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ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT
CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

Note by the Secretariat

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SUMMARY

Since the mid-1970s, the ECLAC system --which includes the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), the Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE), and ECLAC itself-- has been undertaking a set of activities aimed at mobilizing its own capacity to promote and support projects and initiatives for technical and economic co-operation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC).

The general thrust of the activities of the ECLAC system in this field derives from the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (1978). More specifically, its activities are governed by the mandates issued by the member States of ECLAC to the Secretariat of the Commission.

It should be noted that ECLAC resolution 387(XVIII), adopted at La Paz in 1979, established a sessional committee to deal with TCDC/ECDC matters.

The present document reports on the main operational activities carried out by the ECLAC system since the twenty-first session of the Commission, particularly those undertaken pursuant to ECLAC resolution 486(XXI).

The first and most important part of this report reviews activities in support of technical and economic co-operation (TCDC and ECDC, respectively) among developing countries at the regional level, distinguishing among such activities according to the particular TCDC objectives being pursued, namely, inter-institutional co-ordination, the identification of opportunities for co-operation, the organization of exchange of experiences among agents of co-operation, and strengthening of the links among national TCDC co-ordination centres (also known as "focal points").

The second part of the report describes various activities carried out by the Commission at the interregional level, particularly those undertaken in consultation and co-ordination with other regional commissions.

The third and final part deals with various suggested lines of action and future activities in this field.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technical co-operation among developing countries, known by the acronym TCDC, has occupied a prominent place among the activities of the United Nations system since the United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries held in Buenos Aires in September 1978. At that conference, the participating countries unanimously adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which is about to complete ten years of existence, marked a decisive milestone in the promotion of TCDC, since it introduced markedly innovative definitions and perspectives regarding the conception and operation of TCDC. Among other things, it emphasized the instrumental nature of such co-operation; stressed the fact that it is initiated and implemented by the governments of the developing countries themselves; drew attention to the fact that TCDC can take place in any sector of interest to governments and that a wide range of agents may take part in TCDC, including not only government bodies but also non-governmental organizations and the private sector; and it highlighted the multisectoral nature of TCDC, which can take place in any sector that is of interest to two or more developing countries.^{1/}

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have a long history of intra-regional co-operation, particularly that which has been channelled through multilateral co-operation initiatives and schemes, at both the regional and subregional levels. Moreover, the region has seen the emergence of numerous associations and consortia that seek to generate exchanges of experiences and joint initiatives in a wide variety of sectors, involving public and private agents in productive, cultural, technological and service activities, to name only a few. A broad field of co-operation has thus been developed, constituting an important potential resource for the future development of TCDC. This is particularly true at the present time, when emphasis is again being placed on regional co-operation as a necessary tool for helping to overcome the crisis which still affects the economies of the region.

Since its establishment, ECLAC has been explicitly oriented towards the promotion and support of initiatives and schemes of co-operation undertaken by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and as a body that is part of the United Nations system, however, ECLAC has placed particular emphasis on the importance of TCDC as a specific form of co-operation that falls logically within the various activities of its work programme.

Thus, in the 1986-1987 biennium ECLAC has continued to provide support and co-operation for the more efficient use of TCDC in dealing with the needs and initiatives of the countries of the region. In some cases such support was given through the provision of information services; in other cases it was manifested in the specific thrust of technical and substantive studies prepared by the Secretariat with a view to identifying concrete opportunities for co-operation in the various sectors and specifying needs and available resources with a view to establishing possible horizontal co-operation links. In certain cases, ECLAC prepared projects that were aimed directly at promoting co-operation among countries of the region and succeeded in channeling fresh resources required for the implementation of such projects. ECLAC has also served as a catalyst in the establishment and setting in motion of co-operation networks designed to facilitate relatively stable exchanges and links among national co-operation agents, and it has provided technical support to horizontal co-operation bodies in sectors of interest to the countries which so requested. The activities of ECLAC have not been restricted to the regional level, but have also been projected onto the interregional level: it has undertaken joint initiatives with other regional commissions and has provided technical support for the activities which various countries in the region are carrying out in order to strengthen or initiate technical and economic co-operation ties with countries of other developing regions.

II. ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Most of the activities of the ECLAC system to support and promote technical and economic co-operation among developing countries take place at the regional level. Unlike previous reports submitted to the Committee on Co-operation among Developing Countries and Regions at previous session of the Commission, the present report is more synthetic, more selective and is largely set out on the basis of projects rather than on areas of the programme of work. This change has been introduced in order to bring the structure of the document closer to the new format of reports on TCDC activities which is now being widely used within the United Nations system.

The main criterion for the inclusion of activities in this report is the existence of a direct connection between them and the specific objective of TCDC, in the context of the catalytic role which ECLAC, as an organ of the United Nations system, is called upon to play in this area.

In view of this, the TCDC objectives considered in this report are: i) strengthening co-ordination with the organizations of the United Nations system and other regional bodies on TCDC matters; ii) identification of opportunities for intensifying co-operation among developing countries; iii) support for the exchange of experiences among co-operation agents to strengthen the application of different forms of TCDC; and iv) support for national TCDC co-ordination centres in order to facilitate links among country institutions in related sectors where there are specific requirements for and offers of co-operation.

All activities which contribute to the attainment of the above objectives are carried out under the appropriate elements of the Secretariat's programme of work. Apart from those activities intended to strengthen inter-institutional co-ordination as mentioned in item i) above, all the others generally fall within the framework of a given project implemented by ECLAC with financing wholly or partly derived from extrabudgetary resources.

This section of the report will examine the activities in support of co-operation among developing countries at the regional level in the light of the above-mentioned objectives, each of which forms the subject of a separate chapter.

1. Strengthening of co-ordination with the organizations of the United Nations system and other regional bodies in TCDC matters

One of the areas in which significant progress has been made in TCDC during the period covered by this report is that of co-ordination among institutions and organizations which are undertaking initiatives aimed at supporting, promoting or implementing TCDC activities and projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. In view of the operational importance of this matter, as well as the interest in promoting such co-operation frequently expressed by the countries of the region themselves, it would be useful to highlight some of the joint activities which have been yielding the results alluded to. These are as follows:

a) Informal consultation meeting on TCDC

On 27 and 28 January 1987, an informal consultation meeting on TCDC activities was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile, among representatives of the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ECLAC, ILPES, and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). The objective of the meeting was to strengthen co-ordination among the institutions represented, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the activities to promote and support TCDC which these bodies are carrying out within the framework of their respective mandates. During the consultations the following aspects were considered:

i) Guidelines for contributing to the discussions on the position of the countries of the region at the fifth session of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, established under the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which took place at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 18-22 and 27 May 1987; the position of the countries was the subject of a consultation meeting of SELA, which, as on previous occasions, took place immediately before the meeting of the High-Level Committee.

ii) Possible joint activities of UNDP, SELA, ECLAC and ILPES, on the basis of improved co-ordination of their activities within the framework of

the projects to support and promote TCDC which are currently being implemented by these institutions and organizations. In particular, an analysis was made of a set of possible joint activities, including the regular exchange of information, the preparation of manuals and methodologies, and collaboration in training programmes.

b) Informal consultation meeting among intergovernmental bodies and organizations on TCDC

This meeting was held on 18 May 1987 at UNDP headquarters in New York, on the initiative of the Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, which invited the representatives of intergovernmental agencies and organizations who were attending the fifth session of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. Present at this meeting were the representatives of ECLAC, UNDP, ILPES, SELA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The meeting served to exchange information on activities underway in support of TCDC and to take decisions on a number of possible joint activities. In the latter respect, it was agreed to make a joint presentation by ECLAC and ILPES at the meeting of national directors of co-operation convened by the SELA secretariat on the occasion of the thirteenth regular meeting of the Latin American Council held in September 1987. It was agreed that this joint presentation should deal with the subject of training in TCDC.

c) Fifth session of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries

The fifth session of this Committee, convened by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, was held in New York on 18-22 and on 27 May 1987, and was attended by 121 member States.

