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FINAL REPORT OF THE  
REGIONAL ASSESSMENT MEETING ON INFOPLAN  
(Santiago, Chile, 8-10 November 1982)

Santiago, Chile, 1982





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Summary

Report of the Regional Assessment Meeting on the Information System for Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPLAN), held at CEPAL Headquarters in Santiago, from 8 to 10 November 1982. The objectives of the meeting were: (a) to conduct an overall evaluation of the INFOPLAN project, 1980 to 1982; (b) to identify future project activities in the region, and (c) to evaluate the strategies used in the implementation of a decentralized information system.

The countries participating in the meeting (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela) each presented a paper analysing the manner in which the INFOPLAN project had been carried out and how it had influenced the creation and strengthening of planning information infrastructures at the national level.

The document includes the recommendations resulting from the discussions held, as well as suggestions on future activities of the INFOPLAN system.



## 1. Background of the INFOPLAN system

The INFOPLAN system was developed, within the framework of the ILPES programme on co-operation and co-ordination among planning bodies and the CEPAL horizontal co-operation programme, through a joint CEPAL/CLADES project aimed at strengthening the planning process in Latin America and the Caribbean through the exchange of national experiences with regard to planning in the region.

The project is financed by the IDRC of Canada. CEPAL/CLADES is responsible for its implementation and acts as the General Co-ordinating Centre. The CEPAL system <sup>1/</sup> acts as the regional counterpart and provides its infrastructure of services and professional human resources.

### (a) Definition of the INFOPLAN system

The Information System for Planning is a user-oriented decentralized network of participating and co-operating centres co-ordinated at the regional, subregional and national levels by a General Co-ordinating Centre, a Subregional Co-ordinating Centre and a National Co-ordinating Centre, respectively.

The information units of the ministries or offices of planning, which serve as the national focal point for the INFOPLAN project, act, in their own right, as National Co-ordinating Centres. The Documentation Centre of the CEPAL Office in Port-of-Spain serves as the Subregional Co-ordinating Centre for the Caribbean.

The participating centres consist of the information units of the national planning agencies or agencies of the private or university sector which perform similar functions as regards the compilation of documents concerning the planning of a country's economic and social development and the supply of services to users in the field of planning.

The co-operating centres are the information units or systems of institutions whose work is directly or indirectly concerned with the economic and social development of the country. These may be national, regional or international institutions.

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<sup>1/</sup> The CEPAL system is made up of the Offices of CEPAL, CELADE and ILPES.

(b) Background of the Assessment Meeting

The project has been in operation for two years, 1980-1982. From the beginning it was agreed that at the end of the biennium an evaluation meeting would be held at the regional level for the purpose of studying any obstacles encountered during the implementation of the programme, so as to take them into account in future activities and apply such strategies as might be necessary to consolidate the system throughout the region.

In compliance with this agreement, CEPAL/CLADES convened the national focal points of the countries participating in the INFOPLAN system,<sup>2/</sup> and invited representatives of CEPAL (Santiago and Port-of-Spain), ILPES and IDRC of Canada, to an evaluation meeting. This meeting was held at CEPAL headquarters in Santiago, Chile, from 8-10 November 1982.

A representative of the Central American Institute for Public Administration (ICAP) attended as an observer.

2. Objectives of the meeting

- To carry out an overall evaluation of the INFOPLAN project.
- To identify future alternatives for action for the INFOPLAN project in the region, taking into consideration the obstacles encountered and possible solutions to them.
- To prepare the future programme of action for INFOPLAN in the region in accordance with the needs of the countries as expressed during the meeting.
- To evaluate some of the action strategies used in the INFOPLAN project and their possible application in the implementation of decentralized regional information systems in the field of economic and social development.

3. Opening session

The session was opened by Mr. Jorge Israel, Assistant to the Director of ILPES, who welcomed the participant and explained the importance of the work being carried out jointly by planners and documentalists in order to develop

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<sup>2/</sup> Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.



a fundamental tool for co-operation in the region, as was the INFOPLAN system. He stressed that in addition to allowing for a reappraisal of planning in the region, the data bases and information generated in the countries were clearly being used by the planning agencies and that the scheme of activities and strategies carried out in the implementation of the project had significantly contributed to this. Finally, he stressed that the Assessment Meeting, should consider the model of the INFOPLAN System for other information systems, within the framework of horizontal co-operation in other regions. In closing, he expressed his appreciation for the contribution made by the IDRC of Canada and wished the participants the greatest success in the task they were undertaking.

