United Nations, "Policy Brief: the Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean", 2020 [online] https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_lac.pdf.

⁸ United Nations, "Policy Brief: the Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean", 2020 [online] https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_lac.pdf.

those in Central America. Such changes also pose challenges for large economies such as Mexico's, with respect to their relations and integration policies with the rest of Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean, specifically with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Reinterpreting the role of integration begins with identifying the changes and challenges that will face the subregion after the COVID-19 pandemic. The position of the countries in the subregion is doubly weak in the new environment: on the one hand, they are very open economies that have succeeded in becoming deeply integrated into global production processes through trade and investment; on the other hand, they are small economies with little room for manoeuvre. This makes integration and multilateralism necessary and vital paths for the subregion.

To state that the pandemic has exposed structural problems is also to acknowledge that any analysis of its consequences and implications should not be limited to its short-term effects. These effects are varied and, in many respects, serious. However, at this critical juncture, the focus should not be solely on short-term effects and impacts. It is also necessary to resist the temptation to consider the pandemic as a blip or brief hiatus, rather than as the manifestation of an extreme situation demanding a shift in direction, a turning point in the face of what is increasingly considered as a crossroads facing our civilization. In the short term, it is essential to envision and remember the long term.

When delivering the 18th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture on 18 July 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations made a powerful appeal, in light of the consequences of COVID-19, to tackle the inequality pandemic, to build a new social contract and to endow society with a new global deal for what can be called a new era.

In the words of the Secretary-General:

COVID-19 is a human tragedy. But it has also created a generational opportunity.

An opportunity to build back a more equal and sustainable world.

The response to the pandemic, and to the widespread discontent that preceded it, must be based on a New Social Contract and a New Global Deal that create equal opportunities for all and respect the rights and freedoms of all.

This is the only way that we will meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda— agreements that address precisely the failures being exposed and exploited by the pandemic.

A New Social Contract within societies will enable young people to live in dignity; will ensure women have the same prospects and opportunities as men; and will protect the sick, the vulnerable, and minorities of all kinds.⁹

⁹ United Nations, "Secretary-General's Nelson Mandela Lecture: "Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: a New Social Contract for a New Era" [as delivered]", 18 July 2020 [online] <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-07-18/secretary-generals-nelson-mandela-lecture-%E2%80%9Ctackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era%E2%80%9D-delivered>.

In the same spirit, he makes an urgent appeal:

Let's face the facts. The global political and economic system is not delivering on critical global public goods: public health, climate action, sustainable development, peace.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought home the tragic disconnect between self-interest and the common interest; and the huge gaps in governance structures and ethical frameworks.

To close those gaps, and to make the New Social Contract possible, we need a New Global Deal to ensure that power, wealth and opportunities are shared more broadly and fairly at the international level.

A new model for global governance must be based on full, inclusive and equal participation in global institutions.

Without that, we face even wider inequalities and gaps in solidarity —like those we see today in the fragmented global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰

All the signs are that the pandemic is bringing us to the end of a way of producing, exchanging, distributing and consuming, to the exhaustion of a style of development, of the regime of accumulation. That is what we mean when we say that we are facing a new era.

In the subregion, the regime of accumulation (the set of norms, institutions, regulations and social relations around which the processes of production, circulation, distribution and consumption are structured during a historical period and with a certain technology base) has been characterized by a number of factors, with differences and nuances between countries, including: high concentration of property, wealth and income; strong trends towards financialization; growing and, in some cases, disadvantageous integration into the global economy and hyperglobalization; great structural heterogeneity; a marked trend towards primarization, extractivism and low production diversification; strong prevalence of capital over labour and deterioration of the functional distribution of income; high market power of companies and propensity for oligopolization; persistence of rentier and concentration practices; large overlap between political power and economic power; weak and inadequate taxation, with many regressive components; lax environmental regulations; a highly fossil fuel-reliant energy mix; and inadequate, fragmented, hierarchical welfare and social protection systems prone to commodification and residualism.

This is the structure underpinning the culture of privilege, which, in recent years (as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic) has shown increasingly that it leads to poor economic growth, high inequality, persistent poverty and environmental degradation, four factors that constitute structural causes of human mobility. That is why the future needs to be different— and so does the style of development.

