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ADAPTING THE PROCESS TOWARDS A TSA IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

To ECLAC, the subject of tourism is a relatively new subject. However, the recompilation and elaboration of tourism statistics is an activity that has been going on for some time now in Latin American and Caribbean countries. An analysis of the information available shows that economic activities related to tourism have been gaining increased importance in the generation of the value added of economies in the region as well as they have a significant importance in the countries' balance of payments. It is clear that the relative importance of these activities is not equal in all countries, but in some of them, and especially in small Caribbean countries, the relative importance of the hotels and restaurants industry in overall GDP at basic prices may represent more than 10%. Regarding the balance of payments, the relative importance of the travel item and more specifically the comparison between the balance of the travel item and the trade balance, shows that even though for Latin American the trade balance has a greater importance when estimating the current account balance (whether it has a negative or a positive sign), depending on the economic situation of the country, the amount of the travel balance may significantly influence in its final result.

In the last seven years, ECLAC has been incorporating references or analysis related to the tourism activity or the tourism sector in the main documents published by the institution. Therefore, and aware of the importance of this sector to the economies of many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and of the need to count with better information, more accurate, reliable, with increased coverage, and comparable so to allow for international comparability and regional analysis, ECLAC has compromised its support to the diffusion and dissemination of the international standard methodologies approved by the United Nations Statistical Commission regarding the elaboration of tourism statistics and the tourism satellite account.

This article is divided in three parts: the first one relates to the indicators that ECLAC has been presenting in their principal publications (known mainly as flag-ships) concerning the tourism activity; the second one relates to the economic analysis that can be done based on those indicators; and the third one refers to the need to connect the TSA work with the central framework of national accounts, specially in what refers to the accounts related to the economic activities in general, the particularities of certain industries and the production accounts.

1. Indicators that ECLAC has been presenting in its main regular documents.

ECLAC has been incorporating the analysis of tourism activities in its principal published regular documents: the Economic Survey and the Preliminary Overview of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. This last document is published at the end of each year and includes the preliminary estimation of the evolution of the economies during the year. In these documents the behavior of the economies (at a

regional level and at a national level) is described using to do so quantitative information from national accounts, balance of payments, public finances, external trade, the evolution of commodities' prices, occupation and unemployment, financial sector, among others. Regional summaries, on each one of these items, as well as a national summary for each country is presented and the most important events occurred during the year are described, as well as future tendencies (in the short term) of the economies.

In the 1995-1996 Economic Survey, in the summary of the economy of Cuba, physical indicators for the number of tourist arrivals and main countries of departure are presented. For Dominican Republic the total amount for foreign visitors expenses is presented. In the 1996-1997 Economic Survey, there was no mention to the subject of entrance of tourists or expenditures incurred by tourists, except those already mentioned for the Economic Survey of the previous year for Cuba and Dominican Republic.

In the Economic Survey of next years (1997-1998 and 1998-1999) the analysis is enlarged in terms of number of countries, mainly English speaking Caribbean countries. However, these analyses are mainly of quantitative type (number of entrances of foreign visitors) and not always accompanied by volume indicators of the economic activity. There is also a qualitative appreciation of the evolution of the tourism activity, apparently made on the basis of the implicit indicators of the value added figures of the total of restaurants and hotels industry, and on the heading of travel included in the balance of payments.

In the Economic Survey of 1999-2000, there is a change as a bigger number of countries for which an analysis of the tourism activity is presented is included. Indicators of the number of tourism arrivals, growth of the total of restaurants and hotels industry, arrival of tourists in cruise ships, average length of stay and their origin are presented. In the regional summary of the Economic Survey reference is made to the data that is obtained through World Tourism Organization (WTO) for each one of the countries highlighting the relative importance of the revenues obtained from foreign visitors as a percentage of total revenues corresponding to the heading of services credit in the current account of the balance of payments. The same type of analysis is included in the editions of 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 of the Economic Survey and 2001-2002 edition of the Preliminary Overview.

In the document "Latin American Forecasts 2001-2002" reference is made to the evolution of the tourism activity in Latin American countries after the events of September 11. The analysis was made on the basis of information provided by WTO, as well as on the basis of the information most of the countries of the region sent to ECLAC on that opportunity.

In general, a revision of the existing available bibliography concerning the subject of tourism in Latin American and Caribbean countries shows that existing documents refer to tourism activity in one particular location or to the possibility of developing tourist projects around certain areas – tourist clusters. There are also studies on the impact of the development of tourist activities on the generation of employment, mainly

employment of women. With the exception of Cuba, there are not studies that refer to a development of the tourism sector agreed upon the respective authorities and framed in a project concerning the economic activity of a given country.