Following the address by Mr. Israel, Mr. Robert Brown, Deputy Executive Secretary for Co-operation and Support Services of CEPAL, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary, welcomed the participants and stated that CEPAL -created for the purpose of helping the countries of the region to identify and analyse the problems and obstacles that prevented their development and participating with them in the search for alternative solutions- had identified the area of information as a vital point, since the lack of accessibility to a summary or record of progress made and of the successes or failures of the countries in a given area or field of development made it impossible to take advantage of such experiences when decisions had to be made.

The concrete expression of CEPAL's concern in this area was the creation in 1971 of the Latin American Centre for Economic and Social Documentation (CLADES), the launching in 1977 of the DOCPAL Population Information System in CELADE, the creation in 1977 of the Documentation Centre for the Caribbean in the CEPAL Office at Port-of-Spain (CDC) and, finally, the rationalization, since 1980, of the internal handling of information through the creation of the Cataloguing and Indexing Unit in the CEPAL Library.

He added that since the objectives of INFOPLAN fell within the overall objectives of CEPAL and ILPES of seeking to create mechanisms that would allow for greater co-operation and co-ordination among the planning bodies of Latin

CEPAL wished to point out that, beyond the project as such, and its results, the existence of INFOPLAN was an achievement in itself; it was the product of the joint efforts of CEPAL and the specialists of the countries and would make it possible to lay the foundations for an exchange of experiences between planning agencies by strengthening the technical activities required for the INFOPLAN system, i.e., the selection and acquisition of documentation on planning generated in each participating country, the handling of this information and, finally, its timely dissemination, oriented according to the information needs of planning experts.

Finally, he stressed the importance of the work to be done at the meeting, the outcome of which would be decisive in determining the future of INFOPLAN.

The Director of CEPAL/CLADES, Mr. Claudionor Evangelista, welcomed the participants and proceeded to propose that the officers should be elected by acclamation. The following officers were so elected:

Chairman : Celmira Tirado, Venezuela  
Vice-Chairman: Guadalupe Hung, Honduras  
Rapporteur : Stella Castillo, Colombia  
Secretariat : Luisa Johnson, Ximena Feliú and Luis Alba, CLADES



5. First session

Mrs. Johnson described the procedure to be followed for the presentations by participants and the timetable for discussions and presented the list of documents that had been prepared for the meeting relating to the design of the INFOPLAN system, the development of the project and the general guidelines suggested for the evaluation of INFOPLAN and its future projections. She said that the evaluation as such would be carried out at the Round Table to be held on the morning of the last day; the recommendations of the Round Table would be analysed and approved in the afternoon. ILPES, the CEPAL Library and ICAP would also have time to make statements: ILPES as a planner and user of the system, the Library in order to present the new data processing manual for the CEPAL Bibliographic System, and ICAP as a subregional agency concerned with subjects closely related to planning.

Mrs. Johnson then introduced the basic document for the meeting, General Guidelines for the Evaluation of INFOPLAN and its Prospects, stressing the fact that the implementation phase of the INFOPLAN system was still far from having been completed and that in some countries of the region it was only beginning because of the difference in the development of information infrastructures in individual countries. Consequently, the project had set up specific short-term objectives within the framework of one of the overall objectives, i.e., "the strengthening of information infrastructures"; from that standpoint, the tasks carried out -although not at the same stage of development in the information field in all countries- had at least provided an impetus for activities aimed at that goal, a fact which could indeed be considered positive. She added that, as regarded a minimum period for consolidating a regional and decentralized information system such as INFOPLAN, it took more than six years for it to enter the stage of regular operations.

In conclusion, she stressed that the purpose of the meeting was solely to evaluate the development of the project and its impact on the creation and strengthening of planning information infrastructures in the participating countries. The aim was not to evaluate the system itself, which was in the implementation phase. In that regard, she drew attention to chapter II of

document E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.3, concerning the guidelines suggested for measuring the effect of INFOPLAN on the planning information infrastructures of the countries. Those guidelines had been sent to the countries before the Meeting in order that they might be used as a basis for preparing the reports to be presented at the forthcoming sessions. Other aspects considered in the guidelines were joint activities with information units of the planning agency system, streamlining or increasing relations between the national focal points and the authorities of their institution, expanding the basic planning collection, etc. With regard to the latter, she informed participants that CEPAL/CLADES had prepared a working draft of a manual on the selection and acquisition of planning documents, to be used as a working tool by the co-ordinating centres or national focal points in view of the inaccessibility of planning documents; she hoped to hear some comments on this draft.

Finally, she expressed the wish that new countries would join the system once a solution had been found to the problems which, for reasons beyond the control of INFOPLAN, had prevented the identification of national focal points in them.

#### 6. Second session

The second session began with the presentation of reports by the countries participating in the INFOPLAN system.

