
medio ambiente y desarrollo

Urbán consensus.
**Contributions from the Latin
American and the Caribbean
Regional Plan of Action on
Human Settlements**

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I. Introduction

In the course of preparing for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), in the first half of the 1990s the urban and housing policies of the various governments of Latin America and the Caribbean began to converge. Based on similar trends and the relatively homogeneous settlements situation in the different countries and subregions, in the mid-1990s the countries agreed to a regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements, aimed at projecting shared priorities on urban and housing policies for the coming millennium.

Apart from the need for updating in the light of the most recent demographic, economic, political and social changes, the Regional Plan of Action seems to remain fully valid in its aim of achieving sustainable progress in human settlements by integrating a variety of development dimensions. Its thematic areas and the specific measures it proposed can still also be considered relevant today. Nonetheless, its effectiveness is limited, mainly by the vagueness with which it defines responsibilities for putting the plan into practice, but also in the way it envisages follow-up mechanisms at the level of countries, subregions and the region as whole. Four years after its preparation, it is still not clear what progress has been achieved, and there is confusion about the obstacles that need to be overcome and the areas in which objectives and components could be brought up to date.

In the next few years there will be renewed worldwide discussion on human settlements, motivated by a review of the Habitat Agenda that is set to culminate in the Habitat+5 Conference in 2001.

ECLAC considers this a good moment to reconsider the contents of the Regional Plan of Action in the light of city development in the 1990s, and to propose mechanisms for its promotion and follow-up.

II. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements

1. General origin and characteristics

The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements was agreed at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Santiago, Chile, from 13 to 17 November 1995. It contains a set of agreements and proposals dealing with specific features of urban processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the far-reaching economic, social and urban changes that had occurred in the 1980s. The new approach to the problems and potential of cities and human settlements developed in the first half of the decade, gave rise to new guidelines for more effective city development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Instead of viewing the region's high degree of urbanization as a problem, as had previously been the case in normal discourse, the Regional Plan of Action proposed turning this feature of the region into an advantage. With a view to "giving shelter to development" in the numerous and extensive human settlements of Latin America and the Caribbean,¹ the Plan proposed addressing outstanding challenges in

¹ See ECLAC, Human settlements: the shelter of development (LC/L.906 (Conf.85/3)/Rev.I), Santiago, Chile, 1996.

cities through strategies for sustainable development that coordinate social, economic and environmental dimensions. This holistic approach to urban and housing policy reflected a view of development based on the "changing productive patterns with equity and environmental sustainability", which ECLAC had proposed to governments in the early 1990s.

2. Thematic areas

Against this backdrop, the Regional Plan of Action identified five thematic areas for priority action in the region's housing policies.

The Plan firstly acknowledged the obstacles to development and democratic social coexistence posed by widespread poverty, together with the lack of social equity and consequent urban segregation inherited from the 1980s, and it was agreed to work together to overcome these through urban and housing management policies.

In view of the highly urban nature of the region and the role played by the main cities in regional and national economic development, the Plan further argued that genuine regional development required human settlements to become more productive. Crucial components of city competitiveness, such as the quality of urban and productive infrastructure, or the day-to-day quality of the life of citizens, could be improved substantially through sectoral policies. The Plan also suggested making the most of possibilities for complementation and specialization among Latin American and Caribbean cities, using appropriate land development strategies.

The Regional Plan of Action thirdly expressed special concern for the urban environment, drawing attention to serious problems such as the vulnerability of cities to natural disasters and environmental degradation, and it committed itself to making better use of urban land, increasing city densities, expanding access to basic urban services and promoting environmental education, among other things.

The fourth set of proposals related to a desire to consolidate democratic governance in the present decade, and to assure effective citizenship and participation in the benefits and obligations of development for all inhabitants of Latin American and Caribbean cities. From this standpoint, the various aims of the Regional Plan of Action were to be achieved through mechanisms of coordination at the different territorial levels, and by helping to mobilize private-sector resources and participation by people in the decisions affecting their city, neighborhood or home.

Lastly, the countries of the region agreed to take steps at the regional level to enhance the efficiency of housing-sector policies. Special importance was attached to achieving closer integration between urban land and housing policies and between these and policies for economic and social development. An agreement also was reached to reduce the housing deficit, especially among low-income families, through transparent subsidies and more effective targeting of social housing expenditure. To speed up efficiency improvements, the countries of the region also agreed to intensify cooperation and to exchange experiences that had given satisfactory results.

In 1997, the question of the vulnerability of the region to natural disasters and of disaster mitigation and prevention was introduced as the sixth point in the Regional Plan of Action; in fact, it was stressed more than the third point, on the urban environment. The countries pointed to the need for different institutions to participate in prevention and mitigation schemes, bearing in mind that risk prevention and vulnerability reduction should be included in governmental planning at all levels, as well as in legislation and in the control instruments applied by institutions.

3. The Regional Plan of Action, Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda

When the characteristics and contents of the Regional Plan of Action are compared with two programs of world scope – Agenda 21 (the action program resulting from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro) and the Habitat Agenda (1996) – certain coincidences in content can be seen, but also differences, especially in the implementation mechanisms envisaged.

Agenda 21 focuses on human settlements, like other sectors, from the standpoint of sustainable development. Chapter 7, “Promoting sustainable development of human settlements”, identifies the following issues: a) providing adequate shelter for all, b) improving human settlement management, c) promoting sustainable land-use planning and management, d) promoting the integrated provision of environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management, e) promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements, f) promoting human settlement planning and management of in disaster-prone areas, g) promoting sustainable construction industry activities, h) promoting human resource development and capacity building for human settlement development.

The Habitat Agenda, which was agreed in 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey, specifically focuses on the question of human settlements, and proposes five strategic areas: (a) adequate shelter for all; (b) sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world; (c) capacity-building and institutional development; (d) international cooperation and coordination; and (e) implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda.

The Regional Plan of Action has the same principal thematic areas as these two world-scale programs, as regards development of cities and their infrastructure, the provision of adequate shelter for all, and the environmental sustainability of human settlements. Another distinctive feature is the democratizing approach present in all three instruments, which promotes issues such as participation, governance and decentralization.

The Regional Plan of Action also stresses specific aspects that are not present in the worldwide agenda. Firstly, it is more explicit in its commitment to overcoming general poverty, apart from precarious housing, and to reducing inequity. To that end, it gives details of measures that countries commit to taking through their housing and urban management policies. It also anticipates a concern that is later likely to become relevant for the human settlements debate at world and regional level, namely the need to increase the productivity of cities in the light of their growing importance in countries’ economic processes.

For implementing and following up on agreements reached by these three programs, the mechanisms envisaged by Agenda 21 are clearly the most structured, as they specify institutional responsibilities for the various aspects of environmental issues. Procedures to monitor and promote progress have been developed at the global, regional and national levels, and resources have been channeled to implement the agreements in the individual countries. On the other hand, both the Habitat Agenda and the Regional Plan of Action leave it up to each country to implement the agreements, so the chances of them actually being carried out are uncertain and unequal. Apart from weaknesses in follow-up mechanisms, in developing countries especially, there is a considerable shortage of resources available to finance the proposed actions, which may be extremely costly and complex. Although UNCHS/Habitat has set up two initiatives to follow up on the Agenda – the Urban Indicators Program and the Best Practices,² linked through the Global Urban Observatory program – in practice the fact that it is voluntary for countries to adhere to these programs has led to

² This project includes 73 “Best Practices” from 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

serious problems of representativity.³ The status of the Regional Plan of Action is equally uncertain, as neither measures to support implementation nor follow-up initiatives are envisaged. Thus, any progress achieved by the Regional Plan of Action can only be discerned indirectly by reviewing the progress made in individual countries in relation to the main aims of the Agenda.

The following chapters review settlement trends in Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of statistics and analysis recently carried out by ECLAC, on aspects considered relevant for the Regional Plan of Action. The aim of this analysis is to explore how the regional situation has developed during the 1990s with respect to the broad thematic areas, and whether the various guidelines and measures agreed in the Plan could have contributed, directly or indirectly, to that development.

³ Countries, cities and organizations that have made progress on implementing the Agenda have participated in these projects, but it is not possible to get a clear picture of areas or countries where there is little progress or where obstacles remain for sustainable human settlements development.

III. Human settlements in the late 1990s

1. Urbanization

In view of the fact that in previous decades the rate of urbanization and demographic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean were the fastest in the world, significant features of the 1990s have included slower population growth, together with smaller increases in urbanization and a reduction of the growth rates of the largest cities.⁴

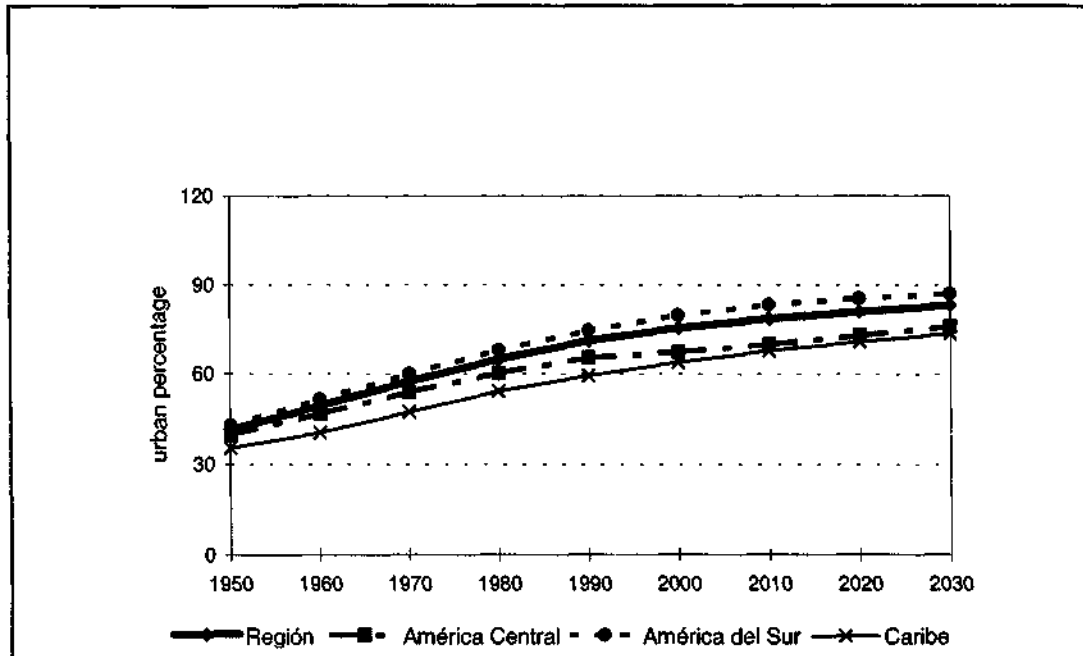
Latin America and the Caribbean is the most urbanized region in the less developed world, with 74% of its 484.3 million inhabitants living in urban areas in 1996.⁵ Within the region, South America remains the most urbanized, followed by Central America and the Caribbean which display relatively lower levels. Figure 1 shows that the relatively homogeneous urbanization patterns among the three sub-regions in the 1950s (the Caribbean, Central America and South America) began to diverge in later decades, mainly because of

⁴ United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat): *An Urbanizing World - World Report on Human Settlements*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996

⁵ United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision. Estimates and Projections of Urban and Rural Populations and Urban Agglomerations*. New York, 1998. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XIII.6. 1998.

explosive urban population growth in South America. Projections for the future, however, would suggest that paths would tend to converge, as the process slows down in the southern sub-region, while Central America and the Caribbean develop their own strong urban characteristics. This trend is likely to make the continent more uniform in the future, and will promote concerted action by the countries in the field of human settlements.

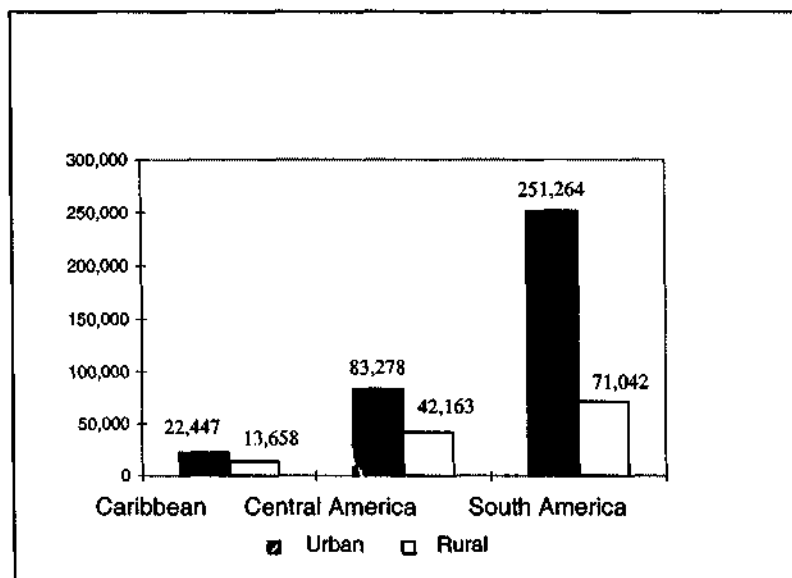
Figure 1
URBANIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 1950-2030



Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects, 1998

Today, in the late 1990s, 70% of urban Latin American and Caribbean people are living in South America, and one out of every three rural inhabitants live in Central America. The relative distribution of the urban and rural populations of the different sub-regions is shown in Figure 2.

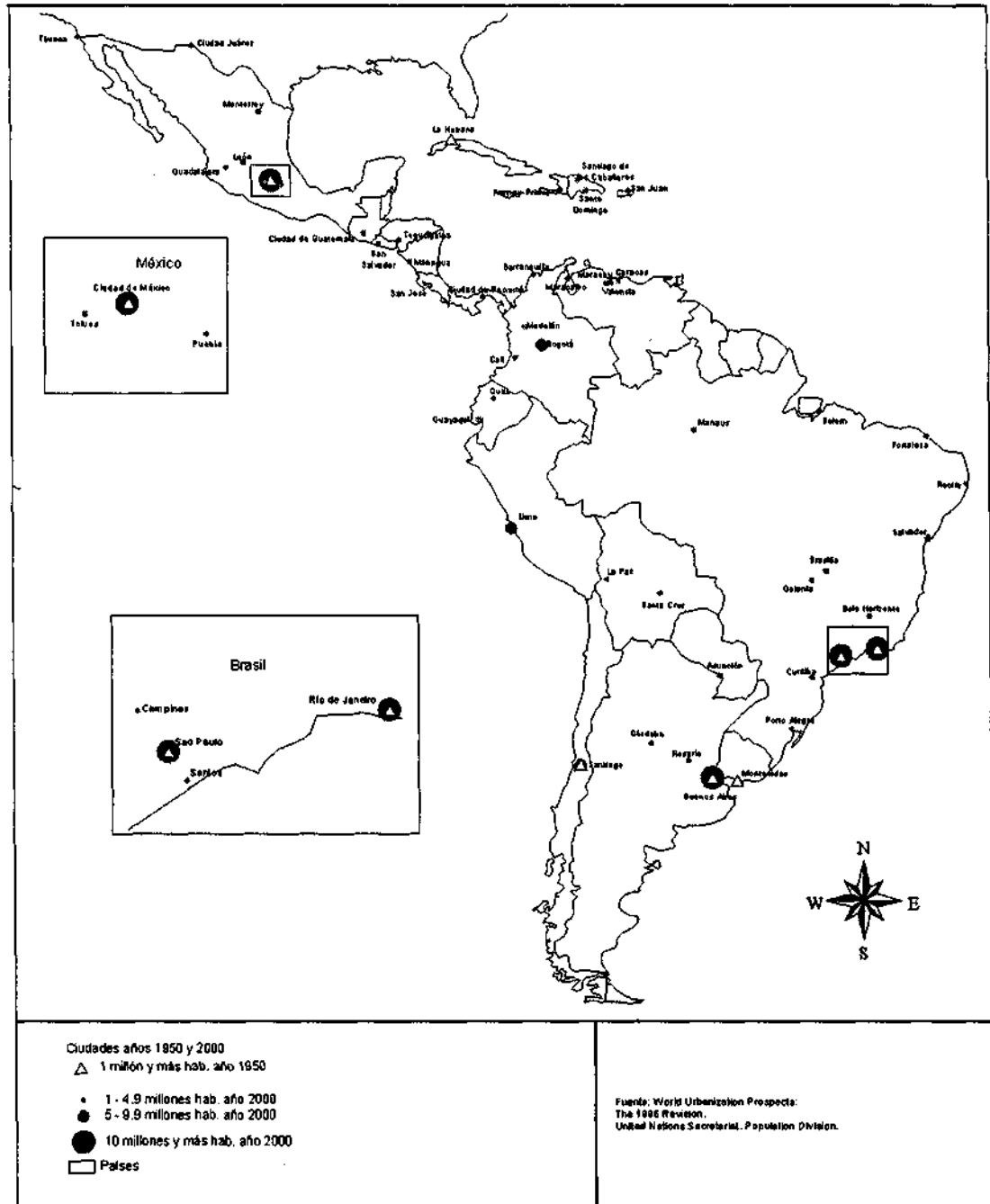
Figure 2
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION, 1996



Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects, 1998

Map 1

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: CITIES WITH MORE THAN ONE MILLION HABITANTS, YEAR 2000

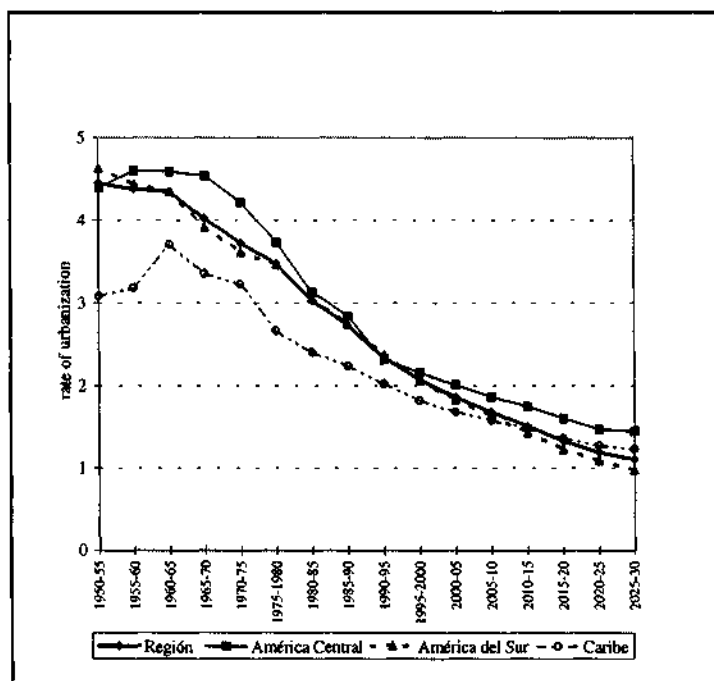


Source: Prepared by the ECLAC Population Division (CELADE)

Note: the boundaries and names shown in this map do not necessarily imply its support or official approval from the United Nations

The pace of urbanization is also a significant feature of the human settlement situation. As Figure 3 shows, the rate of urban population growth, which exceeded 4% at mid-century, has fallen steadily to about 2% in the first half of the 1990s. In the years to come, urbanization will slow down even further before settling around 1% by the year 2030. The pace of urbanization in the 1990s is quite similar in the three sub-regions, in contrast to other developing regions, where sub-regional differences are much more marked.⁶ This feature is part of a generally greater uniformity in the challenges and possibilities for housing policies in Latin American and Caribbean countries in the late 1990s (see Box 1).