The meeting adopted 11 decisions on a wide range of matters, such as information from governments and intergovernmental organizations on their activities in technical co-operation among developing countries (decision 5/3); the role of women in technical co-operation among developing countries (decision 5/4); progress made in implementing the tasks entrusted to the United Nations development system by the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (decision 5/5); national focal points for TCDC (decision 5/6); strengthening and improving activities for technical co-operation among developing countries undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system (decision 5/7); strengthening and improving intergovernmental programming exercises for technical co-operation among developing countries (decision 5/8), and the utilization of indicative planning figures (IPF) for TCDC activities (decision 5/10).

It will be particularly useful to note some of the operative paragraphs of decision 5/5 directed to the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system, which are requested to take expeditious action within their respective fields of competence for the implementation of the

Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which is a legislative framework for all activities, programmes and projects for TCDC (paragraph 1). They are also invited to establish or strengthen their focal points and/or co-ordination centres for TCDC in order to disseminate the principles of TCDC throughout their programmes, and to assist governments to prepare and execute specific projects for TCDC (paragraph 3). The decision requests all organizations of the United Nations system to explore additional sources of finance for TCDC projects and activities, including those of an interregional and global nature, and to allocate an increasing proportion of their resources to activities and projects for technical co-operation among developing countries (paragraph 7). It also reiterates the need to make full use of the potential of developing countries and in this context invites the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to strive ever more actively to use the equipment, services, experts and consultants available in the developing countries in keeping with existing rules, and in that respect it invites them to continue to review their procurement practices and policies (paragraph 9).

d) Informal co-ordination meeting for officials responsible for TCDC in agencies of the United Nations system

At the fifth session of the High-Level Committee mentioned in section c) above, the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries convened an informal co-ordination meeting for officials responsible for TCDC in United Nations agencies. At that meeting there was an exchange of experiences in the use of the new format for providing information on TCDC activities on the basis of projects rather than subject-areas, and it was agreed to strengthen contacts and co-ordination among United Nations agencies through the Special Unit.

2. Identification of opportunities for intensifying co-operation among developing countries

a) Co-operation between Caribbean and Latin American countries

The identification of opportunities for co-operation between the countries of the Caribbean on the one hand, and those of Latin America on the other, deserves special mention in this report. In view of this, the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, in response to a request from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) prepared, in collaboration with a consultant in export development matters, a study on the prospects for co-operation between the OECS member States and Latin American countries.

The study identifies sectors which could be suitable for technical and economic co-operation between the two groups of countries, and outlines the procedures and mechanisms for implementing such co-operation. The sectors identified include the following: expansion of trade through the promotion of non-traditional exports; joint activities in export trade; the processing and finishing of semi-manufactured goods; the execution of turnkey projects, and technical co-operation through the sending of experts, the provision of scholarships and the holding of seminars. The study also stresses that the

most useful mechanisms for promoting co-operation in the above-mentioned activities will be those that permit the establishment of proper contacts between the OECS, on the one hand, and relevant regional and international bodies and organizations, on the other. It also argues that this type of mechanism might be preferable, particularly for the OECS member countries, to the alternative of establishing direct bilateral contacts, at least in the early stages of co-operation projects.

A seminar to provide guidance on TCDC in the Caribbean, with emphasis on the needs of the OECS countries, was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 5-6 June 1986. It was organized with the support of UNDP and under the auspices of the OECS, the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee (CDCC) and ECLAC, through the latter's Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, and 14 countries from the Caribbean and Latin America participated in it.

Among the conclusions of the seminar were some specific recommendations to the countries to strengthen their national TCDC co-ordination centres by providing them with proper resources, structures and authority; to allocate resources in their national budgets to support TCDC activities; and to incorporate TCDC elements in all stages of the process of country programming undertaken by UNDP, particularly as regards the management of the resources included in the indicative planning figure (IPF) of the countries.

b) Programme of co-operation with the Government of the Argentine Republic (ARG/83/011)

Within the framework of the Programme of Co-operation agreed upon in December 1983 between the Government of the Argentine Republic (through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), ECLAC (through its Buenos Aires Office), and UNDP, ECLAC continued to co-operate in and provide advisory services for the project on support for Argentine bilateral and regional economic programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.