##### Brazil:

The Brazilian report was introduced by Mrs. Norma Stenzel, Chief of the IPEA/IPLAN Library, who noted that her unit had ample experience with co-ordinated indexing and was studying the possibility of implementing a mechanized data processing system; in that regard, the system proposed by INFOPLAN was an interesting option that would be taken into account. Her unit had applied the CLADES guidelines for the selection of documents. However, because Brazil participated only partially in the system, it was not sufficiently represented in PLANINDEX and therefore the bibliography did not yet constitute a significant supporting instrument for the unit. The visits by CLADES experts had made it possible to strengthen the participation of IPLAN in the system, as well as other aspects of interest to the unit, such as the initiation of a series of activities aimed at organizing the documentation produced by IPLAN.



Colombia:

The Colombian report was presented by Mrs. Stella Castillo, Chief Librarian and Archivist of the National Planning Department, who said that even though the seminar-course to train personnel for the NAPLAN network had not yet been held in Colombia, some progress had been made in developing the system: the standards and procedures for bibliographical descriptions and summaries proposed by INFOPLAN had been incorporated into the data-processing system and work had begun on the preparation of abstracts to be included in PLANINDEX. Activities had also been carried out to disseminate and provide instructions regarding the use of PLANINDEX. One of the most important achievements of the unit during that period had been the preparation of a specialized bibliography on planning in Colombia, covering the years 1950-1981, which contained more than 900 bibliographical references for 23 Colombian institutions. Finally, another very important activity had been initiated, i.e., the identification of national, regional and local government planning agencies.

Costa Rica:

The Costa Rican report was presented by Mrs. Amalia González, Director of the Documentation Centre of the Ministry for National Planning and Economic Policy. She reported on progress made in implementing the network in Costa Rica, such as: expansion of the collection and activities aimed at applying the methodology proposed by INFOPLAN for possible automation in the future. Because of the economic restrictions which had made it impossible to develop data processing more rapidly, contacts had been maintained between the national focal point and the centres participating in the NAPLAN network, which had received the manuals and materials sent by CEPAL/CLADES. Another interesting aspect that should be mentioned was that pertaining to the prospects for organizing the NAPLAN network around the various Executive Secretariats for Sectoral Planning.

Ecuador:

The report for Ecuador was presented by Miss Nancy Vela, Chief of Public Relations of CONADE and of the Vicepresidency of the Republic. She stated that budget cuts had held back the work programme prepared for the last

months of 1982; however, plans had been made for a series of contacts with directors of the institutions to which the units of the network belonged in order to strengthen institutional support for them. So far, documents were exchanged regularly with IETEL, Instituto Estatal de Telecomunicaciones, and the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE.

To supplement her report she also presented the final report of the Technical Meeting on the Structuring and Operations of the National Planning Information Networks. RED/NAPLAN/ECUADOR (Quito, 21-25 June 1982).

#### Guatemala:

The Guatemalan report was presented by Mrs. Ofelia Aguilar, Acting Documentalist for the Documentation Centre of the General Planning Secretariat, SEGEPLAN. She stated that in the area of information, SEGEPLAN had been affected by the austerity measures adopted for the Secretariat, as a result of which the programme of work for the NAPLAN network had been delayed. Nevertheless, significant efforts had been made to compile the documents generated by each of the institutions belonging to the network. The participating information units were still using their own data processing standards, but the national focal point was processing the material to be sent to the General Co-ordinating Centre in accordance with the standards of the INFOPLAN system. Finally, it was hoped that in future it would be possible to make use of the computer availability of SEGEPLAN to set up a data base.

#### Honduras:

The Honduran report was presented by Mrs. Guadalupe Hung, Chief of the Documentation Centre of the Higher Council for Economic Planning, CONSUPLANE. She pointed out that the Centre currently used the manual processing standards proposed by INFOPLAN and was studying the possibility of computerizing data processing. Although resources were limited, consideration was being given to arranging for co-operation from three experts of the institution to collaborate in the Centre's work. With respect to services, dissemination of PLANINDEX had only recently begun, and it would thus be premature to evaluate the advantage of the publication; nevertheless, greater reliability had been evident in the services provided by the Centre. Finally, co-ordination meetings with the network units had been held, as a result of which the exchange of documents had been increased.



Panama:

The report for Panama was presented by Mrs. Nimia de Arosemena, Chief Librarian of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy, MIPPE. She said that the data processing methodologies proposed by INFOPLAN were being applied and technical meetings had been held with the remaining information units in the Ministry. The Centre had sent worksheets to the CEPAL/CLADES General Co-ordination Centre for inclusion in its working methods. PLANINDEX had not been sufficiently disseminated and it was therefore not yet possible to evaluate its usefulness. As regarded the activities of the NAPLAN network, the Documentation Centre received documents from other institutions through the information units, so that the exchange of documents had been strengthened, but unfortunately, the library did not have the necessary capacity to process the documentation generated outside the Ministry. There was a great interest in Panama in using the computer resources that might eventually be made available by the Office of the Controller General for processing bibliographical data.