This brief description intends to illustrate the fact that tourism activity has been gradually incorporated in ECLAC's analyses, each year with a larger scope, in terms of the number of countries for which the analyses is made and the number of indicators presented. However, even though it is true that there is a progress in ECLAC's documents towards a greater incorporation of the tourism activity in the economic analysis, the actual availability of information only allows making analysis of partial aspects of this industry, not allowing for an overall scope of its influence in the economic activity. It is only possible to look at partial aspects of tourist offer – such as the behavior of the hotels and restaurants industry -, and the tourist demand – such as consumption expenditure of foreign tourists. The advances in the implementation of the Tourism Satellite Account will make possible the availability of the type of information required to make more accurate economic analysis, investment analysis and analysis on the impacts on overall economic activity caused by the evolution of the tourism economic activity.

2. The economic analysis based on Tourism Indicators

The usefulness of counting with this type of indicators is widely discussed. In ECLAC's Statistics and Economic Projections Division, this information has been relevant at the time of making estimates of the economic activity (through the relative importance of the hotels and restaurants industry) and estimates of the balance of services in the balance of payments. It has also been very useful at the moment of studying and making estimates of the future values of some variables that have close relation to this sector (growth of activities related to the tourism sector like transportation, of the economic activity of certain areas in a given country where there is a greater flow of tourists, for example), and a wide availability of these indicators will allow for more accurate estimates of the impact that tourist affluence has on different economic variables – investment, expenditure, transportation sector, other services.

For this we have tried to make a first regional estimation of the importance of tourism activities in the generation of the value added of the economies of Latin America and Caribbean. In this sense, the comparability of the available information is of great importance. Analyzing the available information for all countries, it is very difficult to obtain detailed information in countries' national accounts regarding what could be considered exactly as "tourism activities", since there is not a separation on what is provided (or demanded) solely with the purpose of "tourism" and what does not correspond to tourism but to the provision of goods and services for the residents in a given country in their everyday life. According to this, the most comparable indicator, which could be used as a proxy to the tourism sector, is the hotels and restaurants industry, even though not all the value added of restaurants corresponds to tourism.

Therefore, considering this as an approximation of the importance of tourism activities in the economy may over estimate it. But, on the other hand, we could not find comparable information for most countries regarding the transportation activities related to tourism (such as car rentals) and manufacturing industries. Therefore we consider this as an initial measurement of the importance of the tourism to the overall GDP of the economies. Regarding the tourism expenditure made by foreign visitors in a given country an indicator that could give us a proxy of this is the travel item of the balance of payments.

The results show that in Latin American countries, the sector of hotels and restaurants represents around 3% of total GDP at basic prices[1]. For smaller Caribbean countries this value rises up to around 10% of GDP (see table 1).

As said before, indicators related to the tourism sector are used in the estimations of the heading of services in the current account of the balance of payments. Although for many countries the entrances of tourists and their associated expenditure is more important, for some of them, and at particular moments in time, the trips of their nationals to other countries and the expenditure associated with this outbound tourism, has also been an important aspect to consider. Examples of this are Brazil previous to the devaluation of its currency – the Real – in January 1999 and Argentina before the crisis that put an end to the Convertibility System. These are generally periods of time associated to an overvaluation of the national currency accompanied by a significant raise in the purchasing power of national consumers compared to other countries.

[1] Countries' GDP for whom this information is available represent in total around 90% of total regional GDP.