Figure 3
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: RATE OF URBANIZATION
IN SUB-REGIONS AS OF THE 1950'S



Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects, 1998

In general, the region's rural population is stabilizing, and growth, which was 0.14% per year in 1980-1985 for the region as a whole, is expected to be negative as from 2000. The process of rural demographic stagnation started in South America, where rural populations in countries like Argentina and Chile have been shrinking for several decades. Elsewhere in the region the rural population will continue to expand in the medium term. In Central America, the rural population is only expected to start to decrease around 2020, while in Belize, Guatemala, Haiti and Paraguay it is set to continue growing even beyond that decade.

⁶ Sub-regional differences are relatively small: the urban growth rate in Central America is slightly higher than those of South America and the Caribbean.

Box 1

HETEROGENEOUS TRENDS IN LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CITIES

Of the Region's 59 urban agglomerations with over 750,000 inhabitants in 1995, 38 were in South America, 16 in Central America and five in the Caribbean. Only six of these cities will not have passed the one million marks by the end of the millennium, and 12 will have over 4 million inhabitants by 2010, according to United Nations projections. In that year, over 200 million Latin American people will be living in these urban agglomerations.

In the coming years, the overall rate of increase of city populations is likely to slow down and eventually settle around 1.45% per year, although the picture will vary across the three subregions.

For South America a sharp and sustained fall in population growth is anticipated, especially in the megacities (Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo), which in 2000-2010 are set to grow by no more than 1% per year. As growth rates in large cities have slowed down, there has also been a significant trend towards the expansion of urban centres beyond the metropolitan area. This has led to the rise of polycentric metropolitan areas.

Medium-size cities – Cordoba and Rosario in Argentina; Belo Horizonte, Recife and Santos in Brazil; Santiago, Chile; Montevideo in Uruguay and Maracaibo in Venezuela – are also expected to grow at moderate rates. By contrast, La Paz and Santa Cruz in Bolivia, São Luis in Brazil, Guayaquil and Quito in Ecuador, Asunción in Paraguay, and Valencia in Venezuela, will still be expanding by at least 2.2% in that period. Of all South American cities, Santa Cruz expected to grow most rapidly during the first decade of the new millennium (3.63%).

In Central America and Mexico, after picking up slightly between 1990 and 2000, population growth is then expected to drop even below South American levels. In particular, the Mexican cities of Guadalajara, León, Mexico City, Monterrey, Puebla, and Torreón and, to a lesser degree San Luis de Potosí are all likely to display relatively low growth rates. In the other countries of this subregion, only Panama City is expected to grow by less than 2% per year. Guatemala City, Tegucigalpa and Toluca are examples of Central American cities that are likely still to be growing at over 3% or 4% in the coming decade.

Caribbean cities will still maintain the highest rates of population increase, even though the slowdown predicted for the next few years will be the sharpest in the region (dropping from 3.4% in the 1980s and 3.09% in the 1990s to 1.89% in the coming decade). The case of Havana, Cuba, which is expected to grow by 0.4%, contrasts sharply with Port-au-Prince in Haiti (3.5%) and Santiago de los Caballeros, in the Dominican Republic, where growth is predicted at 2.45%.

Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: the 1996 Revision. Estimates and Projections of Urban and Rural Population and Urban Agglomerations, New York. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XIII.6, 1998.

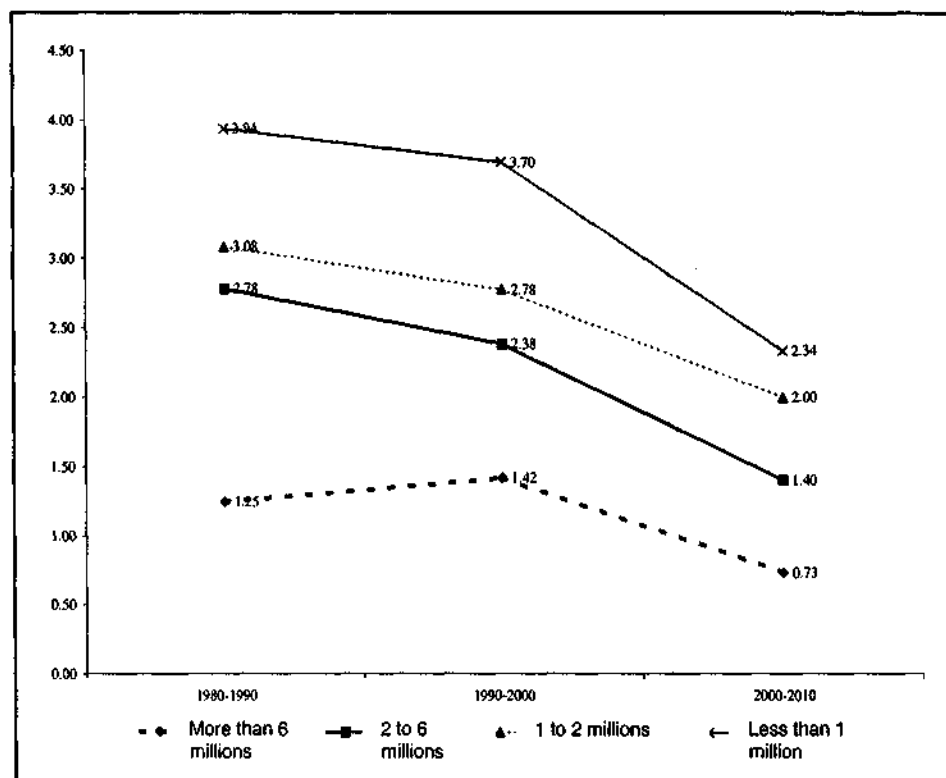
2. Cities

In 1995, the Region was home to four of the largest cities in the world: Mexico City (second largest with 16.6 million inhabitants), São Paulo (third with 16.5 million), Buenos Aires (ninth with 11.8 million) and Rio de Janeiro (fourteen with 10.2 million inhabitants). In the years to come, Latin American and Caribbean cities are expected to figure less prominently among the world's largest, as the presence of the large Asian agglomerations and, to a lesser extent, those of Africa increases. Rio de Janeiro, followed by Buenos Aires, is expected to drop off the list of the world's 15 largest cities. In 1995 the population living in the four Latin American cities mentioned above represented 29% of the entire world population living in megacities (defined as urban centers with 10 million or more inhabitants). By 2005 the region's representation is set to fall to 15% of all

megacity inhabitants, thanks to a drastic drop in their growth rates⁷ and the explosive population growth that megacities in other regions of world are expected to undergo.

Figure 4 shows the expected growth trends of large and medium-size cities over the next few decades, compared to those of larger urban agglomerations. As a group, cities of less than one million inhabitants are still growing at 3.7% per year, while those of between 1 and 2 million are expanding by 2.8% per year. The fall in the growth rate in the 1980s was relatively modest, but it became more drastic in the 1990s. In the next few years, this slowdown could help ease the accumulated services and housing deficits that medium and smaller-size cities are suffering from.

Figure 4
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: CITY GROWTH RATES BY SIZE 1980-2010
(%)



Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospect, 1998

Future trends in many intermediate cities depend on their capacity to integrate into the national and international system, and to exploit or develop comparative advantages in terms of accessibility, infrastructure, conditions of life, etc. In this context, the quality of urban management in small and medium-size cities could be even more decisive for their sustainable development than it is in large cities (see Box 2).

⁷ Between 1975-95 and 1995-2015, annual population growth rates will slow down from 1.27% to 0.80% in Buenos Aires; from 1.94% to 0.73% in Mexico City; from 1.30% to 0.76% in Rio de Janeiro; and from 2.9% to 1.03% in São Paulo.

Box 2

**PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN MANAGEMENT
IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE CITIES**

The region's small and medium-size cities are becoming a new target in the migration process which, associated with the high growth rates of population, are creating new structural changes in the spatial distribution of the population. In addition, they are provoking strains and negative impacts on existing infrastructure and services. Most local governments urgently need to develop strategies and procedures to enable them simultaneously to address these deficiencies, reverse the most entrenched poverty situations and assure the sustainability of economic development at the urban-local level.

With the aim of fostering a style of local action that promotes equity and productivity in urban areas, ECLAC is developing a line of cooperation and research to devise flexible alternatives for municipal procedures and management. Activities include promoting the modernization of management systems in services and public infrastructure, and designing municipal management tools with private-sector participation. Specific advisory services have been provided to municipalities in intermediate cities (Córdoba, Argentina; Cuzco, Perú; Ouro Preto, Brazil; Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; Valdivia and Temuco, Chile; Manizales, Colombia; and San Pedro Sula, Honduras). The aim of these activities has been to improve local institutions in critical areas and reconsider the role of the municipality in local economic development. The varied typology of proposals shows the diversity of the issues that were addressed, including "city marketing", local economic and productive agencies, municipal information systems, monitoring of development plans, institutional re-engineering in public-sector firms, planning and community participation, and the integration of the public and private sectors in carrying out urban projects.

In the course of the work undertaken with municipalities, three critical areas emerged in the region's expanding intermediate cities, which will be developed further in the future: a) the management of public services, involving participation by the private sector and community organizations, fulfilling the mission of providing access for lower income groups by achieving greater efficiency; b) integrated intervention in poor peripheral areas, bringing together various program lines and the beneficiaries themselves at the neighborhood level; and c) recovery of economic and social heritage in run down and degraded urban areas, and definition of the strategic role of the municipality in this task.

The Project "*Urban Management Strategies and tools for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean*", undertaken by the Environment and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC with financing from the Government of Italy, will analyze and discuss these issues in greater depth and will develop new guidelines and activities for improving urban management at the local level, in close collaboration with municipality networks and other institutions involved.

Source: ECLAC, Projects on "Urban Management strategies and tools for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean".

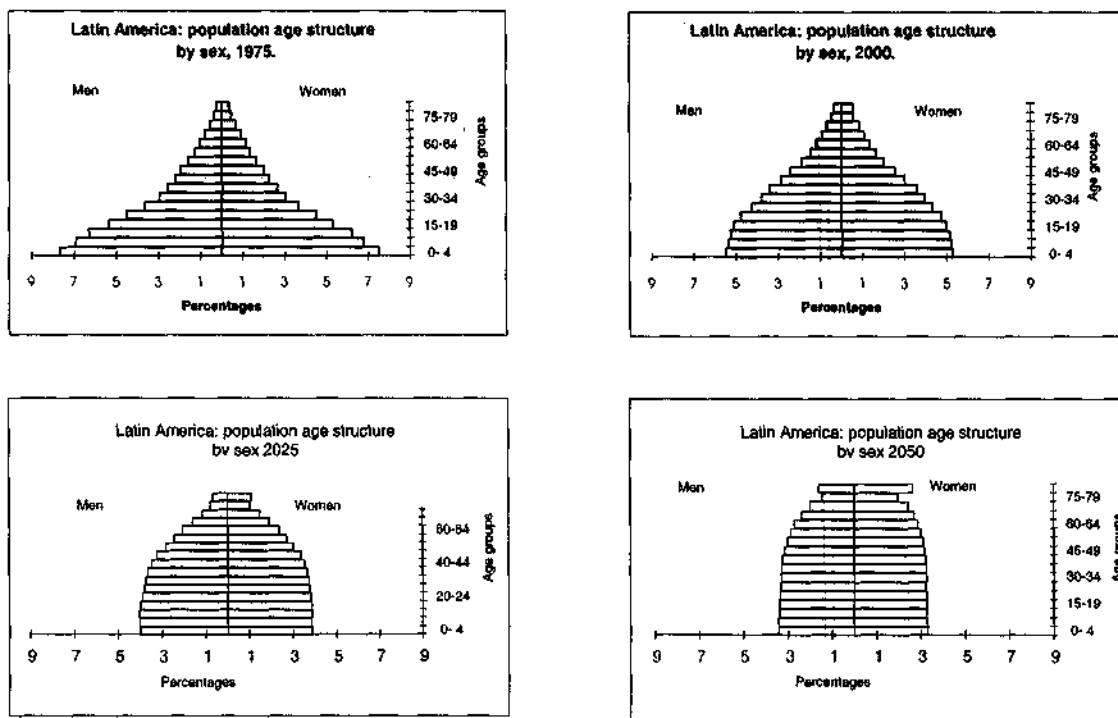
2. Households and people⁶

In a context of demographic transition, other significant changes in the age structure come into play; these are shown in Figure 5, which compares Latin American age pyramids at 25 year intervals between 1975 and 2025.

⁶ This chapter has been written based on Irma Arriagada, *Políticas sociales, familia y trabajo en la América Latina de fin de siglo*, Políticas Sociales Series, No.21 (LC/L.1058), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 1997.

Figure 5

LATIN AMERICA: POPULATION STRUCTURE BY AGE AND SEX



Source: CELADE, Latin America and Caribbean Symposium on Older Persons, Santiago, 1999

Changes in the age structure follow different patterns in the various countries, depending on the stage the country is at in the demographic transition. Lower infant mortality, longer life expectancy and a reduction in fertility have caused age pyramids to narrow. In the coming century, the phenomenon of population ageing will become clearer and more widespread across the region, with direct implications for the human settlement process.

As vessels of Latin American family and social life, cities and homes will be used very differently in the years to come, as the weight of the different age groups changes. As shown in table 1, while two out of every three inhabitants of our human settlements were children and young people in the 1950s, they will be just one in every three by 2050. On the other hand, while adults and older adults jointly accounted for one third of the total at mid-century, these groups will represent 60% of the population living in human settlements and shelters in the cities of the future. The implications of this process for urban management and housing policies are only beginning to be appreciated in the countries of the region.

Table 1
PRESENCE OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA, 1950 - 2050

Grupos de edades	1950	1975	2000	2025	2050
Children (0-14)	40.0	41.3	31.6	23.6	20.0
Youngs (15-19)	26.2	26.9	28.1	23.1	19.7
Adults (30-64)	30.1	27.5	34.9	43.6	43.3
Adults (65 or more)	3.7	4.3	5.4	9.6	17.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: CELADE, Latin America and Caribbean Symposium on Older Persons, Santiago, 1999

Households in Latin American and Caribbean countries have also undergone changes, including a reduction in the size of the family unit, a fall in the marriage rate and later marriage. There is also greater typological diversity: although for the time being nuclear families continue to predominate, other household types such as single-person and single-parent households are becoming more common. Another significant change relates to the increasing presence of “older” families, resulting from a fall in birth rates in previous decades. Young families with children under 12 years old have decreased, while those with older children and adult couples without children have increased in number.

Female-headed households are also on the increase. One in every five Latin American households is thought to be headed by a woman, with averages of between 17% and 25%, and even 40% in the Caribbean region. The increase in this family type, which was already very noticeable in the 1980s, will probably be sustainable as long as the economic, social and cultural phenomena that underlie it remain in force.

The priorities expressed in the Regional Plan of Action are set in the general context of the demographic, urban and social trends described above. The following sections review specific aspects of the human settlements situation related to each of the five thematic areas of the Plan: overcoming poverty, urban productivity, environmental sustainability of human settlements, governance and participation, and the efficiency aspects of housing policies, plus the issue of vulnerability to natural disasters.

IV. Poverty and human settlements

Conscious that the scourge of poverty was still present in every country of the region during the first half of the 1990s, the Regional Plan of Action gives pride of place to the thematic area of achieving social equity and overcoming urban poverty.

The agreements reached to support social progress from the standpoint of sectoral policies included accelerating the rate of house building, at least to match the pace of new household formation; intensifying programs of sanitation, shelter, legalization of tenure and social installations, establishing programs to maintain and improve the housing stock; promoting transparent and effective subsidies, and enhancing rural settlements and shelter.

The most recently available figures at ECLAC indicate that poverty has decreased in most Latin American countries, from 41% at the start of the 1990s to 36% in 1997, thereby regaining the levels of 1980, as shown in figure 6 and table A3 in the appendix. The level of indigence in 1997 also returned to its 1980 level of 15% of the population.