Paraguay:

The report for Paraguay was presented by Mr. Osvaldo Martínez, Co-ordinator of the Documentation Centre of the Technical Planning Secretariat. He said that, with the training received by the national focal point in Santiago, Chile, it had been possible to apply the INFOPLAN processing methodologies. At the same time, work had begun on the dissemination of PLANINDEX among the Technical Divisions of the Planning Secretariat. Although the seminar-course to launch the NAPLAN network had not yet been carried out, the Centre was in contact with the institutions of the public sector and many institutions in the private sector; he therefore felt that conditions for developing the system in the country were favourable.

Venezuela:

The Venezuelan report was presented by Mrs. Celmira Tirado, Chief Librarian of the Foundation for the Development of the West-Central Region of Venezuela (FUDECO), which was temporarily acting as the national focal point for the project and as co-ordinating centre for the NAPLAN network, in accordance with a CORDIPLAN decision. The National Socio-Economic Information Network (REDINSE) had collaborated in the preliminary activities.

The Centre had its own processing standards, which were not very different from those of INFOPLAN, and was thus able to send information on the INFOPLAN worksheets. Even though the NAPLAN network had only recently been implemented, it had already received some documents from the participating centres and worksheets from one of them. FUDECO, for its part, had also begun sending documents and worksheets to the General Co-ordinating Centre. The Centre was planning a seminar-course for 1983 to strengthen the processing capacity of the network and to carry out activities aimed at standardizing the presentation of documents generated by FUDECO in order to improve control of such documents.

Caribbean Subregion (CARISPLAN):

The CARISPLAN report was presented by Mrs. Wilma Primus, Co-ordinator of the INFOPLAN project for the Caribbean Subregion. In her report she described the current system which, since beginning operations in 1979, had actively involved 14 of the 18 member States of the Caribbean. The national focal points, which co-ordinated around 120 participating centres in the subregion, had been selected at meetings convened by the CDC. CARISPLAN operated with the same decentralization philosophy which characterized the INFOPLAN system; thus, the participating units were responsible for compiling and eventually for editing their own national bibliographies. In general terms, the project had been more easily adopted in those countries that had a plan in the area of information -such as Cuba and Jamaica- where UNESCO activities had reinforced the infrastructures. As was to be expected, it had been more difficult to get the project underway in the smaller countries which did not have those advances. To summarize the status of the project in the region, a comparison had been made of two countries: Jamaica -with a high degree of development in the area of information- and St. Vincent, where there was only one information professional. Another important development had been the incorporation of CARISPLAN activities into the programme of the School of Library Sciences of the University, especially those areas which concerned the handling of documents of the public sector. Data processing was currently being carried out in the CEPAL/Santiago Computer Centre, but the possibility was being studied of processing data in the subregion and thus streamlining the services provided by the system.



Summary:

From the reports presented and the discussion which followed each statement, several important similarities became evident, both as regarded the recognition of obstacles -such as the limited human and financial resources available and the instability of the staff working in the information units- and the acknowledgement of achievements and the consolidation of positive situations, such as the utilization of common technical standards and procedures suggested by the INFOPLAN system, training of personnel, etc.

It was also evident that the project had special characteristics in each country and that these probably depended inter alia on the different degree of development of the information infrastructures existing before the implementation of the project, as well as the relative intensity of the economic problems currently affecting the countries of the region. There was consensus regarding the need to establish increased contact with the national information systems in terms of co-operation and exchange of information and to agree on common criteria regarding the application of technical procedures for the exchange. In the Caribbean subregion, presented as a block by the Subregional Co-ordinating Centre, there were also many similarities between individual countries and differences, inter alia because of the particular geographic characteristics of the subregion and the considerable differences as regards the size of the countries and the degree of development of the information infrastructures.

This presentation was followed by a discussion of the advisability of giving priority to the compilation of the national planning bibliography in each participant country and subsequently publishing it, with the support of CEPAL/CLADES, provided the national co-ordinating centres assumed responsibility for its distribution throughout the country.