The three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are interrelated and interdependent. That is why a comprehensive development proposal is being discussed. The environmental dimension should not

¹⁰ United Nations, “Secretary-General’s Nelson Mandela Lecture: “Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: a New Social Contract for a New Era” [as delivered]”, 18 July 2020 [online] <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-07-18/secretary-generals-nelson-mandela-lecture-%E2%80%9Ctackling-the-inequality-pandemic-new-social-contract-for-new-era%E2%80%9D-delivered>.

continue to be considered as an externality but as an integral part of the economic and social model, that is to say, a component just as important as the other two. Therefore it is not enough to consider solely the impact of the style of growth on the environment; we must also examine how the environmental dimension can be turned into a new engine of economic growth and development, in what ECLAC has called a big push for sustainability. As stated in the 2030 Agenda, the environmental dimension forces us to rethink and redefine existing models of production and consumption and their interrelationships. Simply put, development either will or will not be sustainable.

It should be made clear that the COVID-19 pandemic and other epidemic crises that have been experienced in recent times are related to such factors as the destruction of tropical forests, trade in wild species and patterns of intensive agrifood production with high concentration and confinement of animals. Faced with the urgent need for a speedy economic recovery, there is also the risk of pursuing growth at any cost without incorporating, or discounting, the imperative of sustainability. Here, too, in short-term decisions we are gambling with the long term.

One of the many lessons learned from COVID-19 to date is that it has revealed the limitations and weaknesses of social policies and social protection systems in ensuring people's well-being and guaranteeing their rights, eliminating and preventing poverty and providing a set of certainties and assurances to enable people to fulfil their life plans and aspirations. The pandemic has exposed the precarious conditions in which tens of millions of people in the subregion live, in terms of work and income, effective access to fundamental rights (starting with health), safe water and adequate housing, all of which are basic conditions to meet health recommendations.

The welfare regime is considered as the set of relationships, norms, institutions, rights and regulations that embody the social compact during a historical period, through which access to well-being is (or is not) provided, or is provided to differing degrees, by a complex and interdependent interaction between the State, the market, households, communities and non-state public actors.

The key elements for defining the nature of a welfare regime are: the degree to which the basic requirements of human needs are recognized as rights; the degree of universality in effective access to and accreditation of the quality of services, entitlements and benefits; the degree of de-commodification and de-familiarization of welfare components; substantive equality between women and men; de-feminization of social service provision and access; the degree of alignment between the existing level of economic development and people's standard of well-being; compliance with the principles of progressivity and maximum mobilization of resources; guaranteed attention to requirements at the different stages in the life cycle and the creation of intergenerational equity; consistency with the changing structure of social risks; strong recognition for social and cultural diversity; and the degree to which it does (or does not) reduce inequality, poverty, precariousness, discrimination, exclusion, hierarchization and stratification.

The pandemic has exposed the deep-seated weaknesses and failings of prevailing welfare and social protection systems in this subregion, which, with major differences between countries, are characterized by weak or, at best, fragmented universalism owing to the persistence of corporate schemes and to a growing trend, in recent

decades, towards commodification and residualism. Key aspects of welfare, such as care, also continue to be highly feminized and family-based, with a rigidly gendered division of labour.

They have been exposed as regimes that: have failed to facilitate steady progress towards social equality and poverty eradication; in essence, are not founded on a rights-based approach; and maintain wide social, gender, ethnic, territorial and age-group gaps. Taken as a whole, they lead to inadequate enjoyment of social rights, low social mobility, high levels of precariousness and limited social protection, as the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted.

All this shows that the economic, social and environmental factors behind the escalation of migration, refugee and internal displacement processes not only persist but have worsened. Recent information on deteriorating living conditions in the Central America Dry Corridor and other regions points not only to the intensification of human mobility but also, as noted earlier, to a burgeoning humanitarian crisis.

Therefore, the central tenet of the Comprehensive Development Plan is the need for a new type of development for the subregion from the perspective of sustainability, human security and human rights. The Plan comprises 29 policy recommendations and 114 specific project proposals grouped into the aforementioned four pillars: economic development; social well-being; environmental sustainability, climate change and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction; and comprehensive management of the migration cycle

Following the rationale of the 2030 Agenda, the Comprehensive Development Plan considers the four pillars as interdependent, which is why it has been designed as a coordinated set of proposals rather than as a collection of initiatives. It aims to serve as a link between the short term and the long term, between the fastest possible improvement in people's living conditions and the creation of a new style of development, a different welfare and social protection regime, guaranteed sustainability and human mobility consistent with the rights-based approach. The Plan is therefore also part of this subregion's contribution to compliance with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

As stated earlier, this Comprehensive Development Plan is the result of rich dialogue, lively interaction and deep deliberation between ECLAC, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the national Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, as well as the subnational governments of the nine states of south-southeast Mexico involved in the Plan. Although the presidents of the four countries commissioned ECLAC to draw up the document in December 2018, the end product is the result of a collective effort involving multiple actors, where many voices were heard and a wide range of contributions were collected. All this enhanced the Comprehensive Development Plan and made it more all-encompassing.

