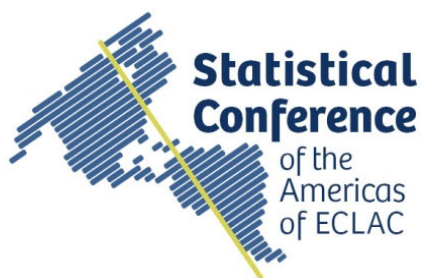




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**REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Virtual meeting, 7–8 April 2021

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The twentieth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was held virtually from 7–8 April 2021.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States serving as members of the Executive Committee: Colombia, serving as Chair, and Canada, Chile, Grenada, Italy, Jamaica and Mexico.

3. Also attending were representatives of the following member countries of the Conference: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Suriname and Uruguay.

4. The following associate members of ECLAC were also represented: Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

5. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were the Resident Coordinator for Honduras and representatives of the Statistics Division, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Development Coordination Office.

6. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the meeting: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Bank.

7. Also present at the meeting were representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Andean Community (CAN), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), European Union, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

¹ See the full list of participants in annex 2.

Chair

8. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

B. AGENDA

9. The Executive Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Presentation and discussion of substantive issues:
 - (a) Statistical challenges of development in transition
 - (b) Towards the production of official statistics based on the measurement of perceptions
 - (c) Peer review mechanisms to strengthen statistical institutions in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic
 - (d) Innovations in the production of environmental statistics
 3. Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2020–2021, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC
 4. Report by the secretariat on the regional follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the dissemination of regional statistics
 5. Other matters
 6. Consideration and adoption of agreements

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

10. At the opening session, statements were made by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC; and Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division.

11. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the meeting was being held amid the most severe crisis in recent decades, caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Poverty, extreme poverty and inequality had increased in the region, and employment and labour participation rates had declined, especially among women, informal workers, young people and migrants. In the Caribbean, the situation was exacerbated by high levels of public debt, the repercussions of the pandemic on key sectors of the economy and the disproportionate vulnerability to climate change and disasters. In that framework,

the importance of having timely and reliable official statistics to monitor the pandemic, identify the most vulnerable groups and measure the impact of policies on living conditions was evident, and georeferencing and data disaggregation were essential for targeting initiatives in those areas. She said that the meeting would also discuss a novel approach concerning the measurement of perceptions in relation to a number of policy and welfare issues. Noting the importance of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses, she underscored the importance of ensuring that the requisite financial and human resources were allocated to ensure that they were carried out despite the current challenges.

12. Regarding the work of the Conference, the Executive Secretary highlighted the preparation of methodological documents on topics specific to each Working Group, the virtual talks held within the framework of the Knowledge Transfer Network and the update of the CEPALSTAT platform, as well as the development of an integrated statistics and geospatial information system, a milestone on the road map established by the Conference in conjunction with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas. She underscored the importance of environmental statistics, noting that in order to move towards a more sustainable pattern of development, statistical information was needed to be able to keep track of the conservation status of natural heritage and monitor international commitments to reduce carbon emissions. It was also essential to measure the impact and extent of natural disasters, and thus gauge the costs and areas most affected, to facilitate reconstruction. Lastly, acknowledging the commitment of the statistical community and its willingness to join efforts to achieve common objectives, she reiterated the Commission's support for those efforts and its commitment to the "Caribbean first" strategy to accompany the subregion on the road to sustainable recovery with equality.

13. The Director-General of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia said that during the pandemic, all users of information had highlighted the role of official statistics in guiding public policies that were people-centred, community-based and focused on the challenging concept of well-being. He mentioned three main points, which he hoped would guide the discussions at the meeting. First, he underscored that official statistics had the capacity to shed light on day-to-day realities and territorial gaps and to raise awareness of the importance of differential approaches based on gender, ethnicity and other factors that became more visible in the context of recovery, and added that progress was needed in the production of sufficiently disaggregated information to ensure that such information could be used in the design of public policies on sustainable development. Second, he highlighted the need to strengthen regional institutions to enable them to face evolving challenges. It was important to prepare for dialogue and coordination that would involve new sources of information, not only from the public sector, but also from the private sector and citizens, in collaborative approaches with statistical offices serving as guarantors of the confidentiality and quality of said new information. Third, an interdisciplinary approach was a crucial principle for tackling the complex challenges related to recovery and he said that the Conference had the capacity to face that challenge. Lastly, he hoped that the region could develop a shared narrative that would make the Conference not only a community of learning and innovation but also a social laboratory for the production of relevant, timely and reliable statistics, based on such an interdisciplinary approach.

14. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division said that his division and ECLAC had worked together closely on the review of the System of National Accounts by 2025, the International Comparison Programme and price statistics, and the recently adopted System of Environmental Economic Accounting. Statistical work in the region was a leading example and influence for the global statistical community in two areas: CEPALSTAT and the mainstreaming of gender and gender statistics by the Statistical Conference of the Americas. Although the pandemic had disrupted statistical data collection exercises, it would result in a "new and improved" normal. One of the biggest commitments of the United Nations Statistics Division was to work on a new capacity-building programme for all countries

around the world, especially least developed countries and small island developing States. It was also working closely with the World Bank on a new global financing mechanism and would try to contribute the substantive background to a better future statistical world.