7. Third session

This meeting began with a statement by Mrs. Carmen Vera, of the CEPAL/ILPES Library, on Procedures Manual N° 1 of the CEPAL Bibliographic Information System, concerning the use of worksheets; the Bibliographic

Description Worksheet (BDW) and the Content Analysis Worksheet (CAW). She pointed out that the Manual had been prepared basically for use in the CEPAL Bibliographic Information System, but in its preparation consideration had also been given to the possibility of its being used by libraries and documentation centres in the region. The existing bibliographic data bases of CEPAL, including the INFOPLAN data base, were the product of the experience and work done by the institution over the last decade. CLADES, created in 1971, and DOCPAL, created in 1976, and the CEPAL/ILPES Library, which had closed its traditional catalogs in order to create the data base in 1978, had each undertaken separately the task of organizing the information to be put into the computer. However, the fact that three units had used the Integrated Set of Information Systems (ISIS) as a data storage and retrieval system made it possible to make all the different data bases compatible.

The experience gained separately by the information units involved, each of which had different objectives and different users, had enriched the work of making the systems compatible. As a result, the common methodologies used were more rational and effective.

Finally, the Manual was distributed to participants in the meeting for their comments.

Mr. Edgar Ortégón, of ILPES, then addressed the Meeting on the subject of ILPES and information on planning. He referred, first of all, to the role of ILPES in the region, stressing the work which the Institute had done in the area of advisory services in economic and social planning and research on the current status of planning, public enterprises, the establishment of medium- and long-term compatibility, participation in planning, etc.

The training courses carried out both at ILPES headquarters in Santiago, Chile, and in countries requesting them made it possible to adjust programme content to the development planning needs of the countries and to accumulate experience that was invaluable both to the region as a whole and to INFOPLAN specifically.



The INFOPLAN system had been implemented in response to the express needs of the planning agencies of the countries of the region, channelled through the project carried out by CEPAL/CLADES with the contribution of ILPES. Speaking as a planner, he stressed the importance of information on planning as a means of reducing uncertainty in decision-making and of increasing accuracy in the programming activities leading to the integral development of the countries.

Information -as a reflection of experiences gained in planning, which made it possible to achieve a continuous, dynamic and cumulative process that would significantly avoid or reduce the scattering of State efforts by making available an essential instrument for analysing the relative value of experiences and methods applied to the planning process.

With respect to the latter, progress had been made in some areas and there were limitations in others, e.g., technical and methodological progress had been made with regard to the objective-means ratio and there were limitations in the operational field of planning. One of those limitations was closely related to the amount of information available to the planner; the information system must reduce the scope of other limitations by compiling, processing, analysing and disseminating such information as was relevant to the needs of the planner. Nevertheless, it was important to bear in mind that the user of information was the person most affected by the services of an information system and, therefore, the efficiency requirements of such a system were directly related to the confidence the user could have as regarded the coverage, availability and timeliness of the information required. Finally, as a user of the INFOPLAN system, he stressed that it was more important to obtain a timely reference on the existence of a given document than to wait a long time for a perfect description of it. In that regard, he suggested that future action under the system should concentrate on the services aspects of INFOPLAN.

#### 8. Fourth session

Round Table: Projections of INFOPLAN.

The Chairman, Mrs. Celmira Tirado, reported that the objective of the Round Table was to discuss and analyse the major problems and achievements

of the INFOPLAN system on the basis of the experiences reported by the countries participating in the Assessment Meeting, in order to identify possible solutions and mechanisms and to draw up such recommendations as might be pertinent.

In order to allow for an orderly study and follow-up on the discussion, the following major subject areas had been outlined.

A. The treatment of information

- (1) Input of data
- (2) Processing
- (3) Services

B. General co-ordination and technical support

- (1) From the General Co-ordinating Centre towards the national focal points
- (2) Training and technical advisory activities
- (3) Promotion and communications
- (4) Supply of materials and support elements
- (5) Political support strategies

C. Organization and co-ordination of the system in the countries

- (1) Co-ordination of the national focal point with the information units and the authorities of the institution
- (2) Co-ordination of the NAPLAN network in the country and co-ordination of the NAPLAN network with national and/or regional and international systems.

There was a debate on the agenda items and the secretariat proposed that in order to organize the subjects considered as conclusions and recommendations, a list should be made, during a brief recess, of the problems and solutions on which there was consensus. This suggestion was approved and at the agreed time, a list was distributed to guide the drafting of conclusions and recommendations.

A. Treatment of information

- Absence of criteria for the selection of information for PLANINDEX.
- Recording of information for multiple formats.



- Disparity in the assimilation of data-processing techniques and methodologies offered by CLADES.
- Definition of the processing of national bibliographies.
- Processing of material in Portuguese.
- Study of planning terminology.
- Lack of use and knowledge of PLANINDEX.