To operationalize the Comprehensive Development Plan, this document makes project proposals available to the Governments of the countries, Central American regional integration institutions, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and potential donors, to initiate implementation of this cooperation and development strategy for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico.

It is no exaggeration to say that we are at a turning point. The decisions made during these crucial months are likely to determine the path countries will take in the coming years, if not longer. Diagnosis, recommendations and inputs, as well as proposals prepared jointly with Governments, are the backbone of the Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico.

However, they are just means to achieving the key aims: to improve economic performance; to enhance social well-being; to guarantee sustainability; and to ensure voluntary human mobility with full respect for human rights. After the pandemic, it will be crucial to strive to rebuild better, in a different way and, above all, with equality at the centre.

Alicia Bárcena

*Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission
for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

*Coordinator of the Special Coordination Mechanism
to support implementation of the Comprehensive Development Plan
of the Northern Countries of Central America and Mexico*

General and specific objectives

Create a sustainable development space across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico
Enhance well-being and make migration a choice rather than an obligation



Promote initiatives to improve economic performance, attract investment, increase trade, foster income generation and boost the creation of decent, worthwhile work, first and foremost in the territories that are more predisposed to migration



Promote universal access to social rights and well-being for equality



Promote sustainability, resilience to climate change and comprehensive risk management, to mitigate the impact of climate change as a driver of migration

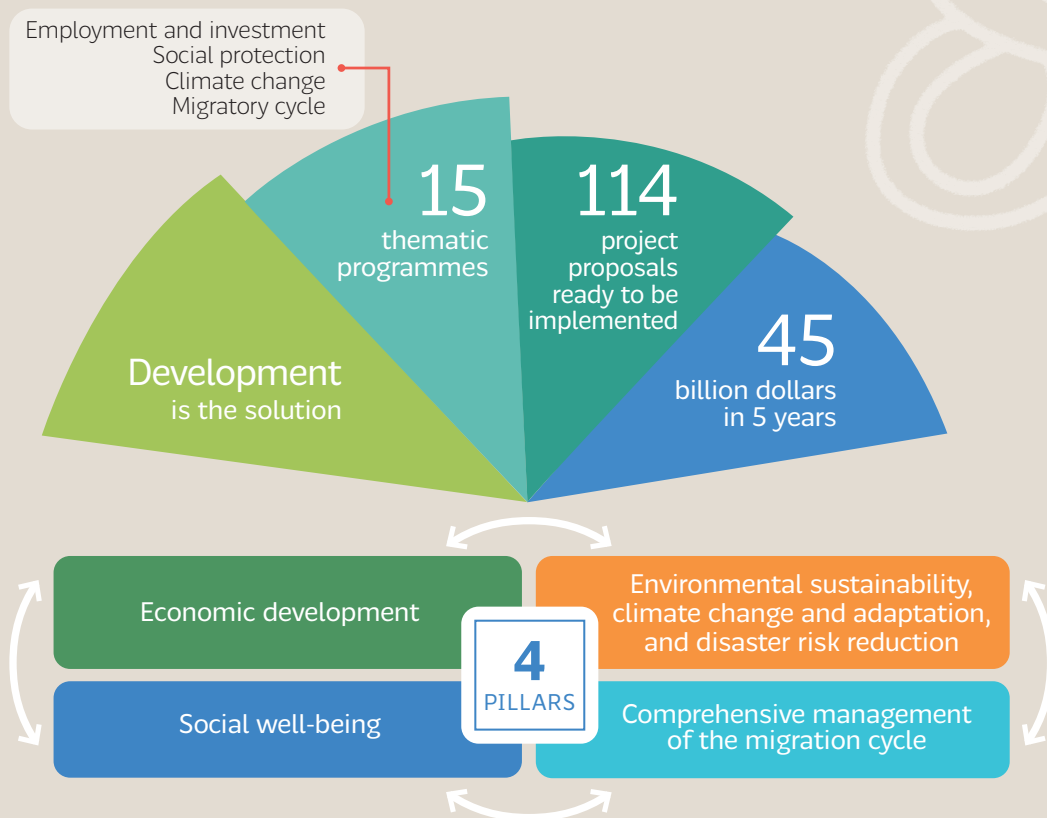


Guarantee the fundamental rights, care, protection, security and dignity of people throughout the migration cycle (origin, transit, destination and return), fostering safe, orderly and regular migration