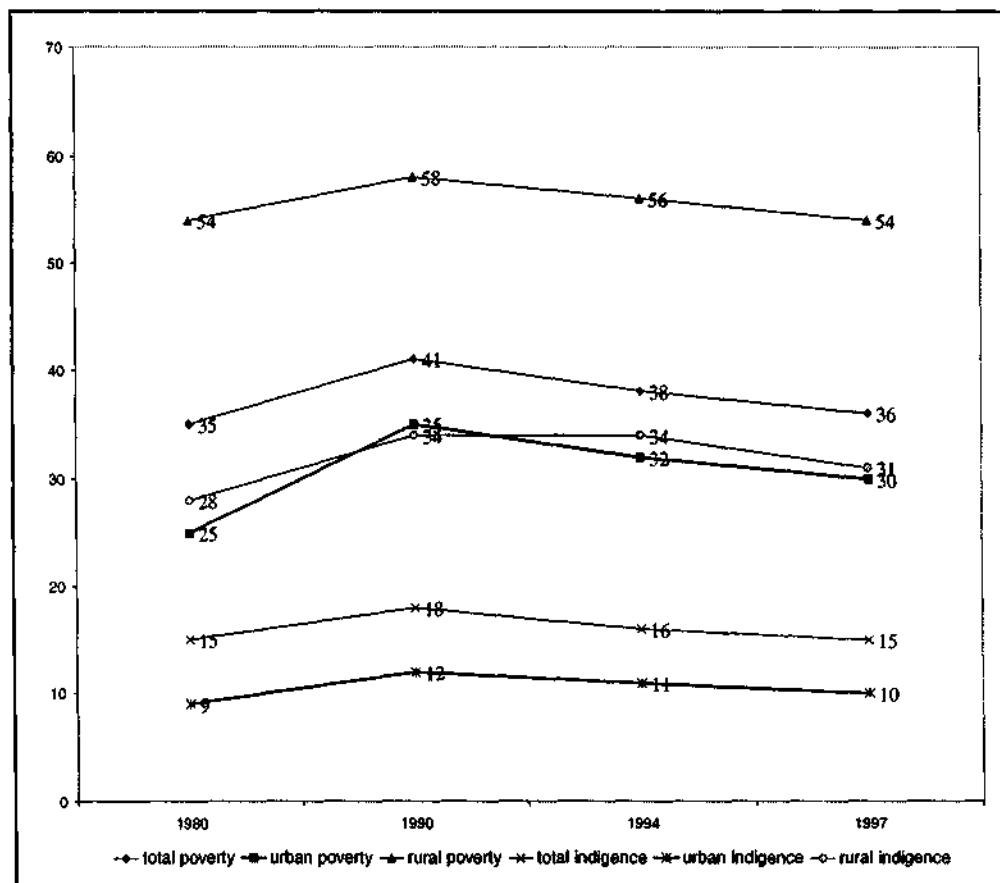
Positive trends in poverty and indigence rates should be viewed with considerable caution. On the one hand, the region has barely managed to return to its 1980 levels and, on the other, the total figures show that there are still around 200 million poor and 90 million indigent people in Latin American and the Caribbean. In several countries, the recent economic crisis may have slowed down or even reversed the positive trend.

How much these advances can be attributed to actions taken in the urban and housing sector is difficult to prove. However, certain features of poverty patterns in the 1990s suggest that the region's cities have been better able to fight poverty than rural areas. It should be recalled that most of the 64 million people who slipped into poverty during the 1980s were urban dwellers, so by the early 1990s the presence of urban poor in the overall poverty total had increased significantly. In the 1990s the ratio was 61%, compared with 62% in 1997, indicating that the region has managed to halt the gradual "urbanization of poverty", which earlier had been a decisive factor in the worsening quality of city life, and the territorial distribution of poverty has stabilized in absolute and relative terms.

Apart from this, poverty remains far more prevalent in rural than in urban areas. As Figure 6 shows, in 1997, 54% of the rural population was living in poverty, and more than half of the rural poor were indigent. In the cities, on the other hand, 30% of the population was poor, and only one third of those were in the indigent category.

Figure 6

POVERTY AND INDIGENCE IN LATIN AMERICA, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, 1980 - 1997



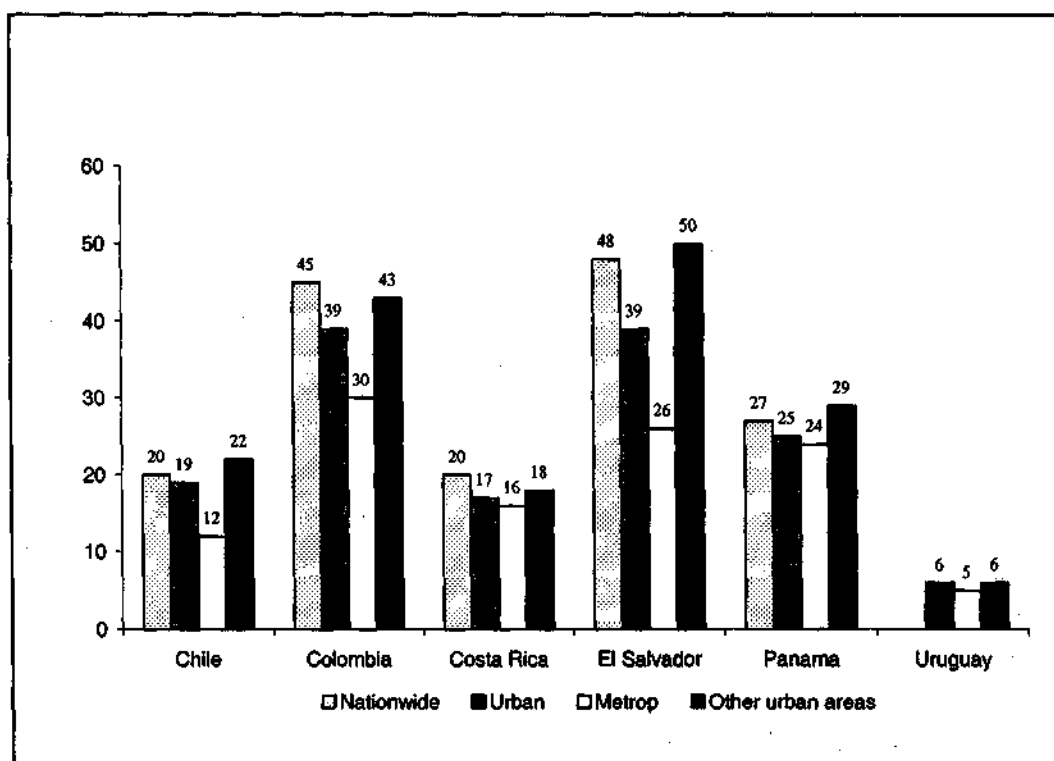
Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998 (LC/G.2050-P), Santiago, Chile, 1999. United Nation's publications, Sales No. E-99.II.G.4.

1. Cities and poverty

The existence of 125 million urban poor reflects a significant decline in the quality of life in many cities of the region over the last two decades. The current distribution of poverty within the urban sector would also seem to confirm the feature identified by ECLAC in the mid-1990s, namely that large cities offer better chances of staying out of poverty than small ones. Figure 7 shows that in a number of countries with quite critical poverty situations, the proportion of the population living in poverty is invariably less in metropolitan centers than in urban areas as a whole. Poverty in small or medium-size cities (other urban areas) is still very significant at the end of the decade, and even exceeds nationwide figures in countries such as Chile, El Salvador and Panama.

The relatively lesser presence of poverty in the Region's most urbanized areas suggests, among other things, that the improvement experienced by cities in terms of goods and services provision during the 1990s has helped reverse the intensification of poverty. This is especially true in large cities, although the special concern expressed in the Regional Plan of Action, in terms of providing support from the housing sector to combat poverty, remains valid in small and medium-size cities.

Figure 7
URBAN POVERTY IN SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES 1997
%



Source: ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998 (tc/g.2050-p), Santiago, Chile, 1999. United Nation's publications, sales no. E-99.II.G.4.

2. Urban poverty and gender

According to ECLAC studies, most Latin American families are maintained by contributions from several members. Women, especially, make decisive contributions to family income, as can be seen in table A2 in the Appendix.⁹ This participation is expected to keep growing in the next few years, as female age cohorts that are better equipped for labor-market activity begin to form families.

Even so, in most countries, female-headed households are more likely to be living in poverty (see table A4 in the appendix). The increase in single-parent woman-headed households has not been given sufficient attention in urban and housing policies. Many such households have limited access to the improvements provided by social policies, when they have insufficient income as a result of relying on the earnings of a single-family member.

3. Urban segregation

Segregation, which has been the main physical expression of poverty in the cities of our region, is not showing any signs of abatement in the present decade – quite the contrary. A real-estate market which in many countries operates with no checks and balances, has tended to push poor people out of the better neighborhoods and concentrate higher-income sectors there, with a level of installations, housing and services that are ever more distant from what is available to the rest of the urban population. This scenario of increasing socio-economic polarisation accentuates the mechanisms that cause poverty to spread and increases the frustration of segregated groups. As discussed below, the significance that the safety issue has acquired in the public mind has also helped to further fragment the urban domain, as higher-income households defensively isolate their territory from the rest of the city.

This segmentation has become more accentuated because nowadays there are no offsetting mechanisms, such as used to be provided by institutions that acted as a sphere of interaction between social strata. Examples of this are the social integration generated by the former public education system, or by large urban health centers. As the decade draws to a close, the extent to which exclusive installations for day-to-day commerce, medical and education services, recreation centers and work places have been concentrated in the higher-income neighborhoods, has generated a degree of autonomy that makes it unnecessary for the inhabitants of these areas to interact with other groups or sectors, or even make use of the central urban areas.

Human settlement policies have themselves contributed to segregation, through policies of shantytown clearance and the location of large social housing complexes in sectors that already had shortcomings, thereby aggravating the pre-existing shortage of services. To reverse these worrying trends, future urban management policies and building regulations will need to be complemented with civic initiatives that promote the values of urban integration and solidarity among the inhabitants of Latin America's cities.

4. Housing shortages

As regards the housing shortage, it is impossible to be precise for the moment about the progress achieved, given that census data used to measure deficiencies in most countries will not be updated till the year 2000. Table A5 in the appendix contains a partial update of the housing deficit

⁹ Arriagada (*ibid*). Households that rely on the head of household's earnings alone are a minority, ranging from 42% in Mexico to 21% in Uruguay. According to a simulation carried out by ECLAC (*Social Panorama of Latin America, 1995*, (LC/G.1886-P) Santiago, Chile, 1995. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.11.G.17), female spouses contribute between 28% and 38% of total household income in the region. Without these earnings, households living in poverty would increase by between 10% and 20%.

figures published in earlier ECLAC documents, including information from countries with more recent census data.

The need for up-to-date information for designing policies to relieve the precarious nature of housing will not easily be satisfied by census alone, as these are usually carried out at ten-year intervals. Interesting possibilities exist, however, for complementing census measurements with other more flexible and timely intermediate estimates (see Box 3).

Box 3

ESTIMATES OF THE HOUSING DEFICIT BASED ON HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

Studies carried out by the Development Finance Unit in the International Trade and Development Finance Division of ECLAC determine housing deficiencies for four countries of Latin America (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay) on the basis of the household surveys.^a These surveys have recently been put into use as an instrument for analyzing the housing situation. The wide range of background information that they provide on households and their accommodation has led to the establishment of new indicators and categories for estimating different kinds of deficiencies.

In quantitative terms, countries such as Chile have made progress in identifying types of needs on the basis of different expressions of the housing shortfall, especially in poor neighborhoods. In this way, they have classified household groups with inadequate housing facilities: the persons or family unit with household members who live in homes where both living premises and expenses are shared, and those households, which, while they share the housing unit, maintain a certain economic independence and may even have separate quarters in the lot or building where they live. This distinction makes it possible to measure more accurately the requirements for new housing units and to tailor different programs to suit those characteristics. By recording household income, the household survey links the shortfall to poverty levels and thus establishes the subsidy amounts required in relevant programs.

Household surveys are of even greater value in establishing qualitative deficiencies. In addition to the usual study on access to water, disposal of excreta and electricity, they determine the type of roofing, wall and/or floor materials and/or the condition of those items. Since it is possible to assess the degree of precariousness of the housing unit on the basis of the presence of one or more housing deficiencies, it is also possible to classify substandard dwellings according to the gravity of the problems they present in terms of shelter.

Notwithstanding these advantages, housing surveys have one limitation in relation to the census in that they are only representative, and therefore must be used with caution. Moreover, they are not designed to deal with the housing shortage nor are they suitable for purposes of comparisons between different countries, as there may be various discrepancies in terms of the period covered, the types of information collected, coverage, etc. However, such limitations can be overcome in the light of the experience gained in the 1990s when they were used as a tool for analysis and update of the census estimates of the housing deficit.

Source: Finance Unit in the International Trade and Development Finance Division of ECLAC.

a) These countries have been carrying out housing surveys on a more or less regular basis - for example, every 2 years - since the 1980s and have moved forward from an urban and partial coverage to a wider, national and subnational coverage.

As is well known, the formal production of housing in the region only covers a small part of the need. With the help of micro-enterprises and family or community initiatives and the use of artisanal technologies, lower-income populations have devised many ingenious solutions to their housing problem. In 1999, the World Bank and Habitat put underway a global plan of action for the improvement of informal settlements (in Brazil and Venezuela, among other countries). According to a study conducted by the World Bank, for each dollar of public funds spent on such interventions, the family contributes seven dollars of its own income for improvements, particularly if there is a prospect of its obtaining legal title to the dwelling.

In general terms, it might be thought that, in terms of the Regional Plan of Action, no clear progress has been made in improving the regional housing situation. Household surveys carried out in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay, which are described in the respective boxes, suggest that a significant proportion of the region's households still suffer from housing problems (78% in Bolivia, 35.5% in Colombia, 31.4% in Chile and 27% in Uruguay).

The net housing deficit must have grown during the 1990s, as new household formation is outstripping house-building in most countries, except for a few that have carried out sustained house building programs during the 1990s. The insufficiency of production even to absorb demand generated by population growth, is even more serious when one considers the faster increase in household formation associated with smaller family size, or the destruction of housing stock caused by recent natural disasters in several countries.

Below, we analyze institutional and financial innovations in the housing sector in a number of countries. These are probably not yet showing through as significant increases in social housing production, but they ought to enable progress to be made in the medium-term towards a gradual and sustained expansion of supply, thereby helping to close the deficit.

Apart from this, the housing problem in the region is still mainly seen in quantitative terms, and this prevents sectoral policies from generally taking responsibility for the serious problems that arise from the use of precarious materials and overcrowding, for example, which afflict much of the region's housing stock. The programs and instruments that address these deficiencies continue to be on a smaller scale than those aimed at new housing production.

5. Rural settlements and poverty¹⁰

The most recent estimates of poverty and indigence carried out by ECLAC¹¹ indicate that 78.2 million rural dwellers are poor and, of these, 47 million are in a state of indigence. For these people, the Regional Plan of Action resolved to boost public, private and social investment to improve rural settlements and shelter and afford the population living in such areas better access to basic services, housing and employment. The chances of this agreement being acted upon vary from one country to another. In countries with a higher level of urbanization and consolidated networks of cities or towns, it is usually possible to provide better access to transport, communication and services for rural sectors. By comparison, less urbanized countries still have very serious shortcomings in housing and services, which have been made worse in some cases by the loss of a significant proportion of the housing stock and services in rural areas as a result of natural disasters.

The spatially dispersed nature of the rural population in Latin America and the Caribbean makes it difficult to meet housing needs. ECLAC studies identify a gradient running from large

¹⁰ This chapter is based on interviews with the Agricultural Development Unit, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, ECLAC.

¹¹ ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998*, (LC/G.2050-P) Santiago, Chile, 1999, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.99.11.G.4.

rural settlements, with better infrastructure and less poverty, to smaller settlements with deficient services and a large proportion of people living in poverty (see Box 4).

Box 4**THE PROBLEMS OF ISOLATION IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS**

In Latin American and the Caribbean, the poverty that afflicts 54% of the rural population does not adhere to a single pattern, but has many manifestations ranging from clearly defined pockets of rural poverty in areas that are otherwise developing strongly, to widespread poverty conditions in extensive land areas that progress has left behind. Factors that impede greater progress in overcoming rural poverty include the dispersion and isolation of rural settlements. Whereas in urban areas a significant population concentration facilitates the installation of basic, productive and communications infrastructure, in rural areas very low population densities make it difficult to develop strategies to improve and equip rural settlements and dwellings with the minimum services needed to break out of poverty.

A study of 240 rural settlements in Peru reveals significant differences in infrastructure access between small settlements (400 to 600 inhabitants), medium-size ones (601 to 1000) and larger settlements (1001 to 3000 inhabitants). The study showed that access to postal services was generally low, but especially so in small villages; public telephones were inaccessible to much of the rural population, and 13% of the population did not use any kind of communication service. Obstacles preventing settlements being reached by motor vehicle fell from 43% and 32% in small and medium-size settlements, respectively, to 13% in the case of larger localities. Only 13% of settlements had direct access to paved roads (FITEL, 1996). A study on rural poverty in Chile found that low-income households in poor rural areas on average live about 5 Km from a main road; 26% of access roads are in bad condition, and 40% of homes are not connected to the electricity network (MIDEPLAN, 1999. "Pobreza rural en Chile", *Documentos Regionales* N° 48, Santiago de Chile).

Rural people clearly perceive that current settlement patterns restrict their chances of progress, yet rural housing programs are expected to provide access to similar services to those available in the cities. In the case of rural settlements in Peru, the priorities for inhabitants of the smallest communities concerned access to safe water and roads, while the larger settlements mentioned the need for access to technology, electricity and communications.