B. General co-ordination and technical support

- Lack of expeditious communication between the Regional Co-ordinating Centre and the focal points and vice versa.
- Strengthening of training and technical advisory activities.
- Timeliness of the materials received.
- Scarcity of financial and human resources.
- Mobility and instability of staff members appointed to a focal point.
- Programming of joint activities among the co-ordinating centres of the system.
- Permanent reporting of the Regional Co-ordinating Centre to the national authorities on the progress of the system.
- Promotion of the INFOPLAN system and of the use of products through pamphlets, posters, bulletins, etc.
- Follow-up activities of the system.
- Inclusion of the Schools of Library Sciences of the countries in the training activities of INFOPLAN.
- Integration of INFOPLAN training with government training programmes.

C. Organization and co-ordination of the system in the countries

- Absence of an administrative framework to facilitate participation in the NAPLAN network.
- Lack of integration of the project to activities of the institution.
- Carrying out of user studies.
- Linkage of the NAPLAN network with the national information programme and sectoral and regional systems.
- Absence of service strategies for internal and external users.

The discussion was then organized around the three major topics. It was agreed, in order to save time, that the countries should meet to prepare draft conclusions and recommendations. These were then submitted for consideration by the officers and by participants, who, after making minor changes, adopted the following text.

### Conclusions and recommendations

#### A. Treatment of information

The limitations of the INFOPLAN system noted by the countries in their consideration of this subject and the most common problems encountered were summarized as follows:

1. Limitations in the capacity of INFOPLAN and the NAPLAN networks in connection with information processing.
2. Obstacles related to the limitation of the planning procedure in the OECD Macrothesaurus.
3. Limitation related to the use of the PLANINDEX in Brazil due to the language barrier.
4. Lack of use and awareness of PLANINDEX and of the existing data bases in the field of planning as instruments for data retrieval.
5. Lack of knowledge concerning the planning discipline on the part of the professionals responsible for the information units in the NAPLAN networks.
6. Shortage of specialized manpower on information in the libraries and documentation centres and constant rotation of that manpower.

#### Proposals concerning the problems declared

- (a) Rescheduling of the time allotted to subject matter covered by the INFOPLAN training programme and to the workshops in the programme.
- (b) The need for the national focal points to lay stress on the inventories and registers of the planning documentation generated by the countries.
- (c) Consideration of the possibility of dispatching data in a format used by other systems if those systems are compatible.
- (d) Orientation of training to the needs of the components of the NAPLAN network in each country.



### Recommendations

1. Considering that manpower training is indispensable for achieving a system of data processing of the same quality and standards in the institutions belonging to the NAPLAN networks, it is recommended:
  - (i) That CEPAL/CLADES work with the national focal point in programming the type and duration of courses required in order to increase the processing capacity of the information units with a view to ensuring that the output is standardized and interchangeable.
2. Considering that manpower training is a permanent activity of the INFOPLAN system in its technical support component and mindful of the multiplier effect which this activity can have in the countries if it is incorporated in the training programme of the governments and in the curricula of the library science schools of the countries as a practical exercise in information systems, it is recommended:
  - (i) That CEPAL/CLADES make available to governments and national schools of library science a training kit designed with enough flexibility to enable each country to incorporate into it whatever technical details it may consider necessary as decided upon in conjunction with CEPAL/CLADES or with government personnel or the staff of the schools of library science.
  - (ii) That those responsible for the focal points and/or information units participate as national counterparts in the capacity of instructors in the courses given by the INFOPLAN system, the objective being to train technical staff at national level.
  - (iii) That consideration be given to including the following subjects in the INFOPLAN training programme:
    - planning and its terminology
    - the organization and administration of NAPLAN networks
  - (iv) That the INFOPLAN training programme consider the possibility of special courses for those responsible for technical operation, with emphasis on the use of the Macrothesaurus, DEVSIS categories, etc.

3. Considering that the services constitute a facility for the permanent evaluation of the information systems and recognizing the deficiencies in the use of the CEPAL/CLADES data bases and PLANINDEX, it is recommended:

- (i) That CEPAL/CLADES study and make suggestions concerning the machinery needed to improve and ensure the smooth operation of the services which the countries can offer their planners/users on the basis of these two facilities.
- (ii) That Portuguese be included as an official language of INFOPLAN.
- (iii) That each country prepare a national bibliography in the field of planning, in accordance with INFOPLAN standards, for publication and distribution by CEPAL/CLADES in the region.
- (iv) That CEPAL/CLADES co-operate with Brazilian institutions in studies related to the compatibilization of the formats used in Brazil.
- (v) That the national focal points assume the responsibility for distributing PLANINDEX to national institutions.