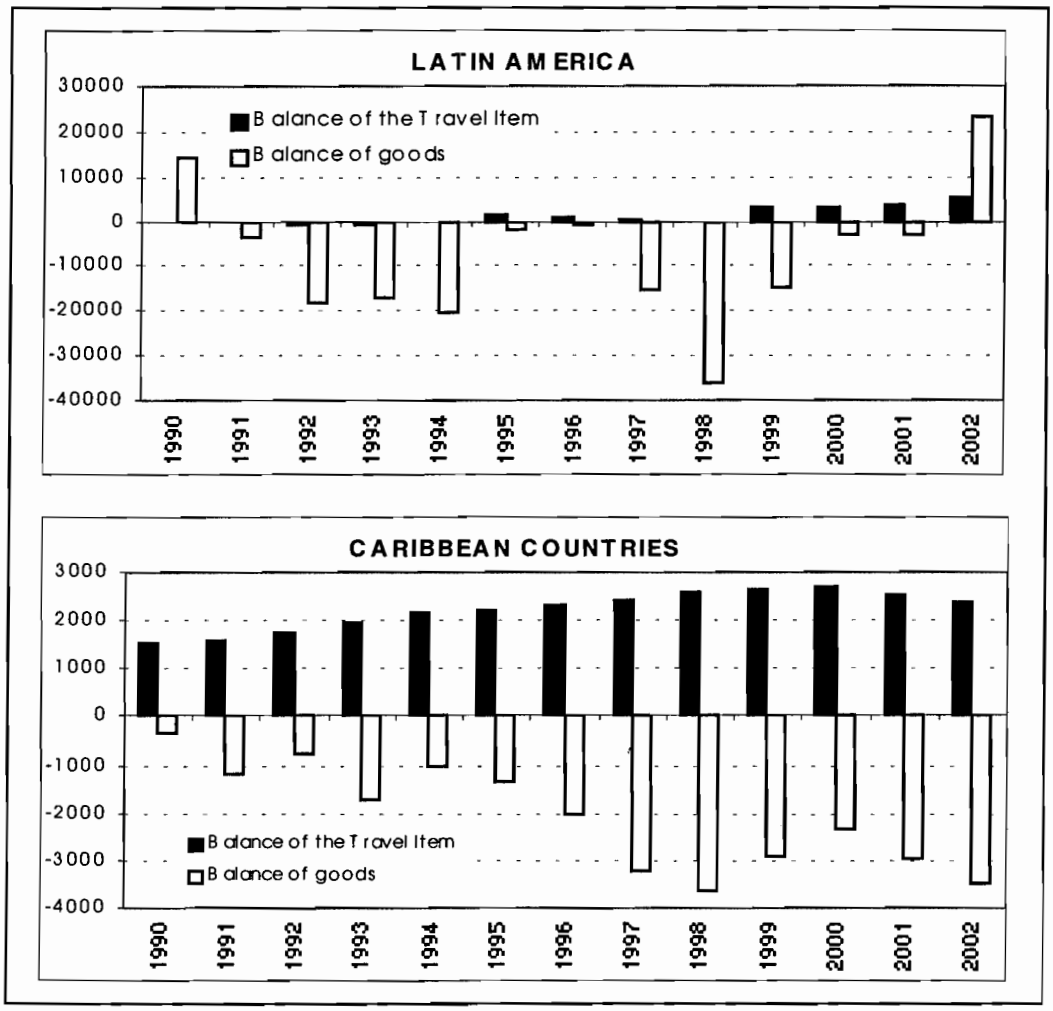
Table 1
Contribution of the hotels and restaurants sector to total GDP at basic prices in Latin American and Caribbean countries
(In %)

	1991	1995	2000
Argentina	2.4	2.6	2.8
Bolivia	3.6	3.5	...
Brazil	3.6	3.7	2.0
Colombia	2.8	2.7	2.2
Costa Rica	3.9	4.2	4.5
Ecuador	...	1.3	1.2
El Salvador	...	...	3.1
Mexico	5.0	5.3	4.7
Panama	1.5	1.5	...
Peru	4.9	4.5	4.4
Dominican Republic	4.2	5.7	6.8
Venezuela	...	2.6	2.6
SubTotal Latin America	**3.8**	**3.8**	**3.0**
Antigua and Barbuda	14.0	14.6	12.8
Barbados	13.7	15.4	15.5
Belice	...	3.6	4.3
Dominica	1.0	1.1	0.8
Granada	6.1	8.2	7.5
St. Kitts and Nevis	8.6	6.9	4.3
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	2.4	2.5	2.5
St. Lucia	10.3	11.2	13.4
Subtotal	**11.0**	**10.9**	**10.7**
Jamaica	...	2.0	2.5
Trinidad and Tobago	...	1.6	2.1
Subtotal Caribbean		**1.8**	**2.2**
Latin America and the Caribbean	**3.8**	**3.8**	**3.0**

Source: ECLAC, on the basis of official information.

For other countries the importance of the services balance is comparable to the importance of the trade balance at the time of making estimations of the current account balance. An example of this are Caribbean countries where the balance of the travel item is almost as important, although with an opposite sign, as the trade balance. This is an important aspect to consider when making estimations of the current account for these countries and analysis of the financing of sustained trade deficits in these economies.

Graph 1
Balance of Trade, Balance of Services and balance of the travel item of the Balance of payments
(In US$ million)