Source: Martine Dirven "Rural Poverties and Innovation in Agriculture", Santiago, Chile, Agricultural Development Unit, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 1999.

The dichotomy that used to exist between the region's urban and rural areas has been replaced recently by a more complex relationship between the city and the countryside. For example, living in the country does not necessarily mean working there, nor is city or town residence necessarily linked to an urban job. According to ECLAC, the region's economically active agricultural population amounts to about 44 million people, which represents 22% of the total economically active population (EAP). Only 35 million of these, however, live in rural areas, since 9 million of them work in agricultural activities but live in urban centers. On the other hand, 15 million rural dwellers take part in non-agricultural activities in sectors such as industry, commerce, services and building. In recognition of this greater connectivity between rural and urban life, land-management policies are broadening their scope beyond the limits of cities and villages, and are including the rural domain in local programs and investments. This trend in land-use management could contribute to progress towards more equitable conditions in the rural domain in the next few years.

V. Urban productivity

In relation to this thematic area, the Regional Plan of Action proposes an increase in the productivity of human settlements, recognizing that the development of city competitiveness and productive potential must, above all, lead to improvements in the quality of life of their inhabitants. Initiatives in this area are few, and have mostly been undertaken in the large urban agglomerations.

1. Urban employment and local productivity

The economic growth that has occurred in the Region during the 1990s has not been matched by a general increase in productive employment.¹² On the contrary, the tendency has been towards polarization between the few very dynamic activities where most productivity increases are concentrated, and a broad sector that remains at very low productivity levels. In most of the countries the urban unemployment rate in 1997 was higher than at the start of the decade, especially among young people, women and low-income households. In 1998, unemployment continued to rise from its 1997 level to reach 8.4%. During the 1980-1995 period, the structure of employment in Latin America changed significantly. The number of jobs in the public sector and in large private firms declined, while the importance of informal sector, small businesses and non-professional own-account work increased. According to data provided by ILO,

¹² While output increased by 3.2% per year and the labor force grew by 3.1%, employment expanded by 2.9% up to 1997 and by 2.6% in 1998 (ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998*, (LC/G.2050-P) Santiago, Chile, 1999, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.99.11.G.4.).

most jobs in the region are generated by the tertiary sector; in 1995, informal sector and small businesses accounted for 84 of every 100 new jobs.

The transformations caused by the globalization of information and communication technologies mean that traditional modes of production; work organization and business management are subject to fundamental change and innovation. Cities and their surrounding areas now form single continuous economic territories, with their own productive and institutional structure as well as own different economic stakeholders. In these "socially organized territories",¹³ the action of public administration at each of the different territorial levels is a key factor for promoting local socioeconomic development and coordinating stakeholders and their interests.

The following are interesting examples of local institutions, that have become involved in ad-hoc public-private agencies for the promotion of local development activities. In the city of Córdoba, an economic development agency (ADEC) has been set up to boost the city's endogenous development potential, diversify its economic-productive structure, and position Córdoba competitively in its regional and continental setting.

In the metropolitan area of Santiago, Chile, the municipalities of Santiago and Huechuraba have established development corporations in conjunction with private sector stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, universities, non-governmental organizations and neighborhood groups. These have achieved interesting results including programs of real estate development and the restoration of housing in inner city areas, activities to bring street commerce into the formal economy, the construction of highway nodes and activities of social and labor-market development. Another case is that of Villa El Salvador (Peru), where the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the municipality have joined forces to create an industrial park for small and micro-enterprises in the southern part of Lima.

These experiences demonstrate that private enterprise today can act in areas that have traditionally been the preserve of the public sector, and the latter is strengthened in this relationship with a strategic regulatory role and in representing the "public" over and above the "private" interest.

In a general sense, no significant progress has been made in promoting a broad increase in city employment. Although this objective goes far beyond the scope of housing policy, there are areas where collaboration is possible. For example, as women's earnings are now decisive in the household, their incorporation into the labor force needs to be facilitated rather than obstructed. This has implications for the location of housing in relation to work opportunities and services, while the recent precarious nature of employment and consequent increase in informal work by women has also turned many low-income homes into places of production. Paradoxically, it is urban and housing regulations that usually present the greatest obstacles to new work opportunities becoming established in the home and in residential areas.

Productive development is an important issue in local planning, and a detailed knowledge of the development possibilities of local areas makes it possible to better exploit their productive potential, expand employment opportunities and make the necessary investments to do this more efficiently. Methodological advances made in this area by ILPES-ECLAC show the possibilities that are opening up for land management policies to give more decisive support to local job creation in the region's diverse human settlements.¹⁴

¹³ Francisco Albuquerque, *Desarrollo económico social y distribución del progreso técnico: una respuesta a las exigencias del ajuste estructural*, Cuadernos del ILPES No. 43, Santiago, Chile, 1997.

¹⁴ Iván Silva, *Enfrentando la pobreza desde el municipio – metodología para la identificación de programas de inversión social a nivel local*. (LC/IP/L.137), Santiago, Chile, Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Social and Economic Planning (ILPES), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1997.

2. Role of the large cities

Economic processes in the region have influenced the development of megacities. However, there does not seem to be any evidence that sectoral policies have played a proactive role in guiding these trends, still less in harnessing them in favor of the poorest social sectors. As mentioned above, the momentum of recent urban processes seems to have stemmed from economic dynamics with both positive and negative effects for cities.

In the most dynamic parts of the region in recent years, productive activities and urban population have tended to become increasingly concentrated, so as to form economic regions encompassing substantially more than the main metropolitan areas. Of special importance is the region centered on the metropolitan area of São Paulo, which stretches as far as Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro to the north and includes Curitiba and Porto Alegre in the south. Other central areas include the La Plata-Buenos Aires complex, and the extension of the Mexico City metropolitan area and its linkages with several other large cities. The industrial and commercial development that takes place in these central regions does not necessarily favor location in the main cities, and in fact has tended to be even greater in suburban fringes or in secondary nuclei. Urban dispersion is also associated with factors such as their slower endogenous growth, improvements in transport and communications, and access to home ownership in peripheral or suburban areas.

Apart from this, it has been argued that as these large cities enter a global network of commercial and financial centers, they have tended partly to disconnect from their region, and reduce their role as coordinators of national centers and territories. As a result, the land areas surrounding these hubs, which form part of new global and regional hierarchies, are in danger of seeing their peripheral condition worsen as they become excluded from global economic processes. This probably explains why urban centers that used to be important (manufacturing, ports, etc.) decay as the globalization dynamic proceeds.¹⁵

The new scenarios that are arising from economic processes in future will require urban policies to deal more decisively with the issue of city productivity, so as to take advantage of the benefits they offer in improving equity, as stated in the Regional Plan of Action.

3. Land use management and competitiveness

The term land management is understood to refer to a process whereby land distribution is based on social and economic criteria. The aim is to allow for the inclusion, by consensus, of as many endogenous components as possible and to ensure compatibility between the environmental components of the area, the social aspirations of the people, and a sustained increase in the productivity of economic activities. In short, it is the process of distributing human activity in a given area in an optimum and sustainable manner. According to Boisier, in order for regional policies to work, they must include four specific components, i.e., political and territorial decentralisation, promotion of production, interregional coherence and land management. The latter includes instruments such as (a) a political-administrative division; (b) the assignment of duties to each unit in the division, in the national project; (c) the specific identification of development priorities over time; (d) a proposal for human settlements; (e) a proposal for broad categories of land use.¹⁶

From a territorial point of view, a key feature of Latin America and the Caribbean is its great diversity and size, which is both a strength and an opportunity when integrating into the world economy.

¹⁵ Sassen, Saskia, "Las ciudades en la economía mundial," in *La Ciudad en el Siglo XXI*, Inter-American Development Bank, 1998.

¹⁶ Boisier, Sergio, *Teorías y metáforas sobre desarrollo territorial*, ECLAC (LC/G.2030-P), Santiago, Chile, May 1999.

Regional cities and territories start from very unequal bases when competing to attract economic activity, employment and infrastructure (see Box 5), so this would seem a good time to collaborate in land-use management aimed at a more balanced form of development, to make it possible to better exploit the potential of territorial and urban concentration. Recent experience in some cities suggests that territorial cooperation is specially advantageous for increasing the competitive capacity of areas that are less integrated into the process, by facilitating shared investment in infrastructure and installations.

As it becomes clearer that the location of activities and land use in the region's countries are increasingly being influenced by economic and social forces situated beyond national borders, countries are becoming more open to the need for land-use management policies which establish a framework of territorial integration taking account of the different forms of political and spatial organization in the region, and also reinforce a spatial view of the management of sectoral policies, taking territorial levels into account and enhancing possibilities for multisectoral intervention.

Box 5

COMPETITIVENESS AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Different types of urban settlements may be distinguished in the region in terms of their roles and the opportunities they present for economic development.

- Urban areas of international and regional scope which fulfil a series of functions as a hub city with international linkages. They have the most competitive bases despite increasingly complex problems with respect to quality of life. São Paulo; Rio.
- Global cities at the regional level, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and São Paulo, which will continue to attract high-level functions, such as the headquarters of multinational agencies, financial institutions and top-level commercial services.
- Metropolitan regions, also at the international level, such as the axis formed by São Paulo, Campinas and the Brazilian hinterland, whose international role is strengthened through specialization of different agglomerations in complementary areas.
- Capital cities with some global functions but with an economic base that is essentially both service-oriented and industrial and which fulfil a coordinating role at the national and international level.
- National cities, a mix of medium-sized cities in which some centers maintain a more or less solid development base, while others show signs of stagnation or decline;
- Peripheral cities with important urban functions, such as State or provincial capitals in countries with a federal structure, where competition is set up with the national capital. They maintain a role as coordinator of major territories within the country and combine a service-based structure with industrial activities.
- Peripheral cities with weak urban functions which have less scope for development, owing to their distance from major centers, dependence on traditional activities, population decline and, in some cases, severe or extreme weather conditions.
- Former industrial cities and or mining towns, where the economy has been hard hit by the recession, structural adjustment and competitive globalization and which may be engaged in the slow and arduous task of reorganizing and restructuring their economic base, with a lag that makes them vulnerable in comparison with other localities;
- Regional cities and towns, where economic performance depends above all on linkages, location and the capacity to absorb innovations;
- Regional cities located in developing areas in the country, whose potential growth is based on the capacity to provide services to larger urban areas;
- Regional cities located outside of the major development areas, whose development is to a greater extent, self-sustaining and which occasionally benefit from their position along a route or corridor, and which have an attractive setting, etc.
- Cities located in predominantly rural regions, centers for trade and small-scale commerce in the heart of rural territory and where local development management strategies can be organized in conjunction with broader strategies for economic and physical integration.

Each of these categories presents different challenges in the area of land-use policy.

Source: Own elaboration on "European spatial development perspective towards balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the E.U." Proceedings of the E.U. Meeting, Posdam, 10-11 may, 1999

VI. The urban environment

In calling for the sustainable development of human settlements, both chapter 7 of Agenda 21 and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) have underscored the need for an environmental perspective to be incorporated into housing and urban development processes. The third thematic area of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements also refers to the improvement of the urban environment, with emphasis on such issues as sanitation, more efficient urban land use and disaster prevention. A number of the environmental issues on which ECLAC has compiled new information and which are of special concern from housing and urban policy perspective will be discussed in the following sections.

As a result of decentralisation and of the transfer of competencies, local governments are now empowered to act on environmental matters, but many countries still do not have any environmental policy for urban areas. Moreover, although, on the one hand, many municipal environmental problems are caused by factors that transcend their administrative boundaries, on the other hand, it is the local governments that must apply environmental controls, resolve environmental emergencies, coordinate programmes and projects designed to improve the environmental situation, and prevent new problems.

1. A sustainable urban environment

Many Latin American countries' environmental policies are quite sophisticated by international standards. Most of these countries have an environmental framework law and executing agencies in place

and, in some cases, their constitutions include specific sections on environmental questions. Many have signed the international conventions on climate change, biodiversity and desertification as well as preliminary agreements on transboundary movements of hazardous wastes. Many of these agreements have not, however, established sufficiently specific definitions for action at the local level, nor have they led to the development of practical instruments for their implementation.

Some urban environmental problems arise from the physical-morphological context in which a particular settlement was established, its subsequent growth patterns, and population pressure. The building of settlements in hillsides, ravines and dry riverbeds creates structural problems, and the incompatibility between the natural environment and the built-up areas becomes apparent when large-scale atmospheric phenomena, such as natural disasters, occur. Similar problems arise in regard to a settlement and the region or watershed in which it is located, depending on its geographical characteristics and its capacity to supply resources for basic needs, including water and food.

The second type of environmental problem that must be dealt with in settlements is that of how to meet basic needs and raise the living standard of the population. As far as traditional services –such as water supply, sanitation, drainage, water treatment, garbage collection and waste disposal –are concerned, many Latin American and Caribbean countries, unlike those of other regions, have improved their sanitation infrastructure, considering the present deficit and the increase in demand. Many problems remain, of course, as efforts are made to meet the demand, in regard to management, cost of services, price structure, and the environmental impact of technologies applied.

It is argued that the best way to expand the infrastructure is to privatise services, take a commercial approach (e.g., eliminate subsidies), and delegate more responsibility to local governments. However, privatisation may be incompatible with the improvement of environmental sustainability, cost cutting with poverty mitigation, and tax reduction with expansion of services.

Environmental problems relating to traffic congestion and pollution caused by the use of motor vehicles are the fastest growing component of overall air pollution in the region. Concern about air quality in urban areas has grown, as the harmful effects of emissions (especially from motor vehicles) on health and the environment become apparent. At the same time, there is increased demand for urban land, and speculative consumption is still prevalent in urban growth patterns, given that the public sector is not well equipped to regulate the land market.

A strong awareness of the importance of local management in dealing with environmental problems has taken shape since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the preparation of Agenda 21, which has served as the basis for the formulation of a local Agenda 21. The chief merits of this local-level instrument is that it seeks to link environmental management with other dimensions of territorial development (employment, health, education, etc.) and incorporate it into other locally defined priorities (see Box 6). Accordingly, some private organizations (especially, in Latin America, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, or ICLEI) have concentrated their efforts on building up municipal planning capabilities (and incorporating participatory and strategic dimensions into that sphere of activity) in an effort to ensure that environmental management as such will cut across all the various sectoral strategies that have been designed. This course of action has not only provided a more efficient approach to environmental issues but has also put an item on the public agenda that has not always been seen as a priority by local actors.

No overall analysis of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local level in Latin America and the Caribbean is currently available. To date, efforts in this connection have primarily consisted of isolated, localized initiatives. An examination of the limited information that is available does, however, indicate that the main challenges which need to be met in order for progress to be made in terms of local-actor environmental management are as follows:

- Environmental management requires action at the local as well as municipal level because the scope of environmental problems almost never coincides with administrative territorial boundaries (river basins, environmental pollution, etc.). Cross-municipal cooperation must therefore be promoted.
- Planning needs to be understood as a management tool for the various actors involved rather than simply as the design of policies for implementation by the public sector. Development plans therefore need to be accompanied by a joint evaluation and follow-up plan for all the actors involved.
- Environmental management is not a priority issue for local authorities. Thus, the only way that this item can be placed on the local public agenda is if other actors succeed in linking it up with other aspects of development that the local authorities do consider being priorities.

Box 6

THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN IMPROVING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

ECLAC, with support from the Government of Japan, is developing a project to promote public awareness on the control of anti-pollution policies in Mexico City (Mexico), São Paulo (Brazil), and Santiago (Chile).

In the period 1970-1990, the number of car in the region grew by 250% to reach a total 37 million. Unless immediate steps are taken to confront the problem, atmospheric pollution caused by vehicles will continue to worsen with grave consequences for the health and well being of city-dweller.

Agglomerations such as Mexico City, São Paulo and Santiago now have alarmingly high levels of pollution, especially as regards suspended particulates, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone etc. Other cities such as Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá are expected to experience similar problems in the future.

Dissemination of information is fundamental for the success of pollution control policies, since it helps the public to understand the rationale and scope of such policies. Once the problem of environmental pollution is perceived as harmful for public health, citizens can collaborate in strengthening environmental management and become pollution monitors. If they have accurate and reliable information, citizens can choose consumption patterns that pollute less and penalize in social or economic ways those who stray from such patterns.

The project seeks to involve the public and private sectors in information strategies on pollution. It will help the governments of the three cities to achieve greater efficiency in their pollution control policies, strengthen existing regulations, formulate ideas for new market incentives and build greater public awareness of the problem of atmospheric pollution. The dissemination of reliable information to the public does not detract from the importance of existing pollution control regulations or indirect market-based mechanisms. Rather, the aim is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these mechanisms by increasing public awareness.

Source: ECLAC, Project on "Enhancement of citizens' awareness in formulation of pollution control policies in three Latin American cities: Mexico City, São Paulo and Santiago (Chile)".

The incorporation of environmentally beneficial activities and strategies into habitat-related policies also requires detailed information on various environmental aspects of urban areas. Since "sustainable cities" is a fairly new concept within the field of statistics, it is difficult to find relevant information for a relatively extended period of time (more than 10 or 20 years). In some cases selected variables or even indicators have traditionally been included in national census or regional surveys, but there is currently no government body or regional coordinating agency that keeps track or gathers information on cities, much less on their sustainability (see Box 7).

The information sources, which could provide some sort of indicator, are widely scattered. Many of them are part of the United Nations system, however. ECLAC is one such source, since it maintains a data bank on the household surveys of 16 Latin American countries. The World Bank has databases that include a category for urban areas, desegregated by city. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) also has development and sustainable development indicators and statistics. Since 1989, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat) has been compiling statistics on housing and more recently has expanded these series to include urban areas as such. Much of this information is for the first half of the decade, however.

