



**XVII**

Conference of Ministers and  
Heads of Planning of  
Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago (hybrid meeting), 17 and 18 January 2023

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**REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AND HEADS OF  
PLANNING OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Santiago (hybrid meeting), 17 and 18 January 2023





1. The seventeenth Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean was held prior to the nineteenth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on 17 and 18 January 2023.<sup>1</sup> The Conference was opened by Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of ECLAC, and Héctor Alexander, Minister of Economy and Finance of Panama, in his capacity as Chair of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).

2. In his opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of ECLAC said that the challenging global context and forecasts for the region were weakening confidence in democratic institutions, which were perceived by citizens as incapable of responding to the increasingly complex challenges of development. Access to State-generated information, systematic mechanisms for public participation in decision-making, transparency, dialogue, accountability and collaboration with the public, especially with young people, were some avenues that could help to rebuild that weakened trust. Notwithstanding the need for a response to the current situation and solutions to existing public problems, States must also look to the long term and strengthen citizen trust by collectively building probable future scenarios that would shape a common vision of the country and design State policies that would make that vision a reality. Against a challenging and turbulent backdrop of high uncertainty and multiple crises, there was public management needed to be not only competent and efficient but also intelligent and resilient, which required a relational and deliberative approach. The decade of action and delivery for sustainable development called for accelerated efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through planned, innovative, coherent and inclusive policies that involved all development stakeholders.

3. The Minister of Economy and Finance of Panama stressed the importance of a new approach to public service, in which State action would create public value based on dialogue around shared values, respond to and serve citizens by facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogue to reach consensus and building an empathetic and collaborative leadership structure that sought partnerships with the private sector, civil society and academia. He was convinced that strengthening institutions and their capacity for dialogue with all development stakeholders was conducive to sustainability of State action, deepening democracy and shaping a future-oriented culture capable of building long-term visions, that were much needed in the countries of the region.

4. Four panel discussions were held during the Conference on foresight as a tool for building innovative and participatory public policies, the open State and citizen participation at the heart of the new public service, the role of innovation in public institutions in accelerating full implementation of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the challenges of a new public service in the territory. Two side events were also held: a discussion on gender mainstreaming in planning, and a presentation of the book *Patrones de desarrollo económico en los seis países de Centroamérica (1950–2018)*, published by the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico. In addition, a workshop was held on foresight for development.

#### Panel 1 – Foresight as a tool for building innovative and participatory public policies

5. Opening remarks were made by foresight for development expert Paola Aceituno and presentations were delivered by the following country representatives: Wayne Henry, Chairman and Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ); Luis Madera, Deputy Minister for Planning and Public Investment in the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic; Luz Keila Gramajo,

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

Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala; and Ana Gabriela Castellani, Secretary for Management and Public Employment of the Head Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of Argentina.

6. The foresight for development expert noted that foresight analysis in the region had received a significant boost owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the collective feeling of uncertainty. Recent political conflicts, the COVID-19 health crisis and climate change had compelled States to look into future studies on the and the need to prepare for a changing context. There were new challenges for the institutionalization of foresight in State structures. Those were related to financing required for foresight analysis and the social participation that involved, the need to develop foresight analysis appropriately at the territorial level, and the need to go beyond a sectoral approach, moving from prospective analysis in certain sectors towards its application in the overall context of national development. Another challenge involved developing a mind set at the State level that could visualize the future and plan for it by building strategies.

7. The Chairman and Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica said one major challenge was the need to equip public officials with new capacities so that they could address the crises countries were facing, especially in places where foresight was highly useful. Political will and commitment from government were necessary to face the three crises caused by political conflict, the pandemic and climate change, all of which obliged States to think about the future and how to prepare for it.

8. The Deputy Minister for Planning and Public Investment in the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic said that foresight analysis had been used in his country to develop the National Development Strategy 2030 through a participatory process over three years that had enabled consensus-building but had not yielded any single vision of the future. While the main advantage of the process was that it had placed the long term at the heart of public policy, there remained the challenge of coordinating the long term with medium- and short-term planning. Other challenges included the need to develop forward thinking, which was fundamental to foresight analysis, and apply this anticipatory strategy to efforts, as well as the financing requirements of foresight, given that after formulating foresight-based strategies, few public budgets included a clear and pertinent intertemporal component.

9. The Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala cited the K'atun National Development Plan 2032 as an example of the application of foresight, the development of which incorporated scenarios of future trends in the definition of present-day action. The Plan was linked to the budget and parts of it could be programmed with every annual budget. The uptake of the Plan in the territories represented a significant challenge.

10. Lastly, the Secretary for Management and Public Employment of the Head Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of Argentina said that a tradition of foresight analysis existed in her country in specific areas, but not in a national plan. Foresight enabled a holistic approach but was a major challenge in public management due to the vertical design of ministries. A lack of horizontal inter-agency coordination had negative effects such as overlap, profound disparities and gaps in planning and public management. Among the challenges in planning and foresight were a lack of innovation in public management processes, a prevalence of short-term planning, insufficient assessment mechanisms, the limited availability of data, little inter-agency and inter-sectoral coordination, and the presence of institutional silos.