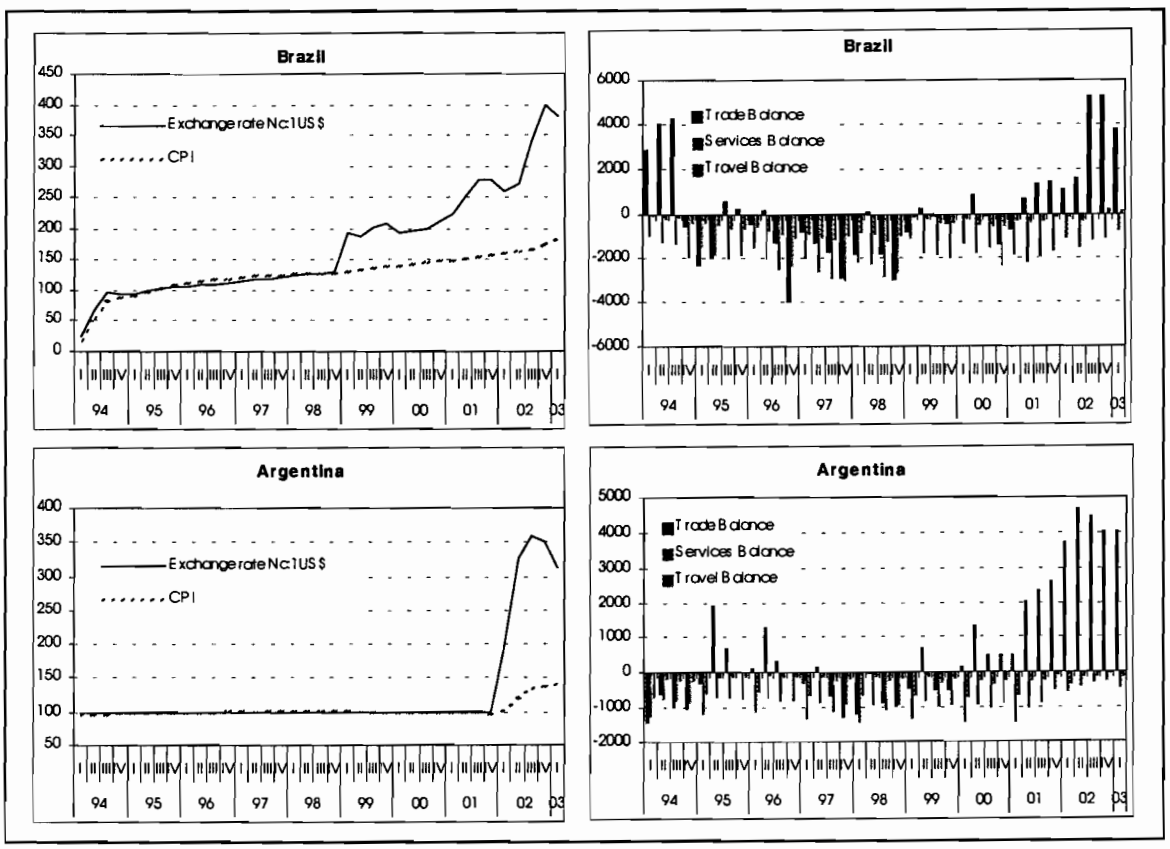


Source: ECLAC, on the basis of official figures.

These indicators have been gaining relevance in the last few years not only because of the increase of the purchasing power of consumers in some countries of the region, but also due to the fact that there is an increase in the access to this type of

services: decrease in the costs of airplane tickets, an increase in the offer of tourism packages, as well as a greater development in the countries' tourist infrastructure. On other hand, the end of the high rates of inflation also allowed consumers to have access to consumption credit in order to pay for these types of expenditures.

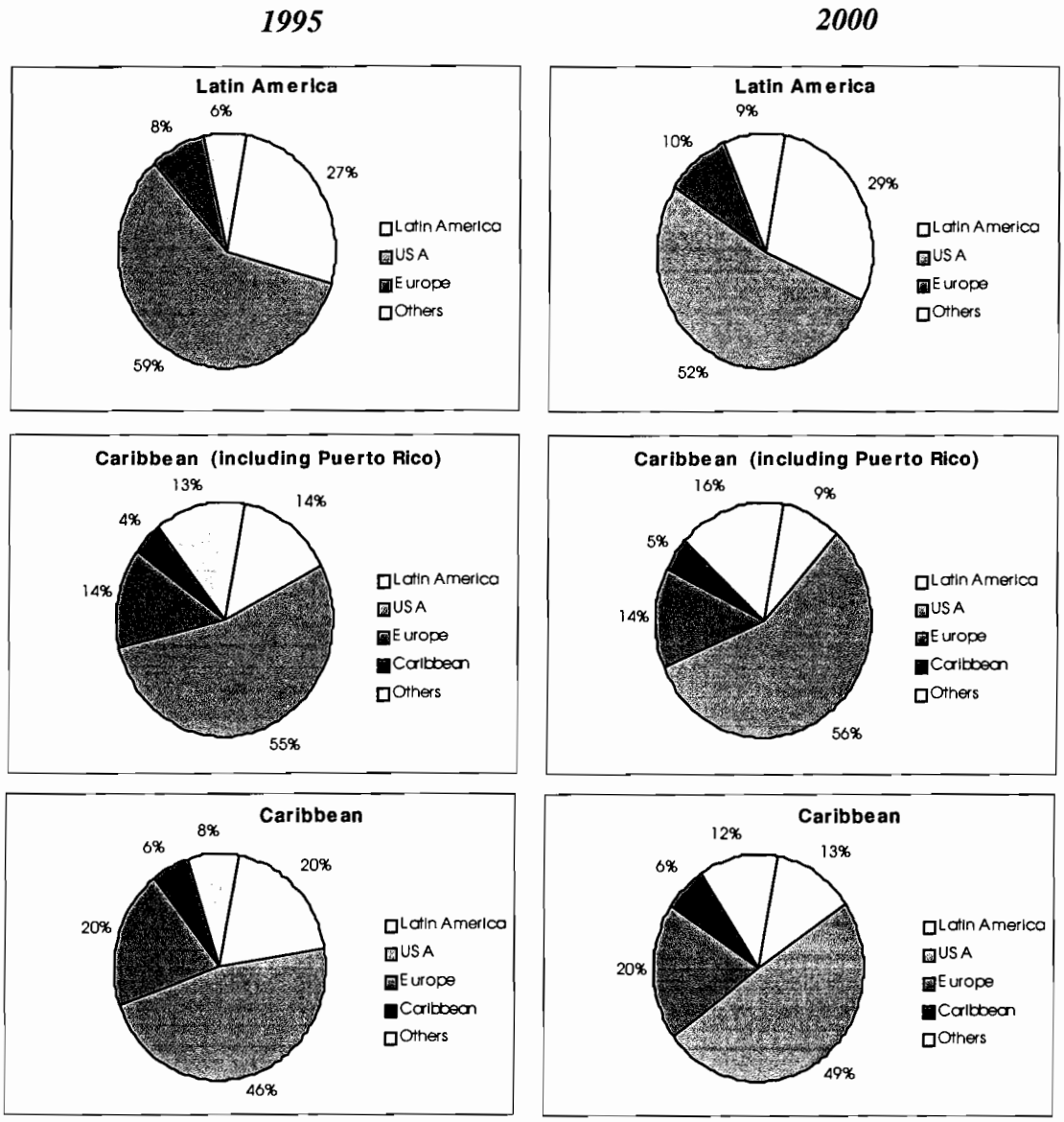
Graph 2
Exchange rate, Consumer Price Index, and some balances of the Balance of Payments of Argentina and Brazil
(Indexes 1995=100 and US$ millions)