A study prepared by the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (UNEP, UNDP, ECLAC, IBRD, IDB) for the Forum of Ministers for Environmental Affairs of Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁷ proposes the development of a set of indicators that could be used to monitor factors relevant to the sustainability of urban areas on an ongoing basis.

Box 7

THE FOUR PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The new World Bank strategy for promoting urban development is oriented towards the promotion of sustainable cities where the progress of city-dwellers - with special emphasis on poverty alleviation - can be achieved at the same time as national progress. The sustainability of urban development can be measured in terms of a series of conditions which must be met by local governments. These include:

1. Livability or compliance with minimum standards for ensuring the quality of life of city-dwellers and especially the poor. To this end, appropriate housing schemes must be provided to ensure land ownership, access to credit, transport, health, education and other services, bearing in mind the need to prevent environmental degradation, guarantee public safety and preserve cultural heritage.
2. The city's competitiveness or capacity to promote the installation of productive services, which, in turn, will generate employment, income and investments.
3. Good governance, which implies having city governments that are representative of civil society, who, for their part, must be entitled to participate in urban management. Moreover, good governance implies transparent management, local governments that have the means to fulfil their responsibilities and a broad-based alliance of the different sectors.
4. Bankability, or the capacity to administer resources at the municipal level, for which a clear definition of the local taxation system is required together with transparent management of the use of such resources.

The World Bank bases these objectives on four principles for development: (a) the importance of urban development for national development; (b) the promotion of a participatory urban process; (c) the implementation of actions with the participation of the public and private sector; and (d) the promotion of intermediary networks such as associations of cities.

Source: World Bank; Global Urban and Local Government Strategy (<http://www.worldbank.org/>)

2. Sustainable urban land management

In view of the large land areas covered by the region's cities, in conjunction with the mounting difficulties being experienced in terms of their development due to factors relating to land management issues, the Regional Plan of Action includes agreements concerning efficient urban land use. As noted in the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda, "access to land and legal security

¹⁷ Inter-Agency Technical Committee, Forum of Ministers for Environmental Affairs of Latin America and the Caribbean, "Estrategias ambientales para el desarrollo sustentable de América Latina y el Caribe, 1999", *Bases territoriales y biorregionales de la planificación*.

of tenure are strategic prerequisites for the provision of adequate shelter for all and for the development of sustainable human settlements. Every Government must show a commitment to promoting the provision of an adequate supply of land in the context of sustainable land-use policies”.

The real estate speculation that is a traditional feature of Latin American cities prevents households that lack the resources needed to acquire land through the formal market from meeting their housing and urban-services needs. By the same token, speculation tends to reinforce negative traits of the cities, such as the rigid segregation that is fostered by speculators as a way of bolstering the prices of urban real estate in certain areas of the city.

The efforts made by the public sector in the past to intervene in the market in order to make land available to the poorest sectors of the population have been ineffective in controlling urban sprawl and spatial segregation. The countries of the region have remained convinced of the importance of continuing to exercise some measure of regulatory control over urban land use, however, and they are therefore exploring new avenues that will prove effective within the region’s economic framework. The cases discussed in the accompanying box (see Box 8) provide examples of some of the progress that has been made in devising more sustainable urban land use policies. In view of the existing land tenure system, the large number of outdated regulations on the books and, above all, the political and economic interests associated with the land market, it appears that it will be very difficult to implement the reforms that need to be made in the land market during the coming decade.

Box 8

INSTRUMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN LAND

The following are some interesting examples of government interventions at the local level, which have been successful in terms of market regulation. The “system of transfer of development potential” proposed by the Mexico City Historic Center exploits commercially the low land use density in the historic area by granting permits to owners to sell the virtual area not used directly by the monument - referred to as the development potential - through an exchange arrangement administered by the local government. A promoter may acquire these rights to construct in another part of the city and under higher density conditions than those established by the development plans for the center. In turn, the reform of the Omnibus Urban Planning and Construction Law put forward by the Ministry of Housing of Chile provides for different innovative standards, such as the generation of “certificates of aptness for construction”, whereby the owner of a building that has been declared a historic monument can sell the equivalent of the developments that he could have implemented there, if no restriction had existed.

Some efforts have been directed towards updating property taxes to make the most of capital gains on the land market and curb speculation. The land betterment taxes in the cities of Colombia, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico are examples of innovative ways of reaping some of the benefit of the increase in land values due to urbanization. The City of Quito increased its property tax collections substantially through an automated, multi-purpose register and, as a result, is in a position to undertake high-priority local public works. Taxes on land betterment or potential betterment have also been used successfully in other Latin American cities; in Tijuana, Mexico, for example, they have been allocated to finance the priority public works plan, referred to as the Urban Activation Plan. This type of instrument reinforces the link between local public investments and their potential beneficiaries, leading to what could be termed a “political contract” for financing urban infrastructure.

Source: ECLAC/LINCOLN Project on “Access to land and municipal land taxation as means for financing urban development”.

3. Water and sanitation

Another important agreement relating to the environment that is contained in the Regional Plan of Action has to do with the need for a substantive improvement in access to quality drinking water and waste disposal services, especially for the poor. As shown by the examples given in table

2, in all the countries listed except Brazil, access to drinking water in urban areas has increased substantially during the 1990s, and this can be assumed to have had a positive impact on the living conditions of the poorest sectors of the population and on the urban environment. On the other hand, access to waste disposal systems is still quite limited in many countries, despite the region's high degree of urbanization. The fact that some countries, such as Brazil and Paraguay, have higher figures for 1996 than they did at the start of the decade may be the result of the still explosive growth rates of some smaller and medium-sized cities. In the case of Colombia, however, the reason for the increase is probably not an actual deterioration in access to sanitation but rather the fact that the survey's geographic coverage has been expanded since 1990.

Given the high implicit costs of these systems, in addition to the cost of proper waste treatment, upgrading sanitation services requires large-scale investments. However, the backlog of unmet needs in other priority areas of development, especially in smaller and medium-sized cities, makes it difficult to secure sufficient funds for these investments. The failure to make such investments clearly has a negative impact in terms of environmental quality.

Recent trends in human settlements have been conducive to progress towards the goal of providing basic services to all of the region's inhabitants. Such access is directly related to the countries' level of urbanization and, indeed, it is quite rare for any of the more urbanized countries to have large numbers of households living in informal settlements lacking in services, whereas greater service shortfalls are found in all of the primarily rural countries. The rate of urbanization is also important in terms of the expansion of infrastructure and urban services, as a slower growth rate in the cities and a decline in rural-to-urban migration often will enable a country to increase access to services.

Table 2
TRENDS IN ACCESS TO URBAN SERVICES DURING THE 1990S
(Percentages of urban dwellings lacking access)

Country	Drinking water		Sanitation	
	Early 1990s (a)	Late 1990s (b)	Early 1990s (a)	Late 1990s (b)
Argentina (c)	3.8	1.8	...	...
Bolivia	27.5	9.7	57.6	47.2
Brazil	18.7	13.1	49.9	53.2
Chile	2.7	1.6	15.8	12.3
Colombia	1.7	1.7	6.6	8.7
Honduras	23.5	12.7	52	41.6
Mexico	7.4	7.2	22.4	20.3
Paraguay (d)	33.3	25.3	63.7	76.4
Uruguay	6.0	1.9	...	...
Venezuela	8.2	6.5	24.9	24.8

Source: ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998* (LC/2050-P), Santiago, Chile, 1999. United Nation's publication, Sales No. E.99.II.G.4.

- a) Around 1990
- b) 1997, except for Mexico (1994), Brazil and Paraguay (1996).
- c) Greater Buenos Aires
- d) Asunción y urban areas of the Central Department

Between 1994 and 1996, according to an ECLAC study of 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries,¹⁸ average per capita public spending for potable water and sanitation in the region amounted to US\$ 9 dollars and total per capita public spending, to US\$ 225 (in 1996 dollars).

Considering that none of the countries has yet attained universal coverage of basic social services, it is clear that spending in this area has been inadequate. Moreover, the data on international cooperation for development show very low percentages of assistance (around 10%) for basic services.¹⁹ Increased channelling of such resources to these items would help improve the situation and reduce the burden on public budgets.

4. Experiences with indirect environmental control instruments

Despite the inroads that have been made during the 1990s in building an environmental awareness in relation to urban and land use development, to a large extent “the principles of environmental protection are still viewed by many productive sectors, and by not a few governmental ones, as an external imposition that blocks development”.²⁰ Until now, direct regulatory instruments –such as land use regulations and standards, mandatory environmental impact studies and assessments, etc.– have been the main tools used by the countries in their efforts to achieve a sustainable urban environment. The effectiveness of direct regulatory mechanisms has been questioned chiefly because of the difficulties experienced in enforcing such provisions due to the institutional weaknesses of national and local governments. Today, a number of countries are experimenting with the design of indirect financial or fiscal regulatory instruments such as the desegregation and apportionment of the cost of urban services and the consequent reduction of subsidies and, more recently, quotas or tradable emission rights.

Problems in implementing such measures have been encountered, however, especially when the relevant markets suffer from significant failures. Reductions in subsidies for water services have not necessarily led to substantial improvements in the urban environment in cases where the firms in question are not explicitly required to invest certain amounts in upgrading those services. If market prices are to be adjusted so as to accurately reflect the actual cost of providing water, then they must include such components as the treatment of wastewater, maintenance and the development of new sources. The costs involved here are very high, especially since some of the countries in the region are so far behind in terms of providing access to drinking water and especially in waste management, together with the fact that they have barely begun to develop waste water treatment facilities or to take steps to halt the deterioration of water catchment sites. Given existing urban poverty rates, the resulting charges would exceed low-income sectors’ ability to pay; this situation could therefore entail an even greater risk of inequity in access to services than the one generated in the past by the regressiveness of drinking water subsidization.

Thus, because of the increasingly important role to be played by principles of environmental protection in urban management and planning in the coming years, in addition to the use of direct regulatory instruments (e.g., master plans), it will probably be necessary to refine new, indirect instruments for controlling environmental impacts.

¹⁸ Ganuza E., León A. and Sauma P., *Gasto público en servicios sociales básicos en América Latina y el Caribe: Análisis desde la perspectiva de la Iniciativa 20/20*, UNDP/ECLAC/UNICEF, October 1999. The analysis covers Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Peru.

¹⁹ At the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995), basic social services were defined as basic education, primary health care, population programmes, potable water and sanitation.

²⁰ José Antonio Ocampo, “Policies and institutions for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean”, revised version of a document presented at the fifth biennial conference of the International Society of Ecological Economics, Santiago, Chile, 16 November 1998.

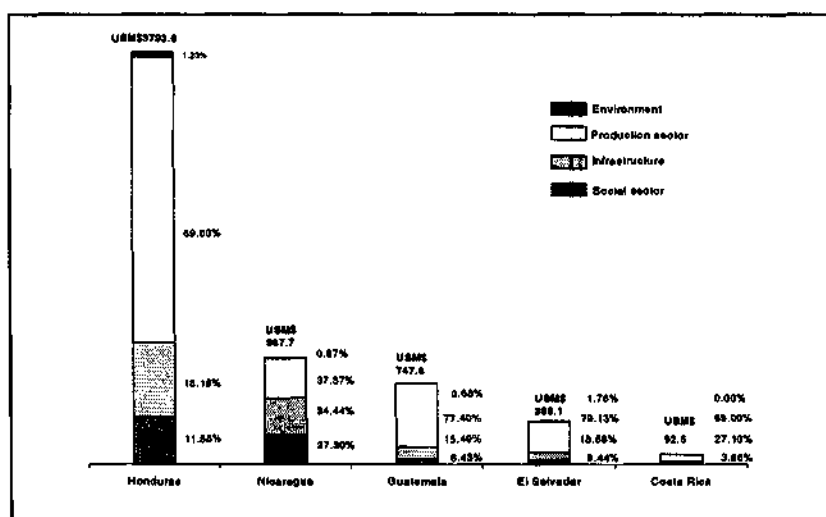
5. Environmental vulnerability and natural disasters

There is general agreement among experts that rapid urbanisation increases the risk of natural disasters. The demand for space for urban growth leads to the use of unsuitable lands that are vulnerable to natural risks. Rapid growth means more buildings –often poorly constructed or inadequately maintained– and the blockage of natural drainage outlets. Locating industries and hazardous materials in urban areas creates potential danger to the population, just to mention a few of the characteristics of urban areas that can create further risks in the event of a disaster. These problems cannot be solved unless there is a clear political commitment, at both the local and the national levels, to enforcing standards for making cities safer; unless this is done, natural disasters will take even more lives and cause more material damage.

In the past few years the region has been hit by a number of extraordinarily serious natural disasters. El Niño has had an impact on many countries. In Ecuador, Peru and Costa Rica, in particular, unusually heavy rains have led to the flooding of large tracts of land and urban centers, landslides and the destruction of crops. According to data compiled by ECLAC, the damage caused by El Niño in the Andean region since the first quarter of 1997 is in excess of US\$ 7.545 billion.²¹

In September 1998, Hurricane Georges swept over numerous Caribbean islands, including Antigua, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, where it took a toll of 235 dead, 595 injured, 300,000 people left homeless and an estimated US\$ 2.193 billion in damage before moving on to Haiti, Cuba and the United States mainland. In October, Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America. Considered the worst natural disaster in the subregion during this century, Mitch caused 9,214 deaths and left 12,845 persons injured or otherwise affected in areas that were just beginning to recover from the armed conflicts of earlier years.

Figure 8
DAMAGE CAUSED BY HURRICANE MITCH



Source: ECLAC, *ECLAC Notes*, No. 3, March 1999.

The magnitude of the damage caused by this disaster underscores just how vulnerable these regions are to events of this sort and corroborates the existence of a close relationship among development, environmental sustainability and the risk of catastrophic damage (see Box 9).

The issue of human settlements' environmental vulnerability has taken on special importance within the field of housing policy as a consequence of the natural disasters that have occurred in some of the countries during the 1990s. Based on calculations performed using the methodology developed

²¹ ECLAC *Notes*, March 1999, No. 3.

by ECLAC, the following table provides statistics on the severe damage sustained by the housing sector as a result of the Hurricane Mitch in 1998 in several Central American countries.

Table 3
HURRICANE DAMAGE IN THE HOUSING SECTOR, 1998

Million dollars

	Total damage	Direct damage	Indirect damage (a)
Guatemala	35.3	24.5	10.8
El Salvador	13.6	5.6	8.0
Honduras	344.1	221.0	123.0
Nicaragua	195.6	182.9	12.7

Source: ECLAC, "Assessment of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch, 1998": El Salvador (LC/MEX/L.371); Guatemala (LC.MEX/L.370); Honduras (LC/MEX/L.367); Nicaragua (LC/MEX/L.372; Mexico City, ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico, 1999

a) Includes damage and loss of furniture and equipment and foregone rents.

The serious, long-standing qualitative and quantitative problems existing in the housing sectors of the four countries listed above have been compounded by the severity of the hurricane damage. The experience gained in the course of the disaster relief work has also underlined the importance of maintaining a longer-term view even during the emergency phase of the effort when deciding where to locate or relocate disaster victims. The development of human settlements policies that include some level of emergency response capacity entails balancing the need to provide rapid, appropriate assistance to disaster victims with a longer-term perspective in order to ensure that on-the-spot decisions do not run counter to housing and urban development objectives. In addition, the countries are now aware of the importance of identifying high-risk areas beforehand, of having planning instruments in place for regulating and orienting land use and of instructing the community how to prevent or mitigate the impacts of natural disasters.

Box 9

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY TO NATURAL DISASTERS

Difficulties in gaining access to land under reasonably secure conditions forces lower-income populations to settle in high-risk areas. This creates in the region a widespread situation of physical-structural vulnerability in settlements and informal low-income dwellings. Poor communities facing critical survival situations are usually unaware of the dangers inherent in these risky locations, and often have no knowledge of basic steps to prevent or mitigate the impact of disasters.

In the last few years, human settlements in several regions and localities in Latin America and the Caribbean have been afflicted by variety of disasters. These have been associated with weather patterns known as la Niña and el Niño, with hurricanes Georges and Mitch in the Caribbean and Central America, and with earthquakes such as the one that struck the Armenia region in Colombia. The human, material and environmental damage caused by these large-scale natural disasters have revealed the close relation that exists between such catastrophes, and the relation between the physical-geographical conditioning of the region's territories and the sometimes inappropriate uses made of them by the populations living there. In addition, "small-scale disasters" caused by flooding, mud slides, avalanches, landslides and other phenomena of more limited impact but which are recurrent in the region, cause significant damage to the housing stock of the most poor, which is generally made of flimsy material and is situated in high-risk areas.

As has been witnessed in official ECLAC missions to Central America and the Caribbean aimed at assessing the socioeconomic impact of hurricanes George and Mitch, and to Colombia following the January 1999 earthquake, the destruction that disasters cause is concentrated almost exclusively in precarious housing, occupied by poor families, in both urban and rural areas. Such families make huge efforts to build or consolidate their dwellings, only to see them partially or totally destroyed with cyclical regularity. When, following a catastrophe, no decisive, speedy and effective governmental response is forthcoming, they have no alternative but to return to the same intrinsically hazardous sites and rebuild their homes with the same characteristics as before. Hence, their vulnerable housing situation persists and becomes more entrenched, and poverty tightens its grip.

Source: ECLAC, "Assessment of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch, 1998": El Salvador (LC/MEX/L.371); Guatemala (LC.MEX/L.370); Honduras (LC/MEX/L.367); Nicaragua (LC/MEX/L.372; Mexico City, ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico, 1999

VII. Governance and decentralization

Promoting good governance and participation is another essential thematic area of the Regional Plan of Action, which is in keeping with the democratization process observed in countries in the 1990s. As regards this thematic area, the Regional Plan of Action seeks to promote greater participation by local governments in actions relating to human settlements and a better coordination between sectoral policies and other policies and interventions. In this section, some aspects of these issues are examined together with two other related areas which are of special concern as the decade draws to a close: the gender perspective and safe cities.