The TCDC activities undertaken under the above-mentioned project include: i) identification of the technical co-operation needs of various countries with a view to determining which of them could be satisfied by Argentina, through missions to Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru (already undertaken) and to the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and the English-speaking Caribbean countries (underway); ii) identification of the technical co-operation needs in sectors previously defined as priority areas in Uruguay (agricultural sector) and Costa Rica (energy, mining and hydrocarbons sectors); iii) diagnostic study and evaluation of trade relations between Argentina and other developing countries such as the Ivory Coast, Nicaragua, Peru, and the People's Republic of China; iv) at the interregional level proper, activities received a considerable impetus from the missions undertaken in April-May and November 1986 to various African countries and to the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Abeba. The aim of these missions was to identify concrete opportunities and mechanisms for TCDC/ECDC which could possibly be met by the Argentine Republic. The countries visited were: Ethiopia (irrigation on small and

medium-sized farms and the management of dairy establishments), Nigeria (co-operation in agriculture, development of water resources and reclamation of acid soils), Angola (health centres), Zimbabwe (institutional co-operation in research and training in livestock farming), Kenya (technology and training for the leather industry) and Ivory Coast (ecological problems related to the lacustrine layout of Abidjan).

c) Project: Economic co-operation among the countries of Latin America in the establishment of inland freight terminals

Within the framework of the project carried out by ECLAC on the establishment of inland freight terminals, the first document in a series has been published, dealing with structural changes in ocean-liner transport and the prospects and implications for policy formulation (LC/G.1463). This study analyses the market service, technological and legal aspects which are bringing about profound changes in ocean-liner transport, with the aim of providing a simple reference framework for dealing with the changing environment in which ocean-liner transport activity is taking place during the second half of the twentieth century; identifying the direction of such changes; and making suggestions on joint policies and plans that could be considered by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Other studies in the series, which deal with land transport and inland freight terminals, are in the final stages of preparation.

The results of the study contained in document LC/G.1463 were presented at a regional seminar on maritime transport management, held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, from 21-25 June 1986; in a regional seminar on maritime legislation, held in Santiago, Chile, from 24-27 November 1986, and at a Caribbean workshop on trade and services which was held at St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 10-12 March 1987.

d) Project: Planning and management of water resources in high mountain basins in the Andean region

As part of the activities of the project on the planning and management of water resources in high mountain basins in Latin America and the Caribbean, which receives financing from the Government of Italy, the International Seminar on Integrated Systems for the Development and Management of River Basins in the Andean Region of Latin America was held at the headquarters of the Board of the Cartagena Agreement (JUNAC) in Lima, from 24-28 November 1986. The meeting was attended by experts from the countries of the Andean region of Latin America and from a number of international bodies.

The meeting emphasized the need to continue with the task of providing support for technical and economic co-operation activities among the Andean countries of the region, which have inhabited areas at more than 2 000 metres above sea-level, since these countries have a set of common problems related to the physical and socio-economic deterioration of their population and natural resources. In view of this, ECLAC and JUNAC were requested to undertake a number of joint activities, such as more detailed study of the strategic aspects of an alternative proposal for each one of the countries

covered by the project; the preparation of a manual for the development and management of river basins in the Andean region; and the promotion of co-operation among experts on this subject.

3. Support for the exchange of experiences among co-operation agents

a) Project: Present situation and future prospects with regard to the supply and production of capital goods in Latin America

In December 1986, ECLAC completed project RLA/77/015 which it had been executing since the late 1970s with UNDP support. It would be impossible in this limited space to describe the considerable achievements of this project in the area of co-operation in the capital goods sector in Latin America. It suffices to mention here that the project was linked with large-scale producers in the region, particularly in the sector manufacturing capital goods for the production of electrical energy. This connection finally led to the organization, establishment and consolidation of the Latin American Association of Capital Goods Manufacturers (ALABIC), which is a co-operation network comprising a significant number of companies in the sector, both public and private, and is financed by the participating companies themselves. Within the framework of the above-mentioned project, ECLAC served as the technical secretariat of this Association. It has been agreed that these activities should continue throughout 1988, if resources can be secured for this. It should be noted that during its final stages this project received considerable financial support from ALABIC.