Presentation and discussion of substantive issues (agenda item 2)

(a) Statistical challenges of development in transition

15. The discussion under this item was moderated by Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. He said that the high-level dialogue aimed to address the challenges of statistical production facing the countries of the region, as statistical production could help to overcome the four traps identified in development in transition: the environment, institutions, productivity and social vulnerability.

High-level dialogue on development in transition

16. Participating in the high-level dialogue were Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; Mario Pezzini, Director of the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and Jolita Butkeviciene, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission.

17. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC referred to the role of data in strengthening and renewing cooperation. She said that moving beyond the use of gross domestic product (GDP) to measure development was a matter of urgency. Income was not a good proxy indicator for development, especially for transition countries, as it did not reflect savings capacity, and countries' domestic resource mobilization capacity varied. The concept of development in transition brought to the fore four structural traps related to productivity, social vulnerability, institutions and the environment. She elaborated on the need to develop new metrics to assess countries' development, highlighting some of the progress made by ECLAC, OECD and the United Nations. It was vital to move towards a new development pattern and a paradigm shift in international cooperation, and she referred to three proposals for debt relief and restructuring for countries with climate vulnerability and heavy interest payment burdens: extension of the debt service suspension initiative to vulnerable middle-income countries, debt relief for the Caribbean and advocacy for the establishment of an international mechanism for the restructuring of sovereign debt. In that context, given the importance of using measurements to raise awareness, the indicators for development in transition should be multidimensional and based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

18. The Director of the OECD Development Centre recalled the origins of the discussions on development in transition, when the countries graduated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee in 2017 had noted that they still faced significant challenges and that other dimensions, not just GDP, should be taken into account. He stressed that in that context statistics were of great importance, and that it was not a question of simply wanting what was measured, but of measuring what was wanted. Relevant indicators were needed and national averages often concealed large gaps. The cooperation system was changing, and there were new stakeholders and goals, in line with the SDGs. He also said that indicators must be adapted to the regional context and noted that ECLAC played a fundamental role in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lastly, he underscored that it was vital to discuss the issues in cooperation with transition countries in order to address traps and determine what policies were needed.

19. The Director for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission highlighted the work carried out with ECLAC and the OECD Development Centre over the last four years, in response to the need to measure development beyond economic growth. She stressed that a multidimensional approach was needed and that the logic by which development was measured in Latin America and the Caribbean was not the same as in Europe. Econometric models were useful for understanding logics, but were not designed to interpret complete realities, as they masked some perspectives. The relationship with countries must not be established on the basis of a single growth indicator; an analysis of advantages and disadvantages, dimensions of well-being and a more complex view of development processes must be incorporated. For the European Union, it was an opportunity to develop a more strategic approach to its international relations, which it had built around the concept of international partnerships. She mentioned the milestones that had shaped a new discourse on developing processes: the document *Latin American Economic Outlook 2019: Development in Transition*; a regional initiative under way on alternative well-being indicators; the “social mobility” initiative led by ECLAC, aimed at consolidating a dynamic narrative on the main determinants of inequality in the region; and a project to assess the impact of the pandemic and recovery processes, which was being implemented in 2021.

20. In the comments that followed, the representative of Peru said that those initiatives were in line with the vision of development in transition. The paradigm shift was a major one and highlighted the gaps that existed in the region. He said that in Peru, productivity problems had been further exacerbated by the pandemic: the informal sector currently accounted for 70% of the labour force, and more than 50% of the population was vulnerable or in poverty. In that regard, the various challenges Peru was facing also complicated the measurement of environmental statistics. He added that national statistical offices should advocate for expanded legal frameworks on access to data and administrative records.

New perspectives on measuring productivity

21. The topic was presented by Sebastián Nieto Parra, Head of the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit at the OECD Development Centre, and Sebastián Rovira, Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC.

22. The OECD representative began by saying that a vision of development beyond the GDP metric called for the use of indicators with multidimensional perspectives that measured well-being in a way that various levels of per capita GDP could not. Indicators such as health and safety were examples. As income increased, new dimensions in the measurement of development emerged that showed disparities within and between countries with the same income levels, illustrating disparate realities.

23. The representative of ECLAC said that the region was facing four development traps relating to social vulnerability, productivity, the environment and institutions. The pandemic would exacerbate issues that characterized the region’s countries, such as social vulnerability. The effect on the middle class, in particular, would be seen in indicators such as job quality or wage levels, which traditional productivity metrics did not measure. Technology and environmental indicators were among those that needed to be developed to improve the measurement of productivity.

(b) Towards the production of official statistics based on the measurement of perceptions

24. The debate was moderated by Macarena Alvarado, Head of the Social Observatory Division of the Ministry of Social Development and Family of Chile. She began by saying that the study on well-being had gone beyond the socioeconomic characteristics of households and individuals, and there was an increasing need to understand how people fared, felt and lived in the societies of which they were a part. Given the requirement for

information, the debate would aim to analyse the role of surveys and the measurement of perception in the world and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

25. Introducing the topic, Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC said that it was imperative to move forward in the production of official statistics based on perceptions, taking into account the contrast between the data