Panel 2: The open State and citizen participation at the heart of the new public service

11. Opening remarks were made by Danielle Andrade, expert in citizen participation, and the following country representatives made presentations: Cristina Vio Gorget, Coordinator of the Presidential Advisory Council for Public Integrity and Transparency of the Office of the Minister-Secretary General of the Office of the President of Chile; Jairon Merchán, National Secretary for Planning of Ecuador; Kate Wilson, Legal Officer with the Department of Sustainable Development in the Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training of Saint Lucia; and Isaac Alfie, Director of the Office of Planning and the Budget of Uruguay.

12. The expert in citizen participation said that an open State and citizen participation were central to a new public service and described the ways in which countries of the region were working towards that goal and the challenges that lay ahead. Traditional approaches to citizen participation no longer sufficed to provide adequate responses to existing tensions in power relations and there was a need to move from consultation to power-sharing in decision-making. The State acted as a facilitator, negotiator and mediator in the search for solutions to society's problems, by bringing together citizens and other development stakeholders in decision-making processes geared toward long-term common interests and responsibilities. The expert highlighted regional progress made in the co-creation of public policy through the voluntary Open Government Partnership among 16 countries of the region, and in the standards established in the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), the first environmental treaty to be signed in the region, that was innovative not only in its content, but also for the open, transparent and collaborative manner in which it had been negotiated.

13. The Coordinator of the Presidential Advisory Council for Public Integrity and Transparency of the Office of the Minister-Secretary General of the Office of the President of Chile highlighted progress made in Chile in citizen participation and open government, including a recently launched national strategy for public integrity, developed using a participatory approach, and new guidelines for citizen participation aimed at strengthening the effective implementation of Act No. 20500. Despite progress, however, the perception of corruption in the country remained unchanged and levels of distrust were on the rise. It was therefore important to pursue a proactive approach, strengthening coordination among all public, private and civil society stakeholders. Implementing an open State was challenging because social relationships and problems had reached new levels of complexity and called for inclusive solutions. Citizen participation and inter-agency coordination offered an opportunity to better understand and solve problems.

14. The National Secretary for Planning of Ecuador emphasized that transparency strengthened governments. He highlighted Ecuador's progress in open government, including the country's open data portal and the Opportunity Creation Plan 2021–2025, Ecuador's national development plan, which had been formulated with citizen participation, incorporated the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a cross-cutting manner and included impact indicators for each proposed goal. Ecuador was moving forward in its plan for an open State that included the possibility of an open Parliament and progress in the areas of justice and elections.

15. Kate Wilson, Legal Officer with the Department of Sustainable Development in the Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training of Saint Lucia, highlighted how the ratification of the Escazú Agreement had served as a guide for improving relevant standards in Saint Lucia. For example, work was under way to draft legislation on access to public information in line with the standards of the Agreement. Further progress on a new public service, in which an open State and citizen participation were central, required greater synergies and cooperation among all

stakeholders in society, as well as sustainable financing. She called on the countries of the region that had not yet done so to accede to the Escazú Agreement as a tool to guide action on transparency and citizen participation.

16. Lastly, the Director of the Office of Planning and the Budget (OPP) of Uruguay said that effective citizen participation required knowledge and that, as such, important information should be public. He noted that social dialogue was the way forward in public affairs but there needed to be a willingness to work constructively to solve problems. He also emphasized the importance of education, capacity-building and access to information in fostering the participation of society in public affairs.

Panel 3: The role of innovation in public institutions in accelerating full implementation of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

17. Opening remarks were made by Roman Yosif, an expert in public innovation, and the following country representatives made presentations: Marlon Andrés Navarro, Vice-Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica; Giofianni Peirano Torriani, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Strategic Planning (CEPLAN) of Peru; Wayne Henry, Chairman and Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ); and Luz Keila Gramajo, Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala.

18. The public innovation expert stated that innovation was about more than just technology or the digitalization of procedures, which the pandemic had shown was a priority for many governments. Innovation implied revamping structures, changing paradigms, radically redesigning internal processes and developing new public sector value propositions. The digital or technological component included in many proposals as an enabler of change was a means, not an end, and recent simultaneous crises made public innovation increasingly important. That highlighted the need to invest in a permanent structure for transformation of the State, which included the financial cost of implementing new practices and processes, and, more importantly, the high cost of change management by public servants. Consequently, there were several challenges related to promoting the new approach to the design, management and implementation of public policies. That said, recent experience had showed that the benefits of innovation outweighed the costs. The institutional framework of public administration must be continually updated to ensure it remained pertinent by assessing, sharing and incorporating successful pilot-level experiences. One of the drivers of public innovation was long-term results-based national development planning, which was a tool for continuous improvement and promoted accountability. Lastly, he emphasized the need for greater stability in high-level management to institutionalize innovation in public management.