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of official figures.

To make these analyses it is also of most importance to have a good knowledge of the inbound and outbound tourism of a given country, specially regarding the nationalities of the visitors and of the countries that residents in a given country prefer to travel to. Some conclusions may also be derived from this: even though the major part of the visitors to Latin America and Caribbean countries comes from outside the region, the region as a whole represents almost half of the trips Latin Americans and Caribbean make outside their countries of residence.

Graph 3
Inbound Tourism in Latin America and Caribbean countries
(Arrivals of tourists from abroad, relative percentage to the total of arrivals)

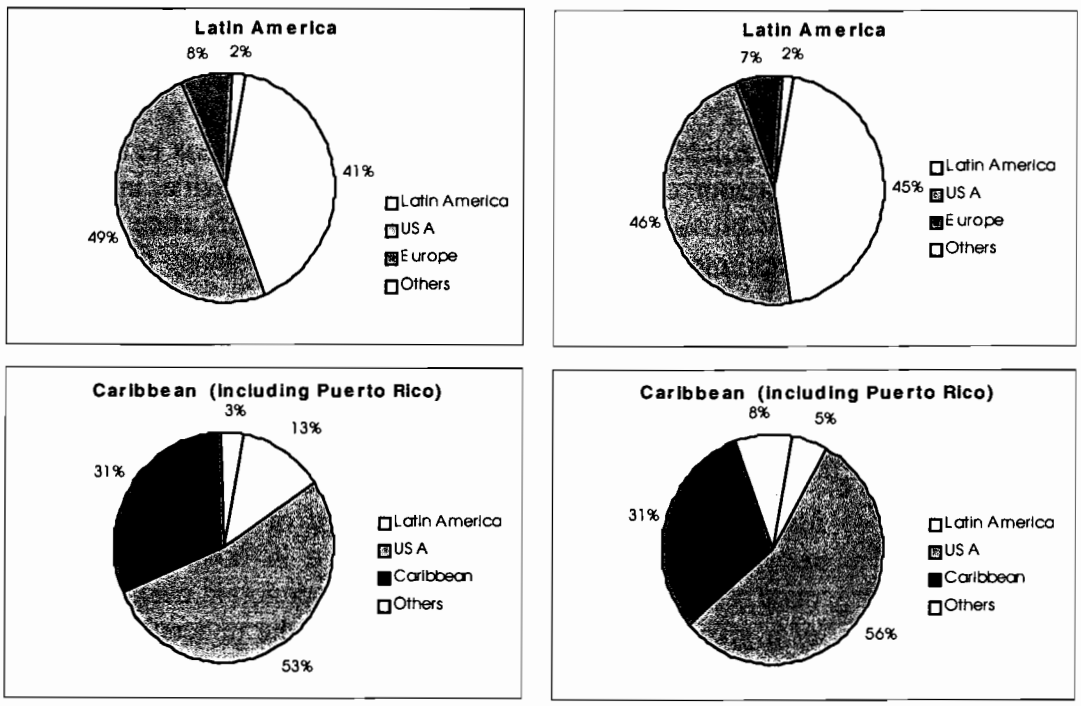


Source: ECLAC, on the basis of World Tourism Organization data.