B. General co-ordination and technical support

On the basis of the countries' consideration of this topic, it is recognized that:

- 1. Communications between the Regional Co-ordinating Centre and the national focal points are weak, although this has not always been the fault of the Centre but of the means of communication existing in the region.
- 2. The General Co-ordinating Centre has been inadequately supervising the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the reciprocal agreements reached with the national focal points.
- 3. It has been difficult to consolidate the system's national focal points because the staff made responsible for them is frequently moved and suffers from job instability.
- 4. The national focal points lack training and experience in administration of the networks.



Proposals concerning the problems stated

- (a) Joint programming of activities by the General Co-ordinating Centre, the National Co-ordinating Centres and the Subregional Co-ordinating Centres.
- (b) The establishment of a continuous flow of information from the Regional Co-ordinating Centre to the national authorities concerning the state of the INFOPLAN system.
- (c) Preparation by the General Co-ordinating Centre of information sheets, bulletins, etc.

Recommendations

1. Considering that communications between the CEPAL/CLADES General Co-ordinating Centre and the national focal points must be rapid and continuous if the problems which arise in the NAPLAN networks are to be detected, it is recommended that:
  - (i) Because of the difficulties related to the available means of communication, such as the postal services, and the high cost of communication by telephone:
    - the national focal points send CEPAL/CLADES a periodic progress report at least twice a year, and
  - (ii) On the basis of the problems referred to in these reports, CEPAL/CLADES work with the national focal points in programming activities in such fields as training, technical advisory services, dispatch of materials, etc., aimed at the solution of those problems.
2. Considering that as national co-ordinating centres of the NAPLAN networks, the national focal points need strong support from the institutional authorities in asking the participating information units to devote one working day or part of one day to the activities required by the network, it is recommended:
  - (i) That in so far as possible, CEPAL/CLADES and ILPES stay in continuous contact with the planning authorities through reports, communications and personal interviews, in order to keep them informed concerning

the operation of the system, the state of development of the NAPLAN networks, their accomplishments and the services they offer and ensure that those authorities co-operate by dispatching the notes required for participation in the system.

- (ii) That CEPAL/CLADES study the possibility of IDRC's joining the governments in financing national projects aimed at strengthening the NAPLAN networks.
- (iii) That in the training courses it conducts in the region, ILPES provide information concerning the INFOPLAN system and its activities.
- (iv) That in the forthcoming meetings of the ministers of planning, support be requested for the NAPLAN networks and national focal points and that an official agreement regarding country participation in the INFOPLAN system be proposed.

C. Organization and co-ordination of the system in the countries

The following conclusions were drawn from the countries' analysis of the subject:

1. That there is a lack of basic organizational guidelines to help the national focal point to co-ordinate NAPLAN network activities.
2. That an administrative-legal framework is needed to enable those responsible for the information units in the NAPLAN network to meet the time and resource requirements for their full participation in the network.
3. That it is difficult for the information units in the NAPLAN network to participate simultaneously in regional information systems which are not sufficiently compatible.

Recommendations

1. That the regional information systems should intensify their co-ordination and co-operation activities with a view to ensuring that the techniques, methodologies and formats they offer the countries of the region are compatible.



2. That CEPAL/CLADES, together with the national focal points and other related regional information systems, should study the possibility of scheduling annual technical working meetings for evaluation and co-ordination.
3. That CEPAL/CLADES, together with the Subregional Co-ordinating Centre, should study the application of mechanisms to enable the participating countries in a subregion to take part in activities programmed by the Co-ordinating Centres of other subregions.

9. Closing session

The Chairman of the Meeting offered the floor to the representative of ICAP, Mr. Win Crowther, who described the work done by the Institute, stressing the similarity between the subject matter with which it was concerned in Central America and that with which INFOPLAN was concerned. He felt the appropriate conditions existed for joint work on the basis of concerted co-operation and co-ordination.

Mrs. Tirado then expressed her appreciation for her nomination. On behalf of the countries represented, she expressed her appreciation to CEPAL, to ILPES and to IDRC for the opportunity to discuss the achievements and projections of the INFOPLAN system, which was so important to the region.

Mrs. Martha Stone, of IDRC, then expressed her satisfaction with the organization of the meeting, which had enabled her to see firsthand the effect of the INFOPLAN system in the countries and thus to measure the contribution it had made to the national information infrastructures. The enthusiasm with which the participants had worked at the meeting was a reflection of each one's work in the individual information units and of the fact that despite the limitations or restrictions they had to face, there was a reality which must be continued and improved with the individual and co-operative support of the institutions participating in the system. To this end, she offered all her co-operation in ensuring that the INFOPLAN system might be consolidated, within a short time, both in the region and in each individual country.

The Director of CLADES, Mr. Claudionor Evangelista, emphasized the importance of the meeting for the future of INFOPLAN and of the countries proposals for the reorientation of the system. He thanked both the administrative staff and the participants for their collaboration in contributing to the success of the meeting.