Geographic coverage of the Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico



Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico



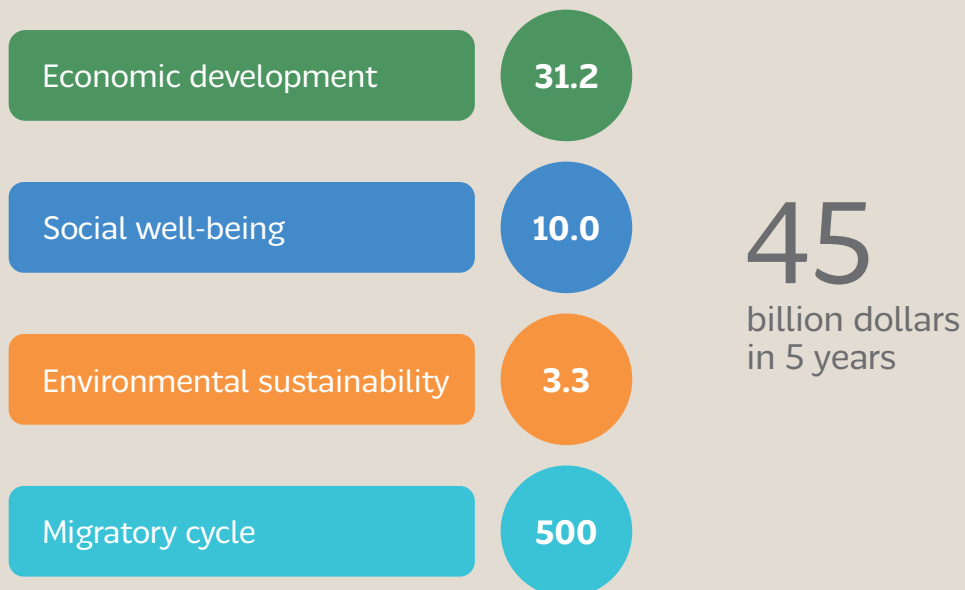
An innovative plan

- Driving force: the political commitment of the four governments
- Joined up proposal by the entire United Nations system
- Economic, social and environmental sustainability
- Territorial dimension that recognizes historical and cultural affinities
- Human security approach
- Rapid response in a period of high uncertainty
- Synergies between ongoing initiatives and new proposals

Actions at all levels: examples of project proposals



Resource mobilization billion dollars



Pillar 1 **promoting economic development**

5 programmes and 49 proposals



Enabling infrastructure

22

proposals



Territorial development

11

proposals



Promoting trade and regional integration

3

proposals



Macroeconomics for development

1

proposal



Productive development

12

proposals

Pillar 2 **moving towards social well-being**

5 programmes and 27 proposals



Social and labour inclusion

10

proposals



Lifelong health

2

proposals



Life-skills

4

proposals



Violence prevention and culture of peace

8

proposals



Comprehensive child development

3

proposals

Pillar 3 **response to climate change**

3 programmes and 16 proposals



Knowledge, data and tools generation

2

proposals



Resilience-building to prevent disaster displacement

6

proposals



Climate change and nature-based solutions

8

proposals

Pillar 4 **a comprehensive management of the migration cycle**

2 programmes and 22 proposals



Comprehensive national responses

8

proposals



Regional actions

14

proposals

A coordinated response by the United Nations system



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

Special Coordination Mechanism



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



UN WOMEN
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



IOM
UN MIGRATION



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



UNAIDS
JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS



unicef



UNOPS



World Food Programme



UN environment programme



UNISDR
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



UNHRC



unesco



UNEP



Pan American Health Organization



IFAD
Investing in rural people



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



UNFPA



UNDP



World Health Organization Americas



Development Coordination Office



EL SALVADOR



UNITED NATIONS GUATEMALA



UNITED NATIONS HONDURAS



UNITED NATIONS MEXICO

An initiative aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Seeking synergies and coordinated actions with the countries at the centre and the support of the subregional integration institutions





The Comprehensive Development Plan aims to create a sustainable development space and generate opportunities to improve the quality of life of the people of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico, thus making migration a choice rather than an obligation. This is an joined up response by the United Nations system, which seeks to generate synergies and coordinate actions with the countries at the centre and the support of subregional integration institutions.



UNITED NATIONS

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Special Coordination Mechanism