Graph 4
Outbound Tourism in Latin American countries[2]

(Number of trips abroad as measured by the arrivals in country of destiny, as percentage of the total of trips abroad)

1995 ***2000***



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of World Tourism Organization data.

Therefore, and in the same manner there is a link between physical indicators, national accounts and balance of payments at the time of making an evaluation of the impact different type of occurrences have on the economic activity of a given country – natural disasters, the impact of a devaluation of the national currency, events in the financial sector and so on – there is also a link between those when analyzing the impacts of events in the tourism sector.

A simple way to describe this is tried out in the chart below. It relates the administrative data available from different sources, the national accounts system and the

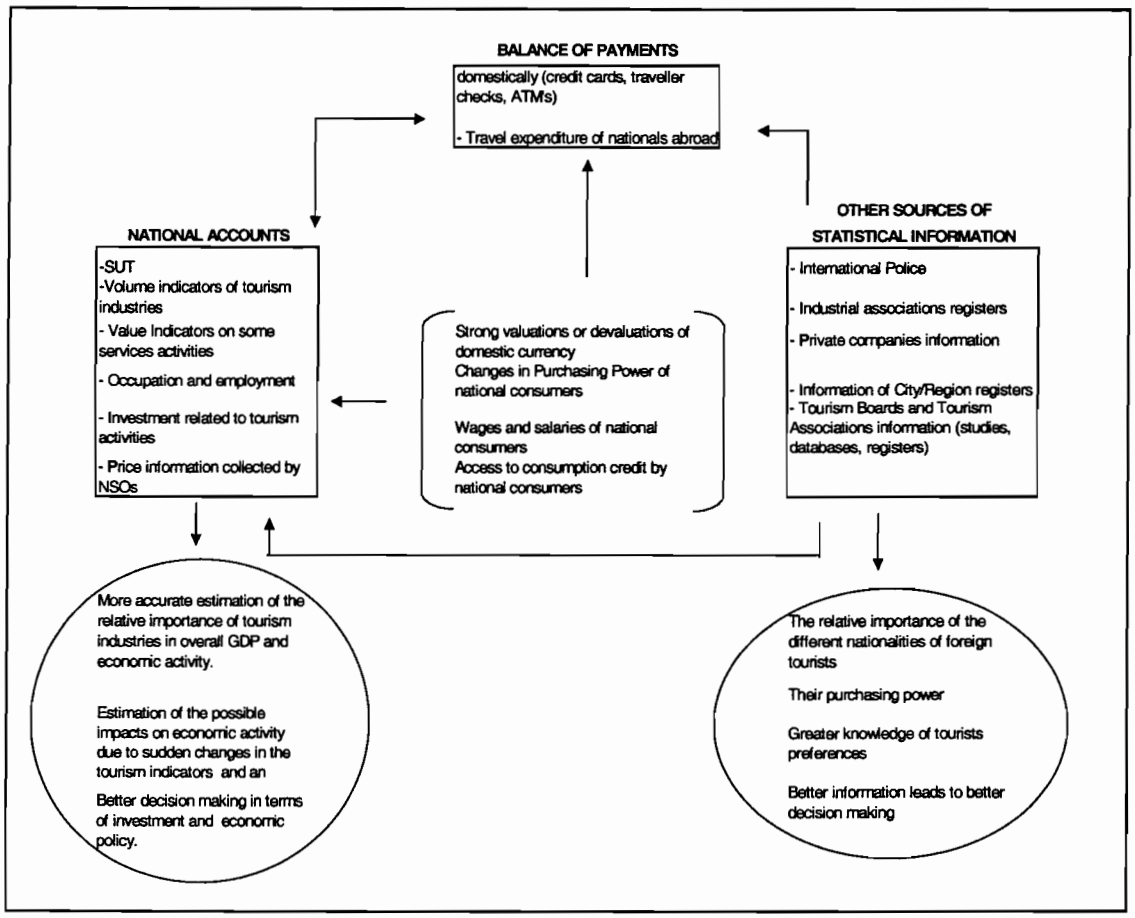
[2] The figures used to elaborate these graphics where obtained from the data that each one of the countries of destiny send to World Tourism Organization (WTO) and therefore correspond to the arrivals to such country. Not all countries deliver to WTO data on tourist arrivals detailed by country of origin. Additionally, in some cases, countries use specific aggregations of countries of origin. In this sense, the figures for outbound tourism do not correspond exactly to the accurate number of travels by the residents of a given country to another country, and are therefore approximations to such real figures.

balance of payments system. Examples of other type of information that could be included are related to the statistics of the fiscal sector, like government tax receipts, or the employment structure.