1. Decentralization in human settlement policies

Progress has been made in implementing decentralizational reforms in the region since the mid-1980s, as democratic processes have taken shape in different countries. The number of countries with direct choice of subnational and local authorities increased from 3 in 1980 to 17 in 1997 and a series of mechanisms has been set up to promote citizen participation in local matters and increase the control and decision-making power of the public in local planning. The dynamism displayed by major cities in the context of regional development has also fostered decentralization in urban policies.

MERCO-CITIES – EXPRESSION OF A NEW ECONOMIC REALITY

In terms of economic size, the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), comprising Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, is the world's fourth largest trading bloc. Since its creation in the Treaty of Asunción in 1991, Mercosur has signed agreements with other trading blocs, such as the European Union, and also with other countries in the region, such as Chile and Bolivia.

The way Mercosur has operated has created new economic territories – which do not always coincide with the political-administrative organization of the countries involved – and to new inter-city relations. It has also redrawn the areas of influence of metropolitan areas and their outlying centers to form complex urban agglomerations – such as that comprised by São Paulo and its belt of satellite cities (Campinas and São José de Campos), or the Buenos Aires-La Plata-Montevideo conurbation. For effective land management purposes, the new urban linkages generated by Mercosur will probably require redefinition of preexisting sub-national and local administrative territories, and the creation of new units of urban and land-use management.

One expression of these new complementation needs is the "Merco-cities" network, a grouping of 57 Mercosur cities that has been in existence since 1995. Anticipating the importance that local government efficiency in management and in improving the quality of life, will have in terms of opportunities for progress, city mayors in the Merco-city group are hoping to use their alliance to enhance the capacities of their respective local administrations in the context of new competitive requirements generated by economic integration. A particularly interesting aspect of the work of this city network has been to encourage better understanding in local government of the demands of private-sector investors. Apart from this, it has been possible to pool resources to gain joint access to better information on markets and to modernize management technologies. In particular, municipal administrations in the merco-cities network are seeking to modernize urban infrastructures, update human resources and point the labor force towards the new opportunities that are arising in the labor market as a result of integration. They also aim to improve the local productive environment so as to attract new investments and opportunities for the participating cities.

The merco-cities network comprises the following cities (in alphabetical order by country):

- In Argentina: Bahía Blanca, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, La Plata, Mar de Plata, Mendoza, Rafaela, Rosario, Rio Cuarto, San Miguel de Tucumán, Santa Fé, Santiago del Estero, Trelew, Ushuaia, Villa Mercedes.

- In Brazil: Belém, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Cuiabá, Curitiba, Florianópolis, Fortaleza, Joinville, Juiz de Fora, Londrina, Piracicaba, Porto Alegre, Recife, Ribeirão Preto, Rio Claro, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Santa Maria, Santo André, São Paulo, Uberlândia.

- In Uruguay: Montevideo, Paysandú, Rivera, Salto, Santa Fé, and Tucuarembó.

- In Paraguay: Asunción, Fernando de Mora.

- In Bolivia: Cochabamba, La Paz, and Tarija.

- In Chile: Concepción, Los Andes, Santiago, and Valparaíso.

Source: *Informe de Progreso*, Bilbao Metrópoli, European Union, DGX-XI, Association for the Revitalization of Metropolitan Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain, 1998.

The shift from a traditionally centralist approach to housing policies in many countries towards a local involvement in urban and housing programs in the region constitutes an interesting challenge. Decentralization of urban and housing policies is still in the early stages and differences in emphasis can be seen depending on the political, socio-economic and territorial framework of each country. Nevertheless, some visible changes in housing policies include a change of emphasis in interventions from merely sectoral programs to those with a territorial base, increased scope in the programs for decision-making by local bodies and the concern to ensure consultation of a wide range of actors, including the private sector, on proposed projects.

In the light of ECLAC experience in other areas,²² certain issues must be borne in mind to ensure that decentralization of human settlement policies in Latin America and the Caribbean represent a step forward rather than backwards. Firstly, the region is still so far behind in terms of housing and urban services that caution must be exercised in implementing decentralized programs to ensure that they do not diminish the response capacity achieved in some countries but rather surpass the levels of efficiency and effectiveness achieved by centralist models. To this end, one must go beyond the experience acquired over the last few decades by local sectoral bodies.

Moreover, decentralization should not mean that the central government should dissociate itself from its responsibilities with respect to housing or even less resort to merely transferring sectoral resources to the local level, as has been done with health and education. The decentralization of housing policies should on the contrary make it possible to increase sectoral resources gathering new resources from the local level to enhance their response capacity.

In the 1990s, the gradual transfer of responsibility for basic services as well as social and road infrastructure to municipal councils accentuated the gap between rich and poor in several countries generating qualitative differences without compensations. In order to avoid similar problems in the area of housing and, in the interests of social equity, it will be necessary, in each case, to preserve the compensatory option available under the existing centralist model towards the most depressed or marginalized territories and communities.

2. Participation in habitat policies and management

Community participation provides the link between civil society and the institutions that are responsible for setting policy and managing the habitat. Although participation is fundamental to decentralisation, it is important, for analytical purposes, to make a distinction between the limited participation that is involved in implementation efforts, and the broader participation that can influence decisions on priorities for urban intervention and the design of urban programmes and policies.²³ Some interesting examples of mechanisms for encouraging citizen participation in policy design at the municipal and other local levels are the local administrative boards set up in Colombia in 1986, the network of local boards created in the municipality of Sao Paulo in the late 1980s, the neighbourhood councils established in Montevideo in 1993, and the communal participation centres set up in Cordoba in 1996.²⁴

These mechanisms, which were devised as a political initiative for strengthening citizen participation, have often succeeded in improving municipal services through deconcentration. There are interesting models of community participation in local government. In Porto Alegre (Brazil), participatory mechanisms have been put underway in the budgeting exercise, so that citizens can play an active role in decisions on resource allocation and annual spending by the prefecture, the idea being

²² See ECLAC, *El balance de la década*, Cap 7. Aghon, Gabriel.

²³ Simioni, Daniela, *Análisis comparativo de la gestión urbana en las ciudades intermedias de Cusco, Manizales, Ouro Preto, Puerto España y Valdivia* (LC/R.1688), ECLAC, Santiago, Chile, 1996.

²⁴ Rojas, E. and Daughters, R.: *La ciudad en el Siglo XXI. Simposio de buenas prácticas en gestión urbana en América Latina y el Caribe*, IDB, March 1998.

that citizens should have control over the management of public affairs. In Bolivia, grassroots territorial organisations (Organizaciones Territoriales de Base) play a significant supervisory role in local government and monitor the use of resources that are transferred from central government.

Another important consideration is the need to preserve the democratic character of this process to ensure an effective participation, and not merely a formal one, in decentralizing programs and interventions.

Whether decentralization of housing policies is technically feasible also raises concerns among countries. The existing administrative and technical capacity of municipalities and other subnational bodies is limited and uneven, and needs to be strengthened. In various countries interesting initiatives have been taken, notably, the dissemination of successful experiments in critical areas of the process for contributing to progress in decentralization in housing and local urban development. This implies a qualitative change in the approach to housing and urban deficiencies, which consider actual decision-making possibilities for the inhabitants and a diversification of supply in keeping with local realities.

Lastly, collaboration between local governments in implementing urban and housing improvements on an appropriate scale is becoming increasingly important. Substantial investments, for example, in the urban infrastructure required to enhance a city's competitiveness, can often be secured by coordinating the interests and resources of various local areas. Similarly, coordination between national and local government entities, the private sector and the community is crucial for making progress with decentralization (see Box 11).

Box 11

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Since 1996 this body has coordinated the main institutions in the housing and human settlements sector in Central America: the Ministries of Housing and Urban Development grouped under the Central American Council on Housing and Human Settlements (CCVAH), municipal associations grouped under the Federation of Municipalities of Central America (FEMICA), and community-based movements affiliated to the Central American Federation of Community Organizations (FCOC). Its main purpose is to promote associative policies and methodologies in the field of housing and human settlements, inspired in the principles, commitments and recommendations of the Habitat Agenda. The United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat) supported this initiative through the Resource Center for the Sustainable Development of Human Settlements in Central America (CERCA). Its aims are:

- To improve living and working conditions in human settlements inhabited by low-income communities.
- To help strengthen community and institutional capacities for participatory and sustainable management of human settlements in Central America.
- To help set up a new type of association between State and civil society, in promoting and putting into practice local strategies for improving human settlements.

The first phase of this initiative began in January 1997 and will conclude in December 1999. After that, the Center is expected to enter a phase of co-management, in which the three associated national organizations will progressively take over management responsibilities. In 1998 all 22 national and three regional agencies affiliated to this regional alliance carried out a wide-ranging and exhaustive process of sectoral and joint consultations which made it possible, at the Fourth Regional Associates Forum (Montelimar, Nicaragua) in February 1999, to approve seven Joint National Strategies and three Regional Sectoral Strategies for the Promotion of Participatory Management of Human Settlements. This consultation process made it possible to identify and analyze priority aspects of human settlements management, such as reducing the vulnerability of human settlements, strengthening local processes of participatory development planning, and promoting policies and instruments to facilitate access to land for housing. In the Central American "Cities for people" summit to be held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in the first week of October 1999, the Alliance will adopt a Regional Plan of Action in which stakeholders in the future of cities and human settlements in Central America will be actively involved.

Source: Habitat Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Rio de Janeiro.

3. Gender and human settlements²⁵

Progressive changes in women's and men's roles in the family and society throughout the region have erased the dichotomy between the productive and reproductive roles previously observed in urban Latin American and Caribbean patterns. With cities now divided up into residential, commercial and industrial areas, living close to one's place of work or school is increasingly difficult and this affects the quality of life of citizens. In this context, there is agreement between some pillars of the Regional Plan of Action and the Regional Program of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean (1994) as regards strategies designed to overcome poverty, improve environmental quality and, above all, enhance good governance and participation at the local level.

Women have played a significant role in shelter and urban processes in the 1990s, insofar as they have been in the avant-garde of the struggle for housing services in many countries and, in particular, have participated in citizens' actions for improving the urban environment through recycling of waste and urban afforestation. However, they still face difficulties in terms of access to land tenure, credit and home ownership.

The dynamic role played by women in building Latin American and Caribbean cities is scarcely reflected at the decision-making level. Given their direct involvement in decisions and tasks relating to everyday concerns, women are in a position to assume a key role in local management in the region. However, with a few exceptions, the democratic process in the 1990s has not substantially improved women's representation in positions of authority at the local level, and this applies especially to cities of major size or importance. Table A7 in the Appendix shows the low proportion of women serving on local authorities. Paradoxically, this trend has been associated with decentralization and the increased transfer of resources to the local level, which has increased the appeal that such positions have for men. Furthermore, cities in the region have recently taken on an important economic and political role, and this has increased the value of securing a share of political power at the local government level. The marked differences, which exist in this regard between the different countries, may be attributed also to historical and cultural factors or to affirmative action, as demonstrated by the increased number of women mayors in countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Decentralization is an opportunity to include in housing policies those groups - including women - whose participation had previously been restricted. Some progress has been observed in countries, which have adopted affirmative action legislation at the local level for the benefit of women; these include Brazil and Peru. The coordinating bodies for women mayors, international training activities, for example, in the context of the International Union of Town Councils and Local Authorities (IULA) reinforce the involvement of women in local government.

4. Security

The overall homicide rate in Latin America is approximately 20 per 100,000 inhabitants, or twice the world average. The situation varies widely within the continent, ranging from relatively low rates in the Southern Cone - 4 per 100,000 inhabitants - to 27 in Central America, and as much as 39 in the Andean countries.²⁶ The situation is particularly grave in Colombia, where the death rate as a result of homicide is one of the higher in the world and reflects a dramatic shift in violence from socio-political causes and drug-trafficking to ordinary, everyday and, in many respects, anonymous violence.

²⁵ This section was developed in conjunction with the Women and Development Unit of ECLAC.

²⁶ R. Guerrero, "Epidemia de la violencia juvenil en América", published in *Espacios*, No. 10, July-December 1997, pp. 25-33.

Violent homicide is particularly high among young males from low socio-economic groups. In Rio de Janeiro, homicide accounted for 65% of all causes of death among teenagers between the ages of 10 and 19.²⁷ Some 68% of the population residing in Latin American cities of over 100,000 inhabitants have been the victim of crimes against property or crimes against the person,²⁸ compared with 60% and 65%, respectively, in Western Europe and North America. Crimes against assets have shown the sharpest increase in recent years. In Mexico City, the crime rate tripled between the 1960s and 1994;²⁹ the rate doubled once more following the economic crisis, which occurred in 1994.

Available information on domestic violence (which affects especially women, children and older persons) does not adequately reflect the gravity of the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, because socio-cultural patterns and family structure lead to denial and under-reporting of such crimes. In Central America and in many capital cities of Latin America, violence is aggravated by trends such as the growing numbers of "street children" and the widespread problem of youth gangs.³⁰ At a more general level, manifestations of violence and break-down of the society in cities may be linked to the sharp inequality in income distribution, which, in cities, is reflected in fragmentation of the society and segregation of social groups, a lack of appreciation for the importance of harmonious relations with others and a lack of public areas. The urban poor are fearful of physical attacks against their person, while higher-income groups feel that their belongings are at risk.³¹

In the region, there seems to be consensus on the need for integrated responses to these problems which would incorporate not only crime control and suppression measures but also preventive measures involving action in different areas of social planning (see Box 12). Nevertheless, the emphasis on one or other sphere gives rise to strong controversy, which, to a large extent, reflects opposing views regarding the importance and social effectiveness whether it is of the policy approach or the integration approach. Recent experience reveals that, in the long term, preventive strategies are the most effective for eradicating the high levels of urban violence in Latin America. Among other things, such strategies call for: (i) the development of multisectoral programs including projects in various sectors such as the judiciary and the police force, the educational sector, the economic sector and health; (ii) replacing a short-term approach by another that covers the medium and long term; (iii) giving due priority to prevention, without disregarding the need to upgrade the police force and judiciary; (iv) fostering the political will to resolve the problem of urban violence, with full involvement of the different branches of government and civil society.³²

²⁷ E. Ramos de Souza, S. Gonçalves De Assis and C.M. Furtado Passos da Silva, "Violência no Município do Rio de Janeiro: áreas de risco e tendências da mortalidade entre adolescente de 10 a 19 anos", *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública*, vol. 1, No. 5, May 1997.

²⁸ UNICRI (United Nations International Crime and Justice Research Institute) (1995), "Criminal Victimization of the Developing World".

²⁹ Data from the Office of the Government Procurator of Mexico City, published in *El Mercurio* of Chile of 25 July 1998.

³⁰ A. Concha Eastman, F. Carrión, G. Cobo (eds), "Ciudad y violencia en América Latina", (Gestión urbana vol.2), Quito, 1994.

³¹ ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998*, LC/G.2050-P, Santiago, Chile, 1999. United Nations publications, Sales No. E.99.11.G.4.

³² R. Guerrero, "Violence in the Americas, a threat to social integration", (LC/R.1795), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), March 1998.

Box 12
EXPERIENCES ON URBAN SAFETY

Strategies drawn up by governments to deal with urban violence range from direct police action to repress it, using tighter controls and heavier sanctions against perpetrators, to more complex strategies that combine prevention, intervention and repression. The latter seem to be more successful, as they take account of the fact that violence occurs in a broad social setting, and they involve the local community in solving the problem.

The program, *Desarrollo, Seguridad y Paz* launched in 1993 by the Alcaldía of Cali, approaches criminal behavior on three fronts: law enforcement, education for peace, and social development. This project's specific achievements include the "Pacto Social por la Convivencia", a pact between the municipality and the leaders of gangs operating in Cali.⁶ A similar approach is being used in work aimed at rehabilitating the "Homies Unidos" gang in El Salvador and the group known as "Los Especiales" in Bogotá. According to UNICEF, the success achieved by the "Programa de la Fundación de Promoción" applied in Goiás (Brazil) in 1990 to help street children and develop community-based educational workshops, was the result of strong political support that forced the police to drastically curb violence against these children.

Reducing domestic violence also seems to be possible, judging by the experience of the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO). A project that started in 16 Latin American countries in 1994 attacks the problem at three levels: locally, by creating decentralized units of the legal and healthcare apparatus and community-based family support networks; at the national level, by encouraging implementation of policies and regulations to strengthen institutions' intervention capacities; and by running a wide-ranging campaign on intrafamily violence in the communications media. In Córdoba (Argentina) the "El Ágora" NGO, promotes the reclamation of public areas as a strategy for rebuilding a sense of citizenship, and it helps citizens participate in the task of achieving greater urban safety.

Source: own elaboration

(a) Swift A., *The fight for childhood in the city*, Innocenti Studies, UNICEF, 1991.

VIII. Urban and housing policies

The final set of agreements in the Regional Plan of Action includes a series of guidelines to enhance the efficiency of human settlement management and policies. This section comments on progress made in relation to these guidelines.