b) Project: Development, testing and distribution of microcomputer programmes for the retrieval of census data on small geographic areas in Latin America and the Caribbean

ECLAC, through the Latin America Demographic Centre and with financial support from the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), has been carrying out this project designed to permit public sector bodies, such as planning departments and offices, social security departments and other government entities to obtain population data on small territorial units, rapidly and at low cost. The project has operated by developing a co-operation network among the co-ordination centres in the respective sector, in order to share the use of the Data Retrieval System for Small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM).

c) Project: Strengthening of federated co-operative systems of savings and credit in Central America

ECLAC has completed the project designed to promote closer ties among Central American federations of savings and loan co-operatives, which was conducted through the Mexico Office between January 1985 and January 1987 with the support of the Government of the Netherlands. One of the main achievements highlighted in the final report on the project (April 1987) is

the promising situation which now exists with respect to the intensification of co-operation among these federations, in that each federation has developed programmes of interest to the others. Guatemala and Honduras have been working in the area of insurance, and Panama is now interested in beginning this programme. The use of computers has been introduced on a large scale in Panama and Costa Rica, and this effort may well have spillover effects as regards the other federations. The exchange of information and experience which has been brought about through the project activities made it possible for the El Salvador federation to send its technical personnel to observe systems for mobilizing savings that have been implemented in Costa Rica and Guatemala, while the Honduras federation requested its counterpart federation in Costa Rica to conduct a seminar on this subject, and this seminar was subsequently held at the headquarters of the Honduran federation.

d) Project: Support for subregional technical co-operation in Central America

Under this project, which received UNDP financing (RLA/85/003), ECLAC collaborated with the Central American countries, through its Subregional Office in Mexico, in redefining and adjusting the external framework for co-operation among them by strengthening the co-ordination of the existing economic integration schemes and mechanisms in the subregion.

e) Project: Urban planning

This project, which was carried out during 1986 using resources provided by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) of the Netherlands, by the Government of Spain through the Ibero-American Co-operation Institute (ICI), and by the World Bank, made it possible to develop a series of proposals based on the results of studies and information-gathering missions previously carried out by ECLAC in nine Latin American countries with a view to setting up a regional support system for training in the development, planning, finance and management of urban areas. The project thus marked a step towards the materialization of this co-operative network, which is conceived as a mechanism for TCDC in the field of human resource training in the region.

f) Project: Regional information programme

ECLAC and UNESCO, working through the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) and the General Information Programme, respectively, completed the formulation of a regional information programme. The work involved in designing this programme is summarized in the joint document published by these two organizations under the title "Basic Principles for a Regional Programme to Strengthen Co-operation among National Information Networks and Systems for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOLAC)" (LC/L.389). This report has been submitted for the consideration of the national institutions of the countries in the region and the regional and international bodies carrying out information activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

g) Project: Information for development policies and planning (INFOPLAN, Phase III)

This project, which is supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, entered into its third phase during the period covered by this report. The objective in this phase is to achieve more effective dissemination and more widespread use of the services provided by the Planning Information System for Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPLAN) which has been developed by ECLAC through CLADES and ILPES. Under this project, assistance in the development and consolidation of national planning information infrastructures has been provided in order to help them participate fully in INFOPLAN activities.

h) Projects to support networks for co-operation in the field of information in the Caribbean

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean has carried forward its activities aimed at supporting co-operation in the field of information in the Caribbean through the strengthening of information networks in those sectors which the countries of the subregion have identified as priority areas. In this connection, the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean carried out the following activities as part of its programme of work:

- i) Improvement and operation of the Caribbean Information System for Economic and Social Planning (CARISPLAN), under a project provided with financial support by the Government of Canada which includes: activities concerning the management and monitoring of the data base of the Caribbean Documentation Centre, which operates at the Subregional Headquarters; the preparation and distribution of bibliographic information (CARISPLAN Bulletins and Abstracts); the provision of technical assistance to the countries of the subregion in connection with the development of documentation centres and the formulation of national information policies; and in-service training for specialists of these countries in the field of information.
- ii) Support and supervision of the development of the Caribbean Agricultural Information System (CAGRIS) in co-operation with the library of the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, which co-ordinates the system.
- iii) Establishment of the Caribbean Patent Information Network (CARPIN), including the creation and management of the data base of this system at the Subregional Headquarters through the Patent Information and Documentation Unit in co-ordination with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

i) Project: Horizontal co-operation in the management of water resource projects in Latin America and the Caribbean

As part of this project, which ECLAC carried out with the aid of a contribution made by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, a meeting of the project consultants was held at ECLAC headquarters from 3 to 6 November 1986. At this meeting, four case studies were reviewed and the planning of the project's final phase was begun. The project activities culminated with the Meeting of Experts on Horizontal Co-operation in the Management of Water Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 18 to 21 May 1987.

Among the subjects examined at the meeting were the four national cases analysed under the project; these studies concerned the Tinajones water system in Peru, the Bogotá river basin system in Colombia, the Limarí-Paloma water system in Chile, and irrigation management in Mendoza, Argentina. Other cases that were presented by the participants were also considered, giving rise to a constructive exchange of viewpoints in relation to TCDC. The topic of training in connection with water resources, which was dealt with in the presentations made by various institutions, was also analysed.

j) Proposed project on horizontal co-operation in regard to the 1990 round of population and housing censuses

ECLAC organized a Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas, which was held at its headquarters from 23 to 25 September 1987. The meeting was attended by 20 representatives of member countries of the Commission, who reviewed the programme of activities in relation to statistics being carried out during the period 1987-1988 within the framework of the regional organization in this sector, i.e., the Inter-American Statistical Conference.

At this meeting ECLAC was asked to prepare a project aimed at getting underway a series of preparatory activities for the 1990 round of population and housing censuses, for which TCDC/ECDC modalities are to be employed with regard to financing and the utilization of national experiences, in order to increase the effectiveness of the census-related work. The project was submitted to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its consideration.

4. Support for national TCDC co-ordinating centres to promote links among national institutions in related sectors

a) Publications in support of TCDC

During the 1986-1987 biennium, ECLAC placed special emphasis on the preparation and dissemination of publications relating specifically to TCDC and ECDC as a means of providing support for national co-ordination centres. As part of this effort, in December 1986 it published the first volume in a series containing abstracts of documents on co-operation among developing countries ("Resúmenes de documentos sobre cooperación entre países en desarrollo" - Serie INFOPLAN: Temas Especiales del Desarrollo, No. 2). This

publication was prepared in co-operation with the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES) and was co-ordinated by the ECLAC Division of Operations. It gathers together, systematizes and presents the bibliographic information concerning TCDC which is contained in the documents produced by various regional and interregional organizations and institutions. A number of different indexes are provided for the retrieval of this information: subject; English-Spanish descriptors; French-Spanish descriptors; geographic; author; conference; and publication series.

The second volume on co-operation in the INFOPLAN series appeared in late 1987 and incorporated some improvements in the document indexes which make it easier to use. Work has begun on the third and final volume in this series, which is scheduled to be ready by mid-1988. The three volumes will cover about 900 documents of all types concerning TCDC and ECDC contained in the bibliographic data base of the ECLAC system.

In addition, ECLAC continued to publish the Co-operation and Development Bulletin, in Spanish and English. This has been coming out since 1981, and to date 23 issues have been published. This bulletin, whose purpose is to disseminate information about the TCDC activities of the United Nations system and particularly those of ECLAC, has permitted regular contacts for the exchange of information to be established with numerous centres both inside and outside the region.