19. The Vice-Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica said that every country was tasked with restoring public trust and that constant renewal was the key to ensuring that the institutional framework underpinning an administration remained in place. New guidelines for the organizational reform and modernization of public administration in Costa Rica for the 2022–2023 period proposed four elements: institutional modernization, innovation in public services, evaluation and upgrade of institutional design, and the improvement of high-level political leadership. Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which allowed for a comprehensive approach to development, was a priority for all public authorities. It was vital not to act in isolation within the State structure but to have a common objective in order to regain public trust.

20. The Chair of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Strategic Planning (CEPLAN) of Peru said that any discussion about development approaches needed to address innovation as well. Planning authorities were being asked to adopt rigid and linear planning tools to respond to the complex and

multidimensional dynamics of development. Designing and implementing effective public policies called for a change in the way things were done and multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary thinking. Inflexible bureaucracy and red tape could hinder innovation, the institutionalization of which in the public apparatus required stability in senior management, the measurement of public resources (budgets, time and human resources), programming and regular reporting on progress.

21. The Chairman and Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) said that his country was working to adopt an innovation-based approach for all its public institutions. The effort was driven by SDG-aligned principles and sought systematic, structural and institutional transformation through policy, legislation and the development of integrated results-based management systems. Among the drivers of public innovation was the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan, which promoted long-term, results-based national development planning. It was implemented through the plans of relevant ministries, departments, agencies and other development partners, and fostered greater coordination, coherence and consensus on needs and tools for continuous improvement. Sustainable and inclusive national development required continuous innovation, agility and adaptation on the part of the government in its operations and engagement with partners towards national development and the achievement of national goals and the SDGs. The factors facilitating public innovation included a public sector that was equipped to deliver planned results, a formal learning framework, workforce management that included succession planning and the institutionalization of roles, human resource development and management that was evidence-based, agile and adaptive, and a culture of change management.

22. Lastly, the Secretary of Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala shared three examples of efforts her country was making to innovate in public management: the 2021 act on the simplification of administrative requirements and procedures, the automation and process innovation, which had enabled the digitization of several services and their accessibility via an online portal, and a quality management system for all processes. She highlighted the support received from the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) through the PlanBarometer to establish performance indicators for public management and quality in planning. Guatemala was also working on a bill to establish a ministry of planning, the functions of which were currently undertaken by a Secretariat of State.

#### Panel 4: The challenges of a new public service in the territory

23. Opening remarks were made by Augusto Barrera, territorial development expert and former Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Quito, and presentations were made by the following country representatives: José Agustín Espino, Director of Territorial Development of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Panama; Mildrey Granadillo, First Vice-Minister of the Ministry of the Economy and Planning of Cuba; Adilio Celle, Vice-Minister of Economic and Social Coordination of the Technical Planning Secretariat for Economic and Social Development of Paraguay; and Fernando Sertã Meressi, Undersecretary of the Multi-year Plan of the Department of the Federal Budget in the Ministry of the Economy of Brazil.

24. The territorial development expert drew attention to the vital importance of restoring, maintaining and strengthening to the territorial dimension of planning, given the unique character of each territory and the persistence of significant regional disparities. He referred to the political and institutional difficulties of coordinating national and local planning. Typically, national planning was the remit of central administrations, while territorial and local planning were handled by subnational governments. There were few coordination mechanisms that were permanent and had regulatory, administrative and financial capacities. There were also significant disparities in capacities at the political, analytical, regulatory, technical, strategic, operational, fiscal and budgetary levels of central and subnational governments, as well

as differences across territories at the subnational level. Capacity-building in the territories was needed to ensure that decentralization and deconcentration processes were effective. He concluded by underscoring the importance of strengthening of ties with citizens within a new public service framework to restore a territorial approach and citizen participation.

25. The Director of Territorial Development of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Panama mentioned the establishment in 2021 of a territorial planning department and the Territorial Development Directorate within that Ministry, resulting in the revival of foresight planning for 2050 and the creation of other territorial planning instruments with varying timescales. Regional development in Panama was uneven due to a concentration of wealth and resources around the capital and in the interoceanic canal zone. Specific territorial plans had been developed, however, including a comprehensive development plan for the Province of Colón, in which the concept of governance involving various community stakeholders and the private sector had been defined. Initiated and backed by a presidential decree, it had been drafted over several months, with a commission set up for that purpose. There were three issues affecting progress in territorial planning throughout the country: limited availability of human capacity to promote territorial development; a need to modernize an obsolete municipal system distorted by legislation to decentralize governance that had deepened clientelist practices; and the need to continue focusing on the needs of individuals and to understand and address them at the local level.

26. The First Vice-Minister of the Ministry of the Economy and Planning of Cuba mentioned the instruments available to the State for territorial development. The National Economic and Social Development Plan to 2030 (PNDES) was the primary tool for achieving the essential objectives established in the *Conceptualización del modelo económico y social cubano de desarrollo socialista*.<sup>2</sup> The initiative to territorialize the 2030 Agenda reflected the importance of local governments in promoting sustainable development and their fundamental role as a link between the central government and communities, and in the participation and inclusion of local stakeholders.