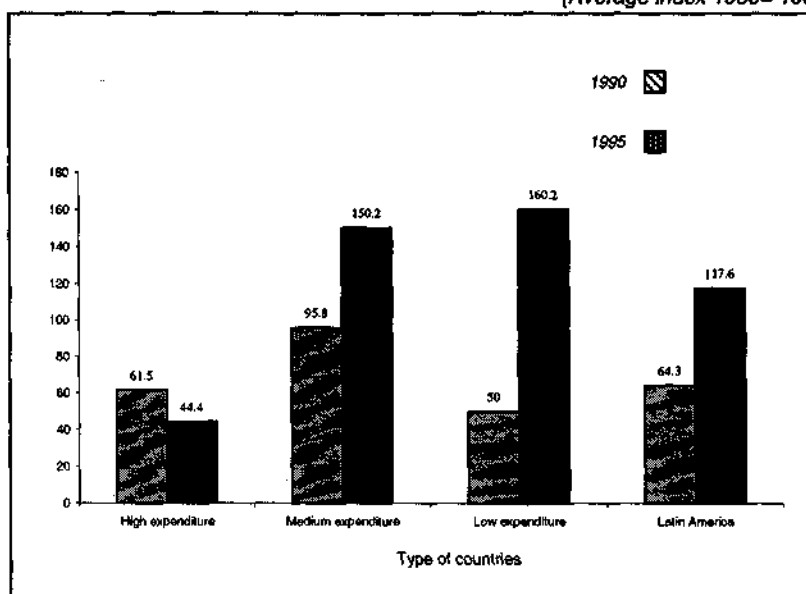
1. Housing expenditure³³

Following the cutbacks in social spending caused by structural adjustments throughout the region in the 1980s, public-sector social spending has been rising in the 1990s. The first half of the decade saw growth of 6.4%, which then slowed down in the 1996-1997 biennium, to settle at an annual average of 3.3%. The extra resources allocated to the social sector have enabled many Latin American countries to compensate and overcome the cutbacks of the previous decade. The pace of recovery has varied, however, between high social-spending countries (Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Panama), intermediate spenders (Nicaragua, Colombia and Ecuador) and low social-spending countries (Bolivia, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Paraguay). The figure below shows that medium and low-spending countries, and the region as a whole, have now comfortably surpassed their early 1980s levels. Comparing public-spending trends in Latin America as a whole, housing expenditure has been exceeded only by spending on the health sector. Medium and low social-spending countries are those that have made most progress, while per capita housing expenditure in high-

³³ Based on ECLAC, *The Fiscal Covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges* (LC/G.1997/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

expenditure countries has actually fallen, compared to the beginning of the decade (table A8 in the appendix).

Figure 9
LATIN AMERICA: TRENDS IN SOCIAL EXPENDITURE ON HOUSING 1990 Y 1995
(Average index 1980= 100)



Source: ECLAC, *The fiscal covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges* (LC/G.1997/Rev.1-P), Santiago, Chile, July 1998. United Nation's publication, Sales No. S.98.II.G.50.

Expenditure on housing is the smallest social spending category.³⁴ The wide variations between countries in terms of per capita housing expenditure and the proportion of total social-sector spending destined for housing, could be the result of its being seen as a residual, or as a component that absorbs the adjustments needed to preserve the general macroeconomic policy framework and, in particular, other social sectors deemed to be of higher priority. The lower short-run growth prospects facing many national economies could lead to further cuts in housing expenditure, involving serious risks for the process of housing policy consolidation that was starting to be seen in the region.

³⁴ Education and social security are the main components of social spending (34% and 32% respectively); these are followed by the health sector (25%) and housing (9%).

Table 4
SOCIAL SPENDING AND HOUSING EXPENDITURE BY COUNTRY

Country	Real per capita* social spending			Per capita housing expenditure**		Housing expenditure %	
	1990-91	1994-95	1996-97	1990-91	1996-97	1990-91	1996-97
Argentina	1222	1638	1570	106	110	8.7	7.0
Bolivia	55	88	119	7	20	12.7	16.8
Brazil**	821	888	951	153	162	18.6	17.0
Chile	451	612	725	38	59	8.4	8.1
Colombia	181	317	391	13	36	7.2	9.2
Costa Rica	445	513	550	44	52	9.9	9.5
El Salvador	87	117	147	3	5	3.4	3.4
Honduras	59	57	58	...	...	...	...
Guatemala	52	66	71	2	16	3.8	22.5
Mexico	283	360	352	...	...	...	...
Nicaragua	48	56	49	6	9	12.5	18.4
Dominican Rep.	66	100	107	19	7	28.8	6.5
Uruguay	929	1260	1371	17	30	1.8	2.2
Venezuela	338	287	317	61	47	18.0	14.8
Regional average	359	454	484	37	44	10.3	9.1

Source: ECALC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 1998 (LC/G.2050-P), Santiago, Chile, 1999. United Nation's publication, Sales No. E.99.II.G.4.

* In 1997 dollars.

** Includes water and sanitation

*** Includes expenditure of federal, state and municipal origin

2. Innovations in housing policies

Some countries in the region have begun to reverse the housing deficit with rates of house building that outstrip new household formation, based on cumulative increases in supply accompanied by demand stimulus. Underlying these experiences is a market-based sectoral development model that is compatible with the country's general model of economic and social development. Housing policies in the region have had to change significantly in the 1990s to meet new demands set by the current housing situation and adapt to the new public-expenditure conditions prevailing in the individual countries.

Housing shortages have been described in earlier chapters. As discussed there, case studies carried out by ECLAC in several countries, point to a weakness in the diagnostic tools available for housing problems, which affects policy efficiency. In general, there is still a tendency to work with categories that are too highly aggregated for designing appropriate social housing policy actions. They do not always clearly distinguish between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the deficit, despite the fact that very different types of solution are required in each case. At the end of the 1990s, qualitative deficits are at least as important as quantitative ones, and call for policies aimed at extension or improvement, which are not available with adequate efficiency and coverage.

In view of the main features of recent public spending trends in the housing sector, which were discussed in the previous section, sectoral policies have not managed to achieve sustainable development. Only in a very few situations it has been possible to provide a sustained flow of public resources to the housing sector, yet this is a necessary condition for generating a cumulative consolidation process in housing policies. The case of Chile would seem to point to the advantage for sustainable sectoral development of the direct provision of public funds as a regular budgetary item, compared to alternatives that make public financing depend on other sources such as external

loans or special funds at the national level (including the sale of State assets and special taxes). Clarity and stability as regards the volume of funds channeled to the sector gives credibility to the operation of the system, but this does not happen when large annual fluctuations introduce uncertainty in both supply and demand.

As regards instruments, the main changes have involved efforts to channel public spending for the provision of social housing through demand rather than supply, as used to be the case. Experiences in this field, which are documented in an abundant bibliography,³⁵ prove that, even in minimal housing programs, subsidies should complement rather than replace any contribution by the family, for which reason prior saving and borrowing have been recognized in ways that were not foreseen in certain policy reforms (see Box 13).

Box 13

HOUSEHOLD CONTRIBUTIONS IN DEMAND SUBSIDY PROGRAMMES

Housing policy reforms in the 1990s have not always provided for a contribution to be made by households at the time of purchasing their own housing unit. Subsequent policies have, however, underscored the importance of having, in addition to the public-sector subsidy, a prior down-payment saved by the family plus a loan to be repaid after the unit has been obtained.

The prior saving, which is set at reasonable, attainable levels proportionate to the household's income, has proved to be an advantage firstly because it is possible, on that basis, to assess the applicant's actual requirements during the period preceding the allocation. The existence of a certain amount of savings means that part of the effort that the household must make is transferred to a time when the housing costs may be lower or when the household's motivation for making the investment is greater. These circumstances reduce the risk of arrears in repayment of the loan later on, the main misgiving that private creditors experience when it comes to providing loans to very poor households.

With respect to the loan component, the implementation of low-cost housing arrangements continues to pose problems. In Colombia, for example, limited credit availability, due to scant interest on the part of the private finance sector in awarding relatively high-risk, small loans, has jeopardized the efficiency of programs for the poorest sectors, making it necessary to promote an effective loan supply geared specifically to low-income groups. In Chile, the public sector continues to play an important role in managing such loans, and has not yet succeeded in passing over full responsibility to the private sector in this area.

Source: Gerardo González, *Acceso a la vivienda y subsidios directos a la demanda: experiencias latinoamericanas*, Financiamiento del Desarrollo series, No. 63 (LC/L.1045; LC/L.1045/Rev.1), ECLAC, Santiago, Chile, 1997.

In the 1990s in order to increase the progressiveness of spending, countries have developed targeting mechanisms that consider other factors apart from family income. The socio-economic characteristics of households in terms of sex, age, job category and education, are empirically related to housing deficits, so knowledge of households' socio-economic characteristics makes it possible to target these subsidies better. Countries that are further advanced in solving their housing problems need to adapt policies to the dynamic social and economic reality of the region, affording greater mobility in the housing market to low income groups. This means making it easier for homes purchased to be sold or let, subject to certain restrictions, without repayment of the corresponding subsidies.

³⁵ Financiamiento del desarrollo series, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): No. 80, M.L.Chiape, "La política de vivienda de interés social en Colombia en los noventa" (LC/L.1211-P), 1999. United Nations publication, Sales No. S.99.II.G.10; No. 63, G. González, "Acceso a la vivienda y subsidios directos a la demanda: experiencias latinoamericanas" (LC/L.1045.Rev.1), 1997; No. 46, S. Almarza, "Financiamiento de la vivienda de estratos de ingresos medios y bajos; la experiencia chilena" (LC/L.1008), 1997; and No.42, M. Gutiérrez and A. Vargas, "Costa Rica: una revisión de las políticas de vivienda aplicadas a partir de 1986" (LC/L.1004), 1997.

During the 1990s, the move from what were essentially short-term housing policies that had high ideological content but gave meagre results over time, to more stable programs whose general characteristics are not altered by short-run policy shifts, is a trend that looks set to continue in Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. Informal land tenure

Informal settlements have been decisive in the growth of cities in Latin America and the Caribbean. These extensive urban areas are frequently generated by the invasion of private land or other forms of irregular occupation, and are exposed to various types of risk. The policies implemented to regularize such situations include legalizing ownership of the land where the settlements are located (when this is possible or advisable from an urban or environmental perspective), the provision of basic infrastructure, and, as a priority item, the legalization of tenure in individual lots. The basic premise on which international institutions like the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank have made loans to countries for “neighborhood improvement”, is that legally recognized ownership generates saving and investment by the beneficiary families and is the basis for a sustained improvement of “habitat”.

The rich Latin American and Caribbean experience in this type of program has revealed the need for policy actions that are more complex than merely legalizing title and making physical improvements, if the aim is to effectively overcome the precarious nature of informal settlements. For example, programs of job education and training should be included along with conventional actions, if the aim is to make real progress among the communities and inhabitants of these informal settlements, which generally are the focal points for the most entrenched poverty in cities and rural areas. In addition, there has been increasing concern to provide better access to urban infrastructure and services in general, to enable informal settlements to become more effectively integrated into the cities (see Box 14).

The legalization of land tenure in informal settlements has proved to be a complicated operation for urban and housing policies in the region. For example, there are difficulties in gathering reliable information on the original occupants of a site and in the legal and regulatory disencumbrance of the property. In some cases there are interesting experiences of programs involving a basic instrument for gathering up-to-date census information on informal settlements at the local level. Identification of the future owner is also a decision with important implications for the future of the settlement. In some cases the title deeds recognize the woman as owner or joint-owner: in El Salvador, for example, priority in the title deeds is given to the woman, and only later and with her consent can it be extended to the man. Another point that needs to be resolved is whether or not certain permanency rights for “squatter” families are recognized, or those who rent space within an original occupant’s lot. These families usually share the services and/or the housing of the initial occupants, contributing income and additional resources to the group. The provision of micro-credit for production and housing has also been envisaged in certain actions undertaken to regularize slum settlements, with favorable effects on overcoming poverty.

Lastly, it is necessary to establish monitoring mechanisms to enable these programs to detect, in a timely way, perverse but almost inevitable effects, such as rising land prices caused by the legalization of tenure and the risk of the poorest being driven out as a result of this rise in prices.

The institutional complexity of these interventions involving a variety of sectors, government levels, service firms, non-governmental organizations and neighborhood organizations, requires a considerable degree of coordination and concerted action for programs to be successful. Notwithstanding the different ways in which the various countries have faced this challenge, in most cases the role of local government has been decisive. In the context of an international campaign on security of tenure to be run by UNCHS-Habitat in 1999, aimed at reducing urban

poverty, experience in this area could support progress in housing policy towards the more decentralized territorial models that Latin America and the Caribbean are likely to demand in the coming decade (see table A6 in the appendix).

Box 14

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING

Between 1990 and 1996, Chile made significant strides in reducing poverty and the housing deficit. Difficulties still persisted, however, in extending social policies to the "hard-core" poor living in densely populated shantytowns. To address this problem, a National Register of Precarious Settlements was devised and implemented. Having identified and described the infrastructural problems of the universe of 972 squatter camps, a program was developed to overcome poverty and, at the same time, make good the housing deficit. The "Chile-Barrio" program is an innovative initiative in Chilean social policy, since it coordinates inter-sectoral efforts by different ministries and government bodies such as the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund and the National Department for Training and Employment. It seeks to provide an integrated solution, combining housing programs and skills-training facilities and, in terms of range, targets the settlements previously identified.

The Ministry of Housing, with technical cooperation from the Latin American and Caribbean Population Center (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, is developing a program for recovery of microdata from the Population and Housing Census in order to identify the requirements and social profile of the people living in the precarious settlements that come under the Chile-Barrio program. An integrated and specific information system on the problem of precarious settlements will be used to obtain a population, labor and socio-demographic analysis of this group, with a statistical coverage ranging from the national total to specific territorial units where they plan to intervene.

Sources: Chile Barrio (1998) "Chile Barrio Program", National Chile-Barrio Office, Santiago, Chile. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MINVU)/CELADE (1998) "Población y Vivienda en Asentamientos Precarios", Technical Division for Research and Housing Development/ Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Center (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, Santiago, Chile.

IX Regional coordination of habitat policies

The promotion of coordinated actions in the area of human settlements in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been possible thanks to consolidation of the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Sector - (MINURVI). Established in 1992, this body has undergone three stages of development.

The initial phase (1992-1994) covered the first ministerial meetings. This body was set up at a time when the sector was just starting to emerge from the crisis of the 1980s, which had seen an intensification of poverty and problems of urban housing and services. At the same time, the new economic and institutional context generated in the wake of the structural adjustment programs had slashed ministerial budgets so that it was no longer feasible for them to intervene directly in areas such as housing construction or strict control of urban areas. Even though countries were experiencing difficulties with these changes, the housing authorities participating in the Meeting were, from the outset, more in favor of setting up a regional body with sufficient political clout to give the housing and urban development sector in their countries and in the region as a whole its due place within the framework of the new development paradigms. Interest in sharing specific experiences in policy management was subordinate to this main objective.

The second period (1995-1996) covered the following two meetings. This period was marked by the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The region had developed an interesting experiment in "post-adjustment" style

policy management for human settlements, and there was a generalized return to democracy. In most countries, the national committees convened by the United Nations Center for Human Settlements in order to prepare for the above-mentioned Conference, included not only government bodies but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities, community-based organizations, academic centers and private-sector organizations. The broad-based perspective provided by these various participants, led to the establishment of national plans of action and, with the collaboration of ECLAC, the Regional Plan of Action. As mentioned earlier, this Plan constituted a link between the pillars of regional development advocated by ECLAC and other organizations (changing production patterns with social equity, and environmental sustainability) and the development of human settlements.

The third phase of this regional body (1997 to the present) encompassed the sixth and seventh meetings. This period saw efforts to establish it as an institution by adopting rules of procedure and an operational structure. A decision was taken to operate on the basis of three subregions, the Caribbean, Central America and South America, which were commissioned respectively to work on the following priority work areas: vulnerability to natural disasters; social production of the settlement and territorial management.

In this course of development, important general agreements were reached on urban and housing policies. The prospect that the Regional Meeting might play an influential role at the regional level in guiding country policies was favored by the increasing importance being attached to the issue of human settlements since the Conference in Istanbul. Firstly, as efforts were made to standardize some habitat features in the light of the trends referred to, there was greater harmonization between intervention procedures used by countries. In addition, progress was made in effecting the changes required in the post-adjustment period and sectoral mechanisms were shared and adapted by countries to meet the demands of multinational agencies and government bodies responsible for macroeconomic management. This was the case of the Chilean demand-subsidy model exported, with varying results, to different countries. These facts suggest that the Regional Meeting can successfully develop a role as national policy coordinator based on the wider perspective it holds by virtue of its regional character.

Furthermore, at the global level, a number of urgent tasks need to be addressed by the Regional Meeting. Available information indicates that few countries are complying with the commitments made by their Governments at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul (1996) (see Box 15). Of the 18 countries, 15 had prepared the respective national reports and 13 had adopted national plans of action. In the period preparatory to the Conference, ten countries (Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela) had prepared national reports as well as national plans of action. The Central American subregion also has a Plan of Action for the group of countries it encompasses. However, with a few rare exceptions, no progress has been made in fulfilling the agreements set forth in those plans, which have wide backing, having been adopted by broad-based Preparatory Committees, which included representatives from different segments of civil society.

The record of the Preparatory Committees is scarcely any better. After the meeting in Istanbul, only Peru, Colombia and Jamaica gave them an official status. Elsewhere, they have either not been convened since the Conference in Istanbul or have actually been declared obsolete.

Box 15

INITIATIVES FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HABITAT PROGRAM AND THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The following initiatives, which have the backing of the Habitat Regional Office, are especially relevant for fulfilling the central aims of the Habitat Agenda and the Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements:

The Ibero-American and Caribbean Forum on Best Practices, created in 1997 under the auspices of the Spanish Government, to promote the exchange of successful experiences in the field of housing and human settlements, by identifying, documenting and disseminating innovative and interesting regional experiences. The Forum consists of a network of some 60 institutions, with activities focused on improving the human environment, and it includes representatives from central and local government institutions, universities, grass-roots community groups and non-governmental organizations.

The Urban Indicators Program, which arose from the Habitat II Conference, as the substantive part of the Global Urban Observatory, has been supported by the Regional Office through several missions to introduce it in countries requesting it, particularly Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Barbados. A support program is also being drawn up for the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro to improve systems of housing statistics.