In this sense, and as seen on Table 2, in the square boxes there are example of the information on the statistical information existing in national accounts, balance of payments and other sources of statistical information. Arrows show the flow of information: relevant statistical information is an input to the elaboration of both national accounts and balance of payments and the elaboration of these last two should be consistent. On the basis of this statistical information, economic information can be derived. This is represented in the round boxes, which show examples of what kind of economic analysis or improvements to the economic analysis a close look at the national accounts and at the different sources of statistical information can provide. in the square brackets some examples are provided of events that may have an influence in the final results obtained when compiling both national accounts and the balance of payments.. These relate to strong revaluations or devaluations of the national currency, changes in wages and salaries of national consumers and access to consumption credit by national consumers.

The proposed scheme, which can be considered as a first approach to an economic analysis framework of the tourism activity integrated in the functioning of national economies, allows to identify and have a better knowledge of the interrelation that different variables related to the tourism activity may have in other aspects of the economic activity in general, such as the impact that certain economic events may have in the tourism activity of a given country. In the same sense, the understanding of the interrelations of the different variables allows to be able to anticipate effects not only of the evolution of tourism activity compared to and its influences in the overall economy but also anticipate effects on the evolution of the tourism sector based on general phenomenon that are present in the economy. In general, these phenomenons are related to the observation of the evolution of the economic activity and with economic policy decision-making in countries.

Table 2
Relations between National Accounts, Balance of Payments and other Statistical information concerning tourism activities



A wider scope of the available information as well as a better understanding of the existing information will allow having a better knowledge of the relative importance of the different sectors, and be a helpful tool in terms of investment decisions (both in terms of public investment as well as private investment), and economic policy decisions – related to taxes, employment, investment promotion, for example. Would also contribute to a better understanding of the economic activity and be a tool to measure the impact of different types of factors and shocks. Depending on the available information productivity analysis and cost analysis can also be made.

When making economic regional analyses regarding tourism activity, the comparability of the available data is also important. Most countries have already

implemented, or are in the process of doing so, the System of national Accounts 1993. In this sense national accounts data every time are becoming more comparable. Also, most countries use the Fifth version of the Balance of Payments Handbook to elaborate their balance of payments statistics. There is also the *"Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework"* that provides a guiding methodology to elaborate the TSA. However, and regarding the collection of the administrative data (an example is the form that tourists must fill when entering a given country) there is the need for countries to coordinate their recollection of information, so this information is not only useful to other institutions who are involved in the elaboration of the TSA but also serves the purpose of allowing for international comparability. This is especially relevant when countries are involved in harmonization processes with neighboring countries. Examples of this are the harmonization processes going on in the Andean Community and the harmonization efforts made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

3. The existing relation between TSA and the core framework of the System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993)

The implementation of the National Accounts under the new international recommendations, commonly know as System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA 1993), requires a wider-ranging set of basic statistics than those required for the previous system. This is not always available making it necessary to invest in the development thereof. The new recommendations comprise the Core framework of the System of National Accounts (SNA 1993), and the preparation of the Satellite Accounts (such as Tourism, Environmental, Health, Education Accounts), which provide an account of the specific aspects of the Economic and Social System. From this new integral approach the producers and users benefit from the information. At the same time, it is necessary for considerable efforts to be made to coordinate the different producers of statistics, such as National Statistical Offices, Central Banks and the government agencies and private bodies representing areas of special interest.

As said before, the preparation of the TSA allows the possibility of further strengthening the information from the different sectors and the core framework of the SNA, additionally enhancing the correspondence between the National Accounts and other macro statistics systems such as Balance of Payments, Public Finance, and so on. In the countries of the region, those preparing the economic and social statistics have understood the importance of this new integrating focus, which involves a major effort regarding the coordination of the producers of basic statistics and those preparing derived statistics, it being recognized that in this way it is ensured that the data prepared will be understood both by the financial authorities of the government, the bodies of the government sector, the private agents and users in general.

Apart from this mention can be made of the fact that the advances made in Latin America and Caribbean with regard to the implementation of the new recommendations are encouraging. Nevertheless, greater efforts must be made to improve the scope of their

Accounts and the strictest adherence to concepts, definitions and classifications recommended. ECLAC has been and continues to support the process of implementing SNA 1993 and the Satellite Accounts in Latin America and the Caribbean since 1995, the date on which the new international guidelines were set forth. It is for this reason that it has promoted, among other experts of the countries in this region the holding of workshops with groups of countries in several of the central blocks of information of the SNA 93, including the Satellite Accounts, and additionally has taken the initiative of getting processes under way for the harmonization of that information which has already been completed.

At the time of making estimates of the production, in general the most important source of information are economic census and economic surveys, usually using as the observation unit the enterprise and/or the establishments. In some cases the observation unit can also be the locations. Practice shows as necessary the relationship that must exist between the ones who compile National Accounts and the ones who compile the Tourism Satellite Account. Moreover, we are in favor that the compilers of National Accounts should be the ones responsible for the elaboration of the Tourism Satellite Account. The elaboration of the TSA by the institution in charge of the National Accounts would guarantee that the results obtained would be consistent with other results obtained through National Accounts – they share the same concepts, methodologies, tables and are consistent with the central framework of the SNA 93.

