

**INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON NEW DIRECTIONS FOR
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN MARKET ECONOMIES**

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**DECISION CO-ORDINATION IN MIXED ECONOMIES:
A CHALLENGE FOR UNDP CO-OPERATION WITH
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

César Miquel

DECISION CO-ORDINATION IN MIXED ECONOMIES: A CHALLENGE FOR
UNDP CO-OPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Expose by the Chief of Division for the
UNDP Regional Programme and the English-
speaking Caribbean Countries, Mr.
Cesar A. Miquel, at the opening of the
International Colloquium on New
Directions for Planning in Market
Economies, held at Santiago, Chile,
25 to 27 August 1986.

1. It is my pleasure to represent the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Hugo Navajas-Mogro at the opening of this International Colloquium on New Directions for Planning in Market Economies.

2. When I say that it is a pleasure for me, I do so not for reasons of mere formality but because for UNDP this meeting represents the beginning of a stage of renewal in economic and social planning during which we hope to contribute pragmatic approaches to the development of Latin American and Caribbean thought.

3. It is no mere coincidence that we have chosen to hold this exercise in reflection in this house which has welcomed us today. ECLAC has traditionally been the home of the region's great thinkers. It is the cradle in which so many of the initiatives which have marked the political, economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decade have been nurtured. Mr. Executive Secretary, on behalf of UNDP I should like to thank you for your hospitality and reaffirm our gratitude to ECLAC for its co-operation in organizing this Colloquium.

4. This favourable environment for change is made even more so by the presence of a group of distinguished international figures. We are convinced that their contributions will provide the basis for a fruitful exchange of thought. We shall thereby be able to add a variety of approaches and experience from other parts of the world to the accomplishments and failures of the region itself. It is our sincere hope that this will strengthen the process of renewal with which we are faced. In particular, I should like to thank the distinguished participants for having found the time to attend this meeting, and above all for their willingness to co-operate in this major undertaking.

5. We are old associates of ILPES. Consequently it is hardly surprising that we have called on its unquestioned capacity in order to tackle a problem that is of serious concern to all the countries in the region. The delicate mission facing both of us requires considerable efforts which the countries have themselves placed in the dependable hands of this institution. We are confident that ILPES will enthusiastically devote itself to satisfying our expectations and making major strides in this direction. I should also like to thank the Director of ILPES and through him all the Institution's specialists and officers for having so painstakingly organized this Colloquium.

6. Mr. Gonzalez has just provided us with an expose on present economic trends and the problems facing the region's development. There is no doubt that the difficulties before us urgently require that the instruments, techniques and theory of planning be adapted to the circumstances of adversity, uncertainty and rapid change which prevail throughout the world.

7. The role played in the past by national planning systems in government decision-making processes was relegated to those departments responsible for short-term economic policies. This has led to the creation of a void in the process of public administration thereby hampering the cohesion of economic and social policies and widening the gap between short-, medium- and long-term prospects. This underlines the need to scrutinize certain of the paradigms of planning and to create instruments capable of effectively keeping pace with change, of adapting development models to the requirements of the future, of implementing structural readjustments and of providing efficacious guidance for the private and public sectors.

8. From our viewpoint, the region is facing two equally important challenges. In the short- to medium-term, it has to deal with the external debt, bring about stabilization and economic reactivation and commence the process of structural readjustment. With regard to the long-term, it will be necessary to lay down a new pattern for Latin America and the Caribbean's insertion into the international economy. The far-reaching technical changes taking place will lead to alterations to the comparative advantages affecting region's economies at present. This phenomenon would seem to suggest that we are on the threshold of a new international division of labour. The common denominator to both of these challenges is a set of quandaries indicating the need to reconsider the directions and perhaps even the strategies adopted by development. In this respect, it is possible to forecast that the years ahead will continue to be ones of transition, at both the world and regional levels.

The high degree of uncertainty and adversity which are likely will require that countries possess greater capacity to react in order to tackle the crises together with sound preparedness if they are to adjust to changing circumstances.

9. During the preparation of the UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean for 1987-1991, countries recommended that we direct it towards solving concrete, and if possible specific problems. The dialogue in which we participated at this stage revealed to us the widely-held opinion among different actors that no further diagnoses are required, that there is a surfeit of studies in the region and that present problems require responses. Moreover, countries requested that we restrict studies to those absolutely necessary for carrying out the tasks ahead. In other words, we are spurred to action.

10. In this respect, I should like to highlight the fact that the four questions put forwards by ILPES in its document on the critical review of planning are not only important but also allow us to adopt practical criteria in approaching the task of regional technical co-operation. If, at the close of this meeting we are in a position to provide but a partial response, then we shall possess a clearer idea of how to deal with changes in planning in the years ahead. This is vitally important not only for countries but also for the institutions of the United Nations system. The ability to adjust to new circumstances and to renew ideas are vital in helping to carry out the tasks of international technical co-operation. It cannot be stressed too much, and even less so during these troubled times, that the role played by international technical co-operation constitutes but one facet of an exercise in establishing relationships and harmony between countries whose final objective is development and the maintenance of peace.