The International Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, one of the most important institutional groups supporting implementation of the Habitat Agenda, has focused on seeking mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of experiences between parliamentarians throughout the world, with a view to improving the quality of current legislation in a variety of countries, states and municipalities. The Habitat Regional Office is actively participating in its meetings and deliberations in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

Source: UNCHS, Regional office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The disruption of the National Habitat Committees in most countries of the region, should be an important concern for the MINURVI, due to their key role in the Habitat Agenda in the achievement of the sustainable development of human settlements. A wider opening to involve sectors other than the central governments in the implementation of the Agenda Habitat has taken place only at a regional level, without relevant impact within the countries.

This is the case of the International Parliamentary Forum for the Habitat, which concentrated its efforts in finding mechanisms for the transference of experiences to improve the existing legislation in different countries. Another example, is the Regional Meeting for the Worldwide Chart for Local Autonomies, held in Santiago of Chile, July 1999. On this occasion, suggestions to improve the Agenda formulation and to adapt it to the necessities of the region were approved.

In turn, the Mayors Meeting, held in Rio de Janeiro, 1977, assembled 150 representatives, in majority Mayors, proceeding from more than 20 cities of Central and Southern America, and the Caribbean. They pledged themselves to collaborate in the implementation of the Agenda, of its principles and its sectorial priorities.

Finally, the first Summit of Ibero-American Cities was held in Lima in October 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to develop a common approach to the problems that cities will have to deal with as the third millennium begins and to consider strategies for overcoming them.

As a result of the previewed review of the progress of the Habitat Agenda in 2001 (Habitat+5), the interest to implement the agreements adopted in Istanbul will probably arise. Then, MINURVI will play an important role to once more place on a regional and national level, the coordination strategies between key actors to enhance the sustainable development of human settlements.

X. Regional urban consensus

The countries of the region must address many complex issues, including those pertaining to the urban environment and sustainable urban development, economic growth with equity and environmental sustainability, the restructuring of national spaces to ensure sustainability and solidarity within and between generations, and the importance of good governance as an element of the new role of local government.

In the past decade, the region's territorial reality has been marked by important changes. Beyond the limits shown on the political maps of countries, new spheres of intervention have emerged which correspond, for example, to concerns for the conservation of specific ecosystems, economic or commercial forces operating since opening up of the region to international markets or to complex demographic, social and cultural processes associated with urbanization. The new regional geography that has been taking shape in the late 1990s attenuates differences between countries, while a more unified picture of the region as a whole has been coming into focus.

This evolution seems to have favored the emergence of basic agreements on the main challenges posed by sustainable development of cities and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean. Beyond the different paths developed by countries in the area of human settlements, at least three areas emerge in which some urban agreements are becoming consolidated at the conceptual and practical levels. Firstly, it seems plain that the capacity for horizontal coordination of urban and housing policies should be substantially increased in the short term. Bearing in mind that the main urban and

housing problems can no longer be approached using strictly sectoral approaches, an attempt is being made to replace the instruments employed up to the present by more open operations in which it is possible for a number of sectors to intervene at the territorial level. The agreement being generated on the need to move towards more comprehensive habitat policies is particularly relevant when the issues addressed include the eradication of poverty, the competitiveness of cities or environmental issues associated with human settlements in the region as a whole; this agreement will undoubtedly have certain direct implications for institutions in the sector.

Secondly, an increasingly strong consensus is emerging with respect to the important and urgent need for the actions and investments under habitat policies to be more coherent in the different territorial levels, ranging from the regional and urban levels to the level of the neighborhood and residential level. Sectoral institutions see the need for balance between necessary vertical cohesion of sectoral policies and the provision of sufficient room for decision-making and freedom to enable the relevant actors at each level to voice their particular concerns. An appropriate degree of decentralization of housing policies seems thus to be another area of agreement regionally and countries can make a valuable contribution in this regard.

A third area of convergence relates to the need to involve the private world in the management of human settlements. At last, the view so prevalent in past decades but also very much rooted in the national institutions in the 1990s, which assigned practically all responsibilities for habitat improvement to the public sector, has been discarded. A series of experiments developed in the 1990s have opened up areas where the private sector - understood in the broad sense of the term as encompassing social organizations and citizens as well as the business sector - can guarantee effective complementarity of its priorities and potentialities with those of public agencies concerned with human settlements.

Emerging agreements, such as those outlined above, will probably be established more firmly as the areas of convergence already referred to expand in the overall panorama of human settlements in Latin America and the Caribbean; this is all the more important given the uniformly high levels of urbanization expected throughout the region in the coming years. Shared agreements such as those in the Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements will have a decisive contribution to make to ensure that this convergence proceeds satisfactorily.

The foregoing review of the numerous problems associated with the growth of human settlements in the 1990s underscores the relevance today of the Regional Plan of Action established in 1995. Not only does this instrument provide a valid approach to the proposal for sustainable development of human settlements in the region in terms of the various dimensions it incorporates but, moreover, the various agreements in the Plan maintain their validity in the face of the existing characteristics of Latin American and Caribbean cities and territories as well as the political, economic and social situations prevailing in the different countries. The above analysis reveals, however, that there is room for improving the Plan's effectiveness and that this is feasible by correcting its shortcomings relating to the institutional implementation and follow-up mechanisms. Furthermore, in order to ensure the realization of the Regional Plan of Action, provision must be made for the requisite skills and procedures for implementing its contents at the local level.

Separate and apart from its merits and shortcomings, the Regional Plan of Action on Human Settlements constituted, in the mid-1990s, the beginning of a process of convergence based on the recognition that the urban and housing picture in Latin America and the Caribbean has specific features which distinguish it from those in other regions but which are shared by the countries within the region itself. Today, as we meet to reinforce these areas of convergence, the Regional Plan of Action could, with some operational adjustments and thematic emphases, emerge as the fundamental instrument for generating the urban consensus, which the region urgently requires.

Appendix

Table A-1

**LATIN AMÉRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: POPULATION TRENDS
IN CITIES HAVING OVER 750,000 INHABITANTS IN 1995**

Subregion/country	City	Population (thousands)				Growth rate (exponential)		
		1980	1990	2000	2010	1980-90	1990-00	2000-10
South America	38 cities	77,864	98,029	120,569	139,242	2.30	2.07	1.44
Argentina	Buenos Aires	9,920	11,144	12,431	13,515	1.16	1.00	0.84
	Córdoba	977	1,179	1,407	1,599	1.88	1.77	1.28
	Mendoza	601	758	943	1,093	2.32	2.18	1.46
	Rosario	953	1,084	1,228	1,370	1.29	1.25	1.09
Bolivia	La Paz	728	1,044	1,458	1,904	3.61	3.34	2.67
	Santa Cruz	324	616	1,110	1,596	6.43	5.89	3.63
Brazil	Belem	992	1,293	1,634	1,905	2.65	2.34	1.53
	Belo Horizonte	2,588	3,333	4,160	4,785	2.53	2.22	1.40
	Brasilia	1,162	1,547	1,985	2,322	2.86	2.49	1.57
	Campinas	926	1,339	1,857	2,238	3.69	3.27	1.87
	Curitiba	1,427	1,930	2,519	2,960	3.02	2.66	1.61
	Fortaleza	1,569	2,213	3,007	3,580	3.44	3.07	1.74
	Goiania	707	896	1,103	1,277	2.37	2.08	1.46
	Manaos	611	959	1,432	1,778	4.51	4.01	2.16
	Porto Alegre	2,273	2,944	3,699	4,270	2.59	2.28	1.44
	Recife	2,337	2,810	3,307	3,729	1.84	1.63	1.20
	Rio de Janeiro	8,741	9,682	10,556	11,450	1.02	0.86	0.81
	Salvador	1,754	2,404	3,180	3,747	3.15	2.80	1.64
	Santos	901	1,075	1,257	1,427	1.77	1.56	1.27
	S. José dos Campos	399	631	949	1,187	4.58	4.08	2.24
	Sao Luis	445	664	948	1,162	4.00	3.56	2.04
	Sao Paulo	12,497	15,082	17,711	19,659	1.88	1.61	1.04
Chile	Santiago	3,717	4,490	5,261	5,848	1.89	1.58	1.06
Colombia	Barranquilla	821	1,034	1,246	1,466	2.31	1.87	1.63
	Bogotá	3,643	5,246	6,834	7,987	3.65	2.64	1.56
	Cali	1,216	1,650	2,082	2,453	3.05	2.33	1.64
	Cartagena	456	681	918	1,105	4.01	2.99	1.85
	Medellín	1,627	2,686	3,831	4,583	5.01	3.55	1.79
Ecuador	Guayaquil	1,115	1,571	2,127	2,715	3.43	3.03	2.44
	Quito	796	1,118	1,505	1,924	3.40	2.97	2.46
Paraguay	Asunción	671	928	1,262	1,711	3.24	3.07	3.04
Peru	Lima	4,401	5,826	7,443	8,843	2.80	2.45	1.72
Uruguay	Montevideo	1,213	1,287	1,361	1,416	0.59	0.56	0.40
Venezuela	Barquisimeto	583	743	914	1,088	2.43	2.07	1.74
	Caracas	2,575	2,867	3,153	3,560	1.07	0.95	1.21
	Maracaibo	964	1,351	1,857	2,288	3.38	3.18	2.09
	Maracay	561	795	1,077	1,327	3.49	3.04	2.09
	Valencia	673	1,129	1,817	2,375	5.17	4.76	2.68
Costa Rica	San José	601	793	1,063	1,369	2.77	2.93	2.53
El Salvador	San Salvador	753	1,035	1,415	1,843	3.18	3.13	2.64
Guatemala	Guatemala City	749	1,676	2,897	3,806	8.05	4.76	3.44
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	408	769	1,241	1,764	6.34	4.79	3.52
Mexico	Ciudad Juárez	546	799	1,168	1,386	3.81	3.80	1.71
	Guadalajara	2,250	3,011	3,908	4,271	2.91	2.61	0.89
	León	635	817	1,050	1,149	2.52	2.51	0.90
	Mexico City	13,888	15,130	18,131	18,682	0.86	1.81	0.30
	Monterrey	1,992	2,624	3,416	3,744	2.76	2.64	0.92
	Puebla	1,101	1,507	1,968	2,167	3.14	2.67	0.96
	San Luis Potosí	413	620	931	1,126	4.06	4.07	1.90
	Tijuana	431	709	1,167	1,493	4.98	4.98	2.46
	Toluca	250	544	1,184	1,812	7.77	7.78	4.26
	Torreón	508	696	953	1,086	3.15	3.14	1.31
Nicaragua	Managua	634	942	1,319	1,718	3.96	3.37	2.64
Panama	Panama City	613	848	1,088	1,321	3.25	2.49	1.94
Caribbean	5 cities	5,606	7,828	10,615	12,801	3.40	3.09	1.89
Cuba	Havana	1,909	2,111	2,302	2,400	1.01	0.87	0.42
Haiti	Port-au-Prince	701	1,134	1,791	2,546	4.93	4.68	3.58
Puerto Rico	San Juan	1,064	1,225	1,381	1,526	1.23	1.21	1.00
Dominican Rep.	Santiago de los Caballeros	485	931	1,540	1,961	6.74	5.16	2.45
	Santo Domingo	1,427	2,427	3,601	4,368	5.45	4.02	1.95

Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision. Estimates and Projections of Urban and Rural Populations and Urban Agglomerations, New York, 1998. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XIII.6.

Table A-2
PERCENTAGE OF INCOME CONTRIBUTED BY WOMEN

	% Contribution
Argentina	38.2
Bolivia	34.9
Brazil	33.0
Chile	34.7
Colombia	33.2
Costa Rica	35.5
Honduras	38.5
Mexico	28.4
Panama	34.2
Paraguay	37.1
Uruguay	28.0
Venezuela	35.4

Source: Irma Arriagada, *Políticas sociales, familia y trabajo en la América Latina de fin de siglo*, Políticas Sociales Series, No.21 (LC/L.1058), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 1997.

Table A-3
POVERTY AND INDIGENCE IN LATIN AMERICA: 1980-1997

	Poverty - total	Indigence - total	Urban poverty	Urban indigence	Rural poverty	Rural indigence
1980	35	15	25	9	54	28
1990	41	18	35	12	58	34
1994	38	16	32	11	56	34
1997	36	15	30	10	54	31

Source: United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision. Estimates and Projections of Urban and Rural Populations and Urban Agglomerations, New York, 1998. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XIII.6.

Table A-4
POVERTY RATES FOR URBAN HOUSEHOLDS, BY GENDER OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD, 1994

Country	Female head of household	Male head of household	Total
Argentina	8.2	10.8	10.2
Bolivia	41.8	41.1	41.3
Brazil	39.1	38.7	38.8
Chile	23.5	23.8	23.7
Colombia	40.2	40.7	40.6
Costa Rica	23.7	16.5	18
Honduras	76	67.6	69.6
Mexico	25	29.8	29
Panama	29.1	24.2	25.2
Paraguay	45.7	41.5	42.2
Uruguay	4.8	6.2	5.8
Venezuela	50	38.2	40.9

Source: Special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in each country.

* Includes indigent households.

Table A-5
ESTIMATES OF HOUSING DEFICIT BASED ON CENSUS DATA
FOR COUNTRIES HAVING SUCH INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Country	Year	Quantitative (a)	Qualitative (b)
Argentina	1991	1,449,783	1,496,212
Bolivia	1992	406,979	327,844
Brazil	1991	5,881,221	10,145,712
Chile	1992	609,255	361,212
Colombia	1985	1,098,711	1,423,095
Costa Rica	1984	71,073	116,386
Cuba	1981	395,472	256,100
Ecuador	1990	424,843	336,834
El Salvador	1992	402,409	180,461
Guatemala	1994	328,978	709,911
Honduras	1988	136,797	189,767
Mexico	1990	3,323,847	2,687,615
Nicaragua	1995	242,000	133,000
Panama	1990	103,888	72,366
Paraguay	1992	161,227	194,889
Peru	1993	1,207,482	1,323,828
Dominican Republic	1993	8,570	199,266
Uruguay	1996	61,618	374,137
Venezuela	1990	763,413	315,359

Source: Census data

(a) Number of households minus number of satisfactory and repairable dwellings.

(b) Number of unrepairable dwellings.

Table A-6
FAMILY OWNERSHIP OF DWELLINGS
(AROUND 1990)

Country	%
Caribbean	
Antigua and Barbuda	65.0
Barbados	76.1
Belize	65.8
British Virgin Islands	40.2
Dominica	72.0
Grenada	78.8
Guyana	63.2
Jamaica	52.5
Montserrat	72.0
Nevis	78.9
St Lucia	72.3
Turks and Caicos	65.7
Central America	
El Salvador	69.6
Nicaragua	84.1
Mexico	80.1
Panama	76.0
South America	
Argentina	68.0
Bolivia	66.0
Chile	68.0
Ecuador	68.0
Peru	71.9
Uruguay	63.0
Venezuela	76.0

Source: ECLAC, Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean. 1998 Edition (LC/G.2043-P), Santiago, Chile. United Nations publication, Sales No. E.99.II.G.1.

Table A-7

**WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: FEMALE MAYORS,
MOST RECENT YEAR AVAILABLE (SELECTED COUNTRIES)**

Country	Year	Municipalities	Mayors	%	Official title
Guyana	1998	27	8	29.6	Mayor
Dominica	1998	30	8	26.7	Local Officer
Bahamas	1997	764	175	22.9	.
Nicaragua	1996	145	30	20.7	Alcalde
Trinidad and Tobago	1995	108	22	20.4	Concejaj
Uruguay	1992	19	3	15.8	Pdte. Junta
Panama	1998	67	9	13.4	Departamental
Honduras	1994	291	37	12.7	Alcalde
Jamaica	1998	16	2	12.5	Mayor
Chile	1997	341	32	9.4	Alcalde
El Salvador	1998			8.4	Alcalde
Venezuela	1998	330	22	6.7	Alcalde
Cuba	1998	169	9	5.3	Pdte. Asamblea Munic
Costa Rica	1998	81	4	4.9	Ejecutivo Municipal
Colombia	1998			4.7	Alcalde
Bolivia	1997	311	12	3.9	Alcalde
Haiti	1995	132	5	3.8	Maire
Argentina	1992	1100	40	3.6	Intendente
Peru	1998	194	7	3.6	Alcalde Provincial
Brazil	1997	5378	190	3.5	Prefeito
Mexico	1998	2418	79	3.3	Presidente Municipal
Paraguay	1996	220	6	2.7	Intendente
Dominican Republic	1998	115	2	1.7	Síndico
Guatemala	1994	330	4	1.2	Alcalde
Ecuador	1997	27		0.0	Alcalde
Saint Lucia	1997	1		0.0	City Council Chairperson

Source: ECLAC/FLACSO, "Participación sociopolítica y equidad de género en América Latina y el Caribe", document prepared for the eighth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table A-8

TRENDS IN PER CAPITA SOCIAL EXPENDITURE IN GROUPS OF COUNTRIES, BY SECTOR

(Average indices: 1980= 100)

	1990				1995			
	High expenditure (a)	Medium expenditure (b)	Low expenditure (c)	Latin America	High expenditure (a)	Medium expenditure (b)	Low expenditure (c)	Latin America
Housing	61.5	95.8	50	64.3	44.4	150.2	160.2	117.6
Education	67.4	72.4	61.8	66.9	78.9	138.9	87.6	100.6
Health care	80.5	90.7	78	78	104.5	279.8	104.2	154.6
Social security	96.5	88.2	67.3	67.3	139.4	177.8	55.5	106.1
Social expenditure	82.6	85.9	64.2	76.3	100.3	171.7	92.3	118.3

Source: ECLAC, The Fiscal Covenant: Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges (LC/G.1997/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 1998.

^(a) Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Panama.

^(b) Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador.

^(c) Bolivia, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Dominican Republic.



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