27. The Vice-Minister of Economic and Social Coordination of the Technical Planning Secretariat for Economic and Social Development of Paraguay referred to the country's 2030 National Development Plan, aimed at establishing a new, more demographically balanced territorial model that offered greater equality in development opportunities throughout the country. The plan had a cross-cutting approach to territorial planning and its objectives included participatory local development, the expansion of regionalization and productive diversification, the strengthening of regional economic integration and progress towards effective decentralization.

28. Lastly, the Undersecretary of the Multi-year Plan of the Department of the Federal Budget in the Ministry of the Economy of Brazil provided examples of real initiatives and some challenges in territorial planning. He said that the deployment of major projects in territories entailed certain risks, such as sector-focused and compartmentalized approaches at the territory level, territorial change, new connections and movements in the territory, partial and short-lived efforts to include local populations, power imbalances and the exclusion of the expectations and interests of regional communities. The main challenges faced were difficulties in accessing federal public resources (especially in the case of underprivileged municipalities), the complex requirements for accessing those resources (to avoid entrenching inequalities), the lack of administrative continuity, the need to build professional teams and train staff, high turnover among civil servants, which limited the development of administrative expertise among staff; and a shortage of professionals with project design skills.

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<sup>2</sup> Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, *Conceptualización del modelo económico y social cubano de desarrollo socialista, 2021* [online] <https://www.pcc.cu/conceptualizacion-del-modelo-economico-y-social-cubano-de-desarrollo-socialista-y-lineamientos-de>.



Closing of the seventeenth Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean

29. In closing, the Chief of ILPES, Cielo Morales said that discussions over the course of the two-day meeting had addressed how States could harness planning and public management to strengthen ties with citizens through a new public service and collectively define a forward-looking, territorial, participatory, inclusive and innovative strategy for post-pandemic recovery. Panel discussions had identified opportunities in the ongoing cascading health, social, economic and political crises to transform the existing development model into one that met the aspirations for a better future for all, with equal rights, access to the benefits of development and environmental sustainability. Without wanting to recap the rich discussions of the four panels, she said that a few ideas in particular merited special attention. First, despite multiple roadblocks, countries were making progress in their efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks for planning and public management at varying paces and with different priorities, given their different situations. That strengthening helped provide tools with which to guide State action with minimal improvisation so as to generate public value and public goods in all countries.

30. Second, representatives were aware of the need to recalibrate the analytical capacities of States to situate planning and policies in the challenging context of multiple cascading crises. Only then would it be possible to rebuild the badly eroded trust between States and citizens that was at the root of citizen unrest in many countries. Third, the notion of the future was a reminder that it was based on the present, and must not be perceived as a static and perfect idea, but as an opportunity to include the diverse viewpoints and capacities of territories in a national vision shared by different development stakeholders. However, realizing the vision of a possible future could not be achieved without planning and implementing policies with deliberative input from citizens. Nor was it possible to imagine a shared future without a commitment to improve public management and innovate. More than a trend, innovation was a way to respond to citizens' needs using appropriate tools—not necessarily technological—based on empirical information. Innovation was possible with limited financial resources provided there was political will, commitment and incentives.

31. Fourth, actions were carried out at the territorial level, which needed to reclaim its leading role in urban and rural areas as a unifying force to promote balanced development that embraced the cultural, productive and natural resource diversity of the territories and generated a sense of belonging within a framework of rights that left no one behind. In a more sustainable development model there would remain the challenges and opportunities of citizen confidence in public institutions, approaching the future as a field of action—not only of dreams—, of opportunities to build a better reality by coordinating resources strategically rather than for contingencies, coordination between sectors, stakeholders and levels of government, deconcentration and decentralization with the requisite capacities and resources, and multilevel governance as the best approach to development. ILPES had the important task of maintaining spaces for cooperation, collaboration and peer-to-peer learning about the common challenges faced by countries and the various paths taken. She concluded by saying that ECLAC and ILPES were committed to maintaining the forum as a technical and political space in which countries could work together, honestly and transparently, to build possible pathways, based on a new public service, towards a better future for the countries of the region.

Annex 1

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES  
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**A. Estados miembros de la Comisión/Member States of the Commission**

**ARGENTINA**

Representante/Representative:

- Ana Gabriela Castellani, Secretaria de Gestión y Empleo Público, Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros, email: castellaniA@jefatura.gob.ar

**BRASIL/BRAZIL**

Representante/Representative:

- Fernando Sertã Meressi, Subsecretario del Plan Plurianual de la Unión, Secretaría de Presupuesto Federal, Ministerio de Economía, email: fernando.meressi@economia.gov.br

**CHILE**

Representante/Representative:

- Cristina Vío, Coordinadora de la Comisión Asesora Presidencial para la Integridad Pública y Transparencia, Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia, email: cvio@minsepres.gob.cl

**COSTA RICA**

Representante/Representative:

- Marlon Andrés Navarro Álvarez, Viceministro de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, email: marlon.navarro@mideplan.go.cr

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Adriana Murillo Ruin, Embajadora de Costa Rica en Chile, email: ammurillo@rree.go.cr embajada@costarica.cl
- Mauricio Zamora Villalobos, Consejero, Embajada de Costa Rica en Chile, email: embcr-cl@rree.go.cr
- Vanessa Rodríguez Coronado, Asistente Ejecutiva, Despacho del Viceministro, Ministerio de Planificación Nacional y Política Económica, email: vanessa.rodriguez@mideplan.go.cr
- Nicolás García Aguilera, Asistente, Embajada de Costa Rica en Chile, email: nicolas.garcia.a@ug.uchile.cl

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<sup>1</sup> Los datos de esta lista son los suministrados por los participantes en el registro correspondiente que se habilitó para la reunión. The information contained in this list is as supplied by the participants themselves, in the register provided for the meeting.