Collaboration has also continued in the distribution in Latin America and the Caribbean of the newsletter of the Group of 77, "Boletín del Grupo de los 77", which provides information and news about the progress made towards the fulfilment of the Caracas Plan of Action concerning economic co-operation among developing countries.

b) Project on promotion of TCDC through the strengthening of links among national co-ordination centres for co-operation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

In response to mandates conferred upon the Secretariat by the Commission at its twenty-first session (Mexico City, 17-25 April 1986), which are contained in resolution 486(XXI), particularly in its operative paragraph 4 b) in March 1987 ECLAC initiated a project designed to systematize information on the capabilities, previous experience, institutional arrangements, procedures and modes of operation of the various countries of the region with regard to TCDC. The project was made possible by a contribution from the Government of the Netherlands, and the field work for it was completed in September 1987. Information was gathered by means of questionnaires which were sent to the national co-ordination centres of Latin America and the Caribbean and to national institutions officially designated by the governments themselves for inclusion in the data base of the Information Referral System (INRES) developed by UNDP as a tool for the utilization of TCDC. As is well known, this system maintains a computerized data base in New York and is administered by the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries. The institutions were selected on the basis of searches of the INRES data base which yielded approximately 350 institutions possessing experience in TCDC projects or activities in a wide range of

sectors in all the countries of the region. Approximately 120 completed questionnaires were received, which constitutes quite a good response rate in terms of the usual norms for this type of information-gathering tool.

As part of this project, three information-gathering missions were also carried out which permitted direct contact to be made with the national co-ordination centres and with representative samples of the national institutions having experience in providing such co-operation. The countries visited by these missions were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The information thus obtained has been assembled in a guide for technical co-operation among developing countries which includes a listing of sources of TCDC and a directory of related institutions in Latin America. This document, the preliminary version of which has been completed, seeks to provide guidance to potential recipients of TCDC by supplying quite a complete picture of the TCDC supply activities in the region. It includes information on sources of TCDC in the countries of the region (chapter 1), on sources of TCDC by area of specialization (chapter 2), a directory of institutions specializing in TCDC (chapter 3), and a final chapter containing conclusions and comments concerning the general framework in which TCDC operates in the region. A revised version of this documents is to be distributed soon.

c) Regional Meeting of Directors of International Technical Co-operation (TCDC)

This meeting, which was convened by SELA and sponsored by the Government of Venezuela, was held in Caracas from 8 to 11 September 1987 immediately before the thirteenth regular meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA. The regional meeting examined the following subjects: the co-ordinated programming of TCDC in Latin America and the Caribbean by sectors and countries for 1988-1989; procedures for obtaining financing and support for TCDC activities and projects within the framework of UNDP, other bodies of the United Nations system and other international organizations; an analysis of the problems faced by the countries in executing TCDC projects; and a regional workshop for analysing the bases for training executive and technical personnel in the field of TCDC. The meeting's agenda also included a presentation by the International Technical Co-operation Department of the Central Office for Planning and Co-ordination (CORDIPLAN) of Venezuela.

The subject of training in the field of TCDC was analysed on the basis of a preliminary document concerning the bases for the discussion of a training programme in the field of technical co-operation which was prepared for the regional meeting by ECLAC and ILPES; this document reviewed the various modules which might be considered in a programme of this type, with emphasis on the practical aspects involved in the preparation of co-operation projects.

The final report of the regional meeting was submitted to the Latin American Council of SELA for its consideration. The Council approved, *inter alia*, decision 252 on technical co-operation among developing countries (TCDC). This decision includes two articles which are of special interest to ECLAC. Article 9 expresses satisfaction with the agreements reached at the

Regional Meeting of Directors of International Technical Co-operation and requests the Permanent Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements with the relevant bodies, particularly the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, ILPES and ECLAC, to ensure that the required support will be forthcoming to permit another Meeting of Directors of Technical Co-operation to be held during the second half of 1988. Article 10 acknowledges the progress made by the Permanent Secretariat, the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, UNESCO, ILPES, ECLAC and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migrations (ICM) towards co-ordinating their activities in the sphere of TCDC with a view to avoiding any duplication of effort and to maximizing the utilization of available resources. This article also expresses the Latin American Council's desire to see the continued consolidation of these efforts.

III. ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING REGIONS

At the level of co-operation among developing regions, the regional commissions, headed by ECLAC, were invited to participate in a round table on the formulation of development policies for intra-regional and interregional economic and technical co-operation among developing countries and regions. This meeting was organized by the Development Policy Forum of the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) and was held in West Berlin from 2 to 5 July 1986. It was attended by high-level representatives of a broad spectrum of governmental and private-sector regional and subregional organizations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Its objectives were to assess the lessons to be learned from the successful ECDC and TCDC experiences of existing regional and subregional organizations in developing regions; to formulate practical proposals for overcoming the main constraints which these organizations have had to confront in connection with their ECDC and TCDC activities; and to suggest future activities which the secretariats of regional and subregional organizations might undertake in order to help the governments and institutions of developing countries to apply the recommendations concerning ECDC and TCDC which have been approved in international forums.

In addition, ECLAC and the other regional commissions are now completing the preparation of projects to promote co-operation among countries of the various developing regions in the areas to which the countries themselves have given priority; these areas were distributed among the regional commissions so that they might take the initiative in preparing and co-ordinating the respective projects. This joint effort, which was carried out within the framework of Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/66, gave rise to 20 proposals for interregional projects for which the various regional commissions would act as co-ordinators. This list of projects was reviewed by the Executive Secretaries when they met in Bangkok in February 1987. At that meeting, they decided to give priority to two project proposals per commission so as to permit the concentration of efforts to obtain financing for these initiatives in the field of co-operation among developing regions.

In the case of ECLAC, the two priority projects concern, respectively, training in specific areas relating to the development of mineral resources, and the facilitation of international transport.

The regional commissions are undertaking joint action, with the support of the Regional Commissions Liaison Office at United Nations Headquarters, to obtain resources from UNDP which will permit some of these priority project proposals to get underway. At their forthcoming meeting at ESCWA headquarters in Baghdad in February 1988, the Executive Secretaries will review the progress made in relation to these interregional co-operation projects.

IV. GUIDELINES AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The basic lines of ECLAC's work, both now and in the immediate future, are very closely linked with the objectives that the countries of the region must achieve if they are to deal adequately and effectively with the repercussions of the crisis which has so severely affected the vast majority of these nations. Accordingly, ECLAC's activities are directed towards the handling of the problem of the external debt which jeopardizes the development strategies of the countries of the region; the application of adjustment and stabilization policies in order to respond to the emergency situations with which they are faced; the mitigation of the adverse impacts of these policies; and the urgent need for a reactivation of their economies.

These basic lines of activity were already highlighted at the twenty-first session of the Commission in Mexico City in April 1986. They were also the subject of an in-depth analysis at the Special Session of the Commission (Mexico City, January 1987), which was convened in response to an express request by President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico. The subjects of indebtedness and the crisis in Latin America and the relation they bear to restrictions on sustained development in Latin America and the Caribbean also figure prominently on the agenda of the twenty-second session of ECLAC.

Within this framework, regional co-operation (including that carried out using forms of TCDC) takes on great importance since, in order to deal with the problems stemming from the crisis, the countries of the region must themselves make an even more determined and concerted effort to cope with the external constraints affecting them.

In order to pursue its task of promoting and supporting co-operation among developing countries and regions, ECLAC must emphasize and strengthen the role of TCDC discussed above. To that end, the Secretariat must continue to seek new opportunities for co-operation and to support the exchange of information in sectors which are particularly strategic for the development policies of the countries of the region. Furthermore, it must redouble its efforts to support the work carried out by the national co-ordination centres in promoting TCDC.

The foregoing considerations should give rise to a renewed interest in seeking out appropriate formulas and methodologies for ensuring that TCDC in

particular and regional co-operation in general will be indispensable elements in the planning and co-ordination of public policies.

The forthcoming Regional Meeting of National Directors of Technical Co-operation, to be held during the second half of 1988 on the joint initiative of ECLAC and ILPES, with the support of UNDP and in collaboration with SELA, could be a suitable occasion for examining and approving new proposals for TCDC support activities with a view to fully incorporating this type of co-operation into the development strategies and policies of the countries of the region.

Note

1/ Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978.