However, we acknowledge and understand that when the TSA is a part of the work program of the institutions responsible for the elaboration of the national accounts, many times the elaboration of TSA is postponed and the interests of analysts and agents related to the tourism activity are affected. In this sense, we see a very important role for the public and private institutions related to the tourism activity in putting in evidence to the authorities their needs of information.

In this sense, Tourism Satellite Accounts, as well as Satellite Accounts of other specific sectors, are compiled in most cases as a result of an initiative of the authorities of the respective sector and not necessarily by the offices in charge of the elaboration of National Accounts, should they be under the responsibility of National Statistical Offices, Central banks or other government bodies. The governmental tourism agencies - National Tourism Agencies, National Tourism Board – are precisely the ones who have the need to build up information systems in order to have a better knowledge of the tourism sector, for them to be able to guide, in the best direction, decision making both by public and private agents. This demands that the government institution in charge of the tourism sector, conducts the coordination efforts between the different institutions involved, which must translate into collaboration tasks between these institutions generating greater benefits for all involved.

When distributing responsibilities among the institutions involved, SNA 1993 should guide the general conceptual framework. Therefore it is important that the institution in charge of the elaboration of the National Accounts gives the appropriate orientations regarding the elaboration of the Satellite Account. Complementary to the

general conceptual framework, the National Tourism Agency and the office in charge of the elaboration of the national accounts must incorporate the conceptual framework specific to the Tourism Satellite Accounts.

Government Tourism Agencies should put at the availability of National Statistical Offices (NSO), offices of national accounts and offices responsible of collecting taxes the acquired knowledge on the tourism sector in their respective countries allowing for an improvement of their basic registers and an actualization of their directories.

On the other hand NSO should put at the availability of the producers of the TSA their legal capacity to assure the conduction of surveys and their technical expertise in aspects such as the sample design, fieldwork, the surveys' processing and so on.

The exhaustive knowledge that the National Tourism Agencies have gathered, specially regarding the inputs the tourism sector uses and the outputs it produces, and of the economic functioning of this sector in general, allows also to guide the price collecting units of NSOs when it is required to recollect prices. Many of these prices may already be already recollected by NSOs, since they may correspond to products or services already incorporated in the National Consumer Price Index. Therefore, this collaboration would allow for a better recollection of prices or presentation of these statistics that would serve both the purposes of CPI and the elaboration of TSA. Examples of this are the prices of the tourism packages.

The experience of National Accounts Offices can also be used at the time of elaborating the Supply and Use Tables. It is necessary to insist that, at the time of elaborating the Supply Tables, these should have, by definition, a correspondence with the Use Tables. We can see these identities in Table 5 of the Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework, and they are equivalent to the methodology used by the national accounts statisticians in the elaboration of Supply and Use Tables according to SNA 93. However there are different ways of completing these tables. Generally information sources are the ones that in a way or another determinate the elaboration methods. Nevertheless, it is recommended to verify the results obtained through different approaches and to confront the results obtained through them.

Also in the area of National Accounts there is the need to confront the information provided by different sources used when estimating economic activity elaborating the Supply and Use Tables and/or the institutional sector accounts.

The elaboration of the occupation table is another aspect of the elaboration of the TSA where the experience of the National Accounts Offices is valuable. TSA proposes the elaboration of a table of occupation (full time equivalent figures). In principle, one would think that an instrument such as a housing survey or an administrative register, like for instance the example of a labor secretary, could help us to elaborate this table. Even though it is possible to fill this table with the previously mentioned sources, they not only allow us to obtain information regarding the tourism sector but also are useful tools to

validate production value of tourism activities. Moreover, as our understanding of the labor market increases better policy measures related to the activity in this sector can be formulated. On the basis of this information and relating it with the production we can generate labor productivity indicators, intensity of the use of labor work, characteristics of jobs and so on. Such elements will help to verify the observed behavior when measuring the economic activity (gross production value).

In the end, the elaboration of a TSA will also prove to be useful in terms of the quality and accuracy of the data recollected for the purpose of elaborating the national accounts. In Caribbean countries tourism is a very important economic activity. The costs associated with the gathering of the necessary information required for the elaboration of the TSA, due to the already available information that exists nowadays, compared to the benefits resulting from having good information concerning the importance of tourism activities for the overall economic activities of the countries are important to consider. In many cases, the objective of compiling a TSA may allow for improvements in the recompilation of the services statistics, most of the times the less covered sector of the economies to be measured both in terms of value added generated and number of units. Compiling a TSA may be a way to improve services statistics and the measurement of the services sectors in the overall economy.

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