**CUBA**Representante/Representative:

- Mildrey Granadillo de la Torre, Viceministra Primera, Ministerio de Economía y Planificación, email: mildrey@mep.gob.cu

**DOMINICA**Representante/Representative:

- Gerard Jean-Jacques, Chief Development Planner, Ministry of Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy, email: chiefdevplanner@dominica.gov.dm (virtual)

**ECUADOR**Representante/Representative:

- Jairon Merchán, Secretario Nacional de Planificación, Secretaría Nacional de Planificación, email: jmerchan@planificacion.gob.ec

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Roberto Izurieta Canova, Embajador del Ecuador en Chile, email: rizurieta@cancilleria.gob.ec
- Cristina Granda Mendoza, Ministra, Embajada del Ecuador en Chile, email: cgranda@cancilleria.gob.ec
- Cosme Batallas Lara, Tercer Secretario, Embajada del Ecuador en Chile, email: cbatallas@cancilleria.gob.ec

**EL SALVADOR**Representante/Representative:

- Irma Yolanda Núñez, Coordinadora de Plan Social, Despacho de la Comisionada Presidencial para Operaciones y Gabinete de Gobierno, email: inunez@presidencia.gob.sv

**GUATEMALA**Representante/Representative:

- Luz Keila Gramajo, Secretaria de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia, email: keila.gramajo@segeplan.gob.gt

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Rita María Elizondo Hernández, Subsecretaria de Planificación y Programación para el Desarrollo, email: rita.elizondo@segeplan.gob.gt
- Nery Orlando Búcaro Castellanos, Director de Planificación Sectorial, Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia (SEGEPLAN), email: nery.bucaro@segeplan.gob.gt
- Gabriela Alvarado Burgos, Directora de Comunicación, Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia (SEGEPLAN), email: liza.alvarado@segeplan.gob.gt
- Romeo Escobar, Encargado de Negocios, Embajada de Guatemala en Chile, email: rescobar@minex.gob.gt

## HONDURAS

### Representante/Representative:

- Ricardo Arturo Salgado Bonilla, Secretario de Estado en el Despacho de Planificación Estratégica, email: emenohemy@gmail.com rsalgadose@spe.gob.hn

### Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Maria Reina, Secretaria General, Secretaría de Planificación Estratégica, email: mreina@spe.gob.hn
- María José Paz, Directora de Comunicaciones, Secretaría de Planificación Estratégica, email: mari.pzm21@gmail.com

## JAMAICA

### Representante/Representative:

- Wayne Henry, Chairman and Director General, Planning Institute of Jamaica, email: wayne\_henry@pioj.gov.jm

## MÉXICO/MEXICO

### Representante/Representative:

- Jorge Adalberto Pastrana Oliver, Subdirector de Proyectos Financieros y de Gobiernos Subnacionales, Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, email: jorge\_pastrana@hacienda.gob.mx

### Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Mariana Patricia Vilchis Cabrera, Analista Programadora, Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, email: mariana\_cabrera@hacienda.gob.mx

## PANAMÁ/PANAMA

### Representante/Representative:

- Héctor Alexander, Ministro de Economía y Finanzas, email: halexander@mef.gob.pa

### Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Enelda Medrano, Viceministra de Economía, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: emedrano@mef.gob.pa
- Arístides Hernández, Planificador, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: ahernadezp@mef.gob.pa
- José Agustín Espino, Director de Desarrollo Territorial, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: jespinod@mef.gob.pa
- Mario Antonio Velásquez Chizmar, Embajador de Panamá en Chile, email: embpanamachile@mire.gob.pa
- Lourdes Arjona, Coordinadora de Planes y Programas, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: larjona@mef.gob.pa
- José Agustín Espino, Director de Desarrollo Territorial, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: jespinod@mef.gob.pa
- Donaciana Acosta Tejada, Asesora, Dirección Superior, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: dacosta@mef.gob.pa
- Vielka González, Analista, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, email: vigonzalez@mef.gob.pa
- Enrique Vega Jiménez, Analista de Seguimiento y Evaluación de Políticas Públicas, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, Panamá, email: evega@mef.gob.pa

**PARAGUAY**Representante/Representative:

- Adilio Celle, Viceministro, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social, email: [adcelle@gmail.com](mailto:adcelle@gmail.com)

Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Camila Magalí Núñez Yegros, Economista, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social, email: [cnunez@stp.gov.py](mailto:cnunez@stp.gov.py)

**PERÚ/PERU**Representante/Representative:

- Giofianni Peirano, Presidente del Consejo Directivo, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [gpeirano@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:gpeirano@ceplan.gob.pe)