Finally, Mr. Robert Brown, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretariat of CEPAL, expressed his appreciation to the representatives of the countries, of IDRC, of ILPES and of ICAP and declared the Meeting closed.



**ANNEXES**

ANNEXES

Annex 1

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- Mrs. Carmen Vera, Librarian, CEPAL/ILPE Library
- Mr. José Bana, Supervisor Cataloguing Unit, CEPAL/ILPE Library



Annex 2

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. The implementation of the INFOPLAN System in the region: proposal for a methodological approach to evaluation.
2. The development of the INFOPLAN System in the participating countries: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.
3. The development of the Planning Information System in the Caribbean subregion: CARISPLAN.
4. INFOPLAN and the CEPAL Common Bibliographical System: new format and manual on recording of information.
5. PLANINDEX as an information service: assessment by an ILPES planner.
6. The system's projections for the future: consolidation of INFOPLAN in the countries and alternative ways of developing.

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Annex 3

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Purpose of the meeting:

- To assess the development of the INFOPLAN project in the region.
- To study the obstacles encountered with a view to taking them into consideration in the strategies to be applied in the performance of future activities in connection with the implementation of related information systems in the region.

Objectives of the meeting:

- To carry out a global assessment of the INFOPLAN project.
- To identify future alternatives for action under the INFOPLAN project in the region, taking into consideration the obstacles encountered and possible solutions to them.
- To prepare a future programme of action for INFOPLAN in the region in accordance with needs of the countries as brought out in the meeting.
- To assess some of the action strategies employed in the INFOPLAN project and their possible application in the implementation of decentralized regional information systems in the field of economic and social development.

Monday, 8 November

Morning:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 09:30 | Registration of participants   |
| 10:00 | Opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ILPES</li><li>- Executive Secretariat</li></ul> |
| 10:45 | Coffee break   |
| 11:00 | Election of Officers   |
| 11:15 | Presentation of basic document   |

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Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores  
Mexico

Annex 4

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.1	Provisional Agenda.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.2	CEPAL/CLADES. Development of the Project on "Planning Information System in Latin America and the Caribbean".
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.3	CEPAL/CLADES. General guidelines for the evaluation of INFOPLAN and its prospects.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.4	CEPAL/CLADES. Manual of selection and acquisition of documents for the Planning Information System (INFOPLAN).
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.5	González Valle, Amalia. Comentarios a las pautas generales para solicitar información a los países participantes en INFOPLAN.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.6	Arosemena, Nimia G. de. Participación de Panamá en INFOPLAN.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.7	Martínez, Osvaldo. Participación de Paraguay en INFOPLAN.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.8	Hung, Guadalupe. Efectos de INFOPLAN en la infraestructura de información de Honduras.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.9	Stenzel, Norma. Efeitos do INFOPLAN na infraestrutura de informacao para o planejamento no Brasil.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.10	Castillo, Stella. Informe de actividades de la Red Nacional de Información para la Planificación de Colombia.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.11	ICAP. Sistema de Información y Documentación Centroamericano en Administración Pública (SIDCAP).
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E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.13	Vela, Nancy. Informe de la Red Nacional de Planificación en Ecuador.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.14	Ortegón, Edgar. El ILPES y la información para la planificación.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.15	Conclusions and recommendations.
E/CEPAL/CLADES/L.13	Final Report of the Regional Assessment Meeting on
E/CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.16	INFOPLAN.



Annex A

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.1 Provisional Agenda
2. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.2 Development of the Project on "Planning Information System in Latin America and the Caribbean"
3. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.3 General Guidelines for the evaluation of INFOPLAN and its prospects
4. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.4 Manual of selection and acquisition of documents for the Planning Information System (INFOPLAN)
5. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.5 Committee of Experts. Comments on the paper generated for the Planning Information System and participation in INFOPLAN
6. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.6 Agreement, Lima, 1968. Participation in the Plan in INFOPLAN
7. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.7 Martínez, Gervasio. Participación de Paraguay en INFOPLAN
8. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.8 Horta, Gervasio. Efectos de INFOPLAN en la infraestructura de información de Honduras
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12. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.12 Tizho, Celmar. Informe de las actividades cumplidas por Venezuela en el marco de INFOPLAN
13. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.13 Vela, Nancy. Informe de la Red Nacional de Planificación en Ecuador
14. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.14 Dirección, Edgar. El IFIP y la información para la planificación
15. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.15 Conclusions and recommendations
16. CEPAL/CLADES/SEM.1/R.16 Final Report of the Regional Assessment Meeting on INFOPLAN

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