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Aurora Cano, Segunda Secretaria, Embajada del Perú en Chile, email: [acano@embajadadelperu.cl](mailto:acano@embajadadelperu.cl)
- Daisy Heidinger Zevallos, Directora Nacional de Coordinación y Planeamiento Estratégico, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [dheidinger@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:dheidinger@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Amaro Rivadeneira Santa María, Director Nacional de Seguimiento y Evaluación, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [arivadeneira@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:arivadeneira@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Martha Vicente Castro, Asesora, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [mvicente@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:mvicente@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Luis Francisco González Norris, Asesor, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [luisgonzalez@cepln.gob.pe](mailto:luisgonzalez@cepln.gob.pe)
- Erika Celiz Ygnacio, Especialista, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [eceliz@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:eceliz@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Carmen Bahamonde Quinteros, Especialista, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [cbahamonde@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:cbahamonde@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Mónica Guerra Ruiz, Analista de Políticas y Planes Nacionales, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [mguerra@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:mguerra@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Lourdes Victoria Gutiérrez Aguado, Especialista en Planes de Desarrollo Local Concertado, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [lgutierrez@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:lgutierrez@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Mijail Huamán Romero, Especialista, Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico (CEPLAN), email: [mhuaman@ceplan.gob.pe](mailto:mhuaman@ceplan.gob.pe)
- Cecilia de las Casas Cadillo, Funcionaria, Embajada del Perú en Panamá, email: [cdelascasas@embaperupanama.com](mailto:cdelascasas@embaperupanama.com)

**REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA/DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**Representante/Representative:

- Luis Gregorio Madera, Viceministro de Planificación e Inversión Pública, Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo, email: [luis.madera@mepyd.gob.do](mailto:luis.madera@mepyd.gob.do)

**SAINT KITTS Y NEVIS/SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS**Representante/Representative:

- Joyelle Clarke, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment, email: [joyelle.clarke@gov.kn](mailto:joyelle.clarke@gov.kn)

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Sherilita Dore-Tyson, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment, email: kezzia.daniel@gov.kn
- Auren Manners, Senior Project Analyst, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment, email: auren.manners@gov.kn

**SANTA LUCÍA/SAINT LUCIA**Representante/Representative:

- Anita Montoute, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs, email: anitamontoute.dsd@gmail.com

Miembro de la delegación/Delegation member:

- Kate Wilson, Legal Officer and National Focal Point for the Escazú Agreement, Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs, email: kate.wilson@govt.lc

**TRINIDAD Y TABAGO/TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**Representante/Representative:

- Erica Fortune, Assistant Director, Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Development, email: erica.fortune@planning.gov.tt

**URUGUAY**Representante/Representative:

- Isaac Alfie, Director, Oficina de Planeamiento y Presupuesto (OPP), Presidencia de la República, email: isaac.alfie@opp.gub.uy

**VENEZUELA (REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE)/VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)**Representante/Representative:

- José Avendaño, Viceministro de Planificación Económica, Ministerio del Poder Popular de Planificación, email: javendano@mppp.gob.ve

Miembros de la delegación/Delegation members:

- Yngrid González, Coordinadora, Oficina de Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación, Ministerio del Poder Popular de Planificación, email: ygonzalez@mppp.gob.ve
- Arévalo Méndez, Embajador de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en Chile, email: armero8@gmail.com
- Patricia Jordán López, Primer Secretario, Embajada de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en Chile, email: prjordanlopez@gmail.com

**B. Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations Secretariat****Oficinas de los Coordinadores Residentes/Resident Coordinators offices**

- Lena Savelli, Coordinadora Residente en el Ecuador, email: savelli@un.org
- Lisbeth Mjøs, Development Coordination Officer, Office of the Resident Coordinator for Barbados, email: lisbeth.mjøs@un.org

### C. Sistema de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations system

#### **Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU-Mujeres)/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)**

- Ernesto Treviño, Regional Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist, email: ernesto.trevino@unwomen.org

#### **Oficina de las Naciones Unidas para la Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres (UNDRR)/United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**

- Raúl Salazar, Jefe, Oficina Regional para las Américas y el Caribe, email: salazarr@un.org

#### **Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**

- Leonel Tapia, Coordinador, Proyecto Regional Digitalización, email: leonel.tapia@fao.org
- Ignacio Moncayo, Consultor, email: ignacio.moncayo@fao.org
- Mauricio Mireles, Policy Officer, email: mauricio.mireles@fao.org

#### **Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO)/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

- Patricia Rengel, Asistente de Ciencias, email: p.rengel@unesco.org
- Alejandro Vera, Programme Specialist, email: a.vera-mohorade@unesco.org

#### **Organización de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Industrial (ONUDI)/United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

- Ramiro Magaña Pineda, Representante Adjunto, Oficina Regional para México y Centroamérica, email: r.magana@unido.org

#### **Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO)**

- Claudia Coenjaerts, Directora Regional a.i. para América Latina y el Caribe, email: brugnara@ilo.org

### D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales/Intergovernmental organizations

#### **Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE)/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**

- Ulrik Knudsen, Deputy Secretary-General

### E. Otros participantes/Other participants

- Joyce Kyerewaa Ahenkorah, Professor, University for Development Studies, email: maasteef@yahoo.com
- Eysel Chong, Gerente de Gestión del Conocimiento, Fundación Ciudad del Saber, email: echong@cdspanama.org
- Nelson Chukwuma Mgbada, Supervisor, Research and Strategy, National Institute for Urban and Rural Planning, Federal Ministry of Environment and Fiscal Planning, Nigeria, email: nelsonchukies@gmail.com

- Sabrina Gioia, Referente, IMS, email: [sabrinagioia874@gmail.com](mailto:sabrinagioia874@gmail.com)
- Pedro Gomes Fonseca, Estudiante, Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, email: [pedro.g.fonseca@edu.ufes.br](mailto:pedro.g.fonseca@edu.ufes.br)
- Walter Gómez Carrión, Encargado de Cooperación Internacional, Asociación Peruana para la Innovación Social (APISOCIAL), email: [waltgoca@gmail.com](mailto:waltgoca@gmail.com)
- Zeeshan Hameed, Taha Enterprises, email: [enterprisetaha@yahoo.com](mailto:enterprisetaha@yahoo.com)
- P Veeraraju Kumar, Trade Commissioner, Latin American and the Caribbean, Trade Promotion Council of India, email: [president@ieto.in](mailto:president@ieto.in)
- Amrish Daniël Lachman, Director, National Planning Office, Suriname, email: [danny\\_lachman@yahoo.com](mailto:danny_lachman@yahoo.com)
- Antonio Llamas, Consultor, MAJOIS, email: [antoniocastillo.majois@gmail.com](mailto:antoniocastillo.majois@gmail.com)
- Eduardo Llamas, Consultor, MAJOIS, email: [eduardo.majois@gmail.com](mailto:eduardo.majois@gmail.com)
- Ludwing Llamas, Consultor, MAJOIS, email: [majois.consulting@gmail.com](mailto:majois.consulting@gmail.com)
- Patricia Llamas, Consultora, MAJOIS, email: [patricia.majois@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.majois@gmail.com)
- Gregorio López García, Maestrando, Unidad de Estudios Superiores Tepetzotlán, email: [licgregoriolp@gmail.com](mailto:licgregoriolp@gmail.com)
- Carmina Mejía Olarte, Especialista Ambiental, Aeronáutica Civil, email: [carmi.roxy2019@gmail.com](mailto:carmi.roxy2019@gmail.com)
- Solomon Onuoha Chikwado, Director, Policy and Planning, National Institute for Urban and Rural Planning, Federal Ministry of Environment and Fiscal Planning, email: [s.chikwado88@gmail.com](mailto:s.chikwado88@gmail.com)
- Mauro Pérez, Docente-Investigador, Universidad Nacional del Centro del Perú, email: [mperez@uncp.edu.pe](mailto:mperez@uncp.edu.pe)
- Beatriz Ramírez David, Directora Ejecutiva, Fundación Unidas: Mujeres Construyendo Tejido Social, email: [b.ramirez.d@hotmail.com](mailto:b.ramirez.d@hotmail.com)
- Gonzalo Alonso Rivera Morales, Administrador Público, Dimori Faja EIRL, email: [g.alonsoriveram@gmail.com](mailto:g.alonsoriveram@gmail.com)
- Adonis De-Alessandro Tello Araya, Presidente, Asociación Chilena del Conocimiento, email: [adonis.tello.araya@comfut.cl](mailto:adonis.tello.araya@comfut.cl)
- Pengfei Yang, Lawshi, email: [pengfei@lawshi.com](mailto:pengfei@lawshi.com)
- Said Azpeitia Blanco, Director de Programa Educativo en Administración y Gestión Empresarial, Universidad Politécnica de Huatusco, email: [dir-admon.gestion@uphuatusco.edu.mx](mailto:dir-admon.gestion@uphuatusco.edu.mx)
- Juan Carlos Hernández Correa, Coordinador de Programas, Gobierno Regional de O'Higgins, Chile, email: [juancarlos.hernandez@goreohiggins.cl](mailto:juancarlos.hernandez@goreohiggins.cl)
- Valeria Mariel Jacquemin, Técnica de Proyectos Territoriales, Municipalidad de Posadas, Argentina/Embajadora de la Red de Planificación ILPES, email: [valeriaobera@gmail.com](mailto:valeriaobera@gmail.com)
- Adolfo R. Medalla Araya, Secretario de Administración y Hacienda, Municipalidad de Calingasta, Argentina, email: [adolfo.medalla@gmail.com](mailto:adolfo.medalla@gmail.com)
- Gisela Paredes Leguizamón, Profesional Especializado en Desarrollo y Ordenamiento Territorial, Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia, email: [gisela.paredes@parquesnacionales.gov.co](mailto:gisela.paredes@parquesnacionales.gov.co)
- Christian Quinteros, Académico, Escuela de Administración Pública, Universidad Católica del Maule, Chile, email: [cquinteros@ucm.cl](mailto:cquinteros@ucm.cl)
- Benjamín Rubilar Ponce, Coordinador, Programa Ambulatorio Intensivo Medio Libre (PAI ML), CT Bellavista, email: [tsbenjaminr@gmail.com](mailto:tsbenjaminr@gmail.com)
- Álvaro Artigas, Investigador, Sciences Po Paris, email: [alvaro.artigaspereira@sciencespo.fr](mailto:alvaro.artigaspereira@sciencespo.fr)
- Richard Edwin Cama Castillo, independiente, email: [richard070576@gmail.com](mailto:richard070576@gmail.com)
- Marisol Escobar, Planificadora, Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas, Panamá, email: [mescobar@mef.gob.pa](mailto:mescobar@mef.gob.pa)
- Ismael Grau, Editor, Revista Búsqueda, email: [igräu@busqueda.com.uy](mailto:igräu@busqueda.com.uy)
- Darío Fabián Hernández González, Director General, Visión Global para la Acción Local SA de CV, email: [dario.fabian.hg@gmail.com](mailto:dario.fabian.hg@gmail.com)



- Ester Kaufman, Coordinadora, Red Académica de Gobierno Abierto Internacional, email: esterkaufman@gmail.com
- Igor Morales, Representante y Vocero, Red Chilena de Organizaciones de Sociedad Civil para el Gobierno Abierto, email: imorales@redchga.org
- Miguel Muñoz Asenjo, Académico, Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana, email: miguel.munoz@utem.cl
- Claudia Estrella Prieto Mulattieri, Técnica en Gestión de Recursos Naturales y Desarrollo Sustentable, email: cprieto@fcien.edu.uy
- Alfredo Rosero Vera, Asesor, Departamento Nacional de Planeación, Colombia, email: arosero@dnpp.gov.co
- Macarena Franchesca Sanhueza Silva, Estudiante, Duoc UC, email: macarensanhueza1992@gmail.com
- Carolina Paredes Balmori, Directora, Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social, Paraguay, email: balmori.carolina@gmail.com
- José Reyes, Asistente, Sociedad Civil, email: paso@chile.cl
- Danielle Andrade, Abogada, Goffe Law, email: dandrade.law@gmail.com

#### **F. Panelistas/Panellists**

- Danielle Andrade, Abogada, Goffe Law, email: dandrade.law@gmail.com
- Roman Yosif, Consultor Internacional, email: ryosif@gmail.com
- Tatiana Hernández, Jefa, División de Políticas de Igualdad, Ministerio de la Mujer y la Equidad de Género, Chile, email: thernandez@minmujeryeg.gob.cl

#### **G. Secretaría/Secretariat**

##### **Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

- Raúl García-Buchaca, Secretario Ejecutivo Adjunto para Administración y Análisis de Programas/Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis, email: raul.garciabuchaca@cepal.org
- Luis Fidel Yáñez, Secretario de la Comisión/Secretary of the Commission, email: luis.yanez@cepal.org
- Cielo Morales, Directora, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Chief, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: cielo.morales@un.org
- Valeria Torres, Oficial a Cargo, Área de Gestión Pública y Gobierno Abierto, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Officer in Charge, Public Management and Open Government Area, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: valeria.torres@un.org
- Natalia Genta, Oficial a Cargo, Área de Planificación, Prospectiva y Desarrollo Territorial, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Officer in Charge, Planning, Prospective and Territorial Development Area, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: natalia.genta@cepal.org
- Alicia Williner, Asistente de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: alicia.williner@cepal.org

- Carlos Sandoval, Asistente Superior de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Senior Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: carlos.sandoval@cepal.org
- Lucy Winchester, Asistente Superior de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Senior Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: lucy.winchester@cepal.org
- Dante Arenas, Asistente de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: dante.arenas@cepal.org
- Bárbara Silva, Asistente de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Research Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: barbara.silva@cepal.org
- María del Pilar Délano, Asistente de Investigación, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Research Assistant Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: mariadel Pilar.delano@cepal.org
- Karen Haase, Asistente Superior de Gestión de Documentos, Oficina de la Secretaría de la Comisión/Senior Documents Management Assistant, Office of the Secretary of the Commission, email: karen.haase@cepal.org
- María José Beck, Consultora, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Consultant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: mjbeck@uc.cl
- Daniela Gebhard, Asistente de Gestión de Programas, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Programme Management Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: daniela.gebhard@cepal.org
- Segundo Vigo, Asistente de Equipo, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Team Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: segundo.vigo@cepal.org
- Mauricio Escobar, Asistente de Información, Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES)/Information Assistant, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), email: mauricio.escobar@cepal.org
- Estefani Rondón, Asistente de Investigación, División de Desarrollo Sostenible y Asentamientos Humanos/Research Assistant, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, email: estefani.rondontoro@un.org
- Georgina Cipoletta, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, División de Desarrollo Económico/Economic Affairs Officer, Economic Development Division, email: georgina.cipoletta@un.org
- Giannina López, Asistente de Estadísticas Económicas, División de Estadísticas/Economic Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division, email: giannina.lopez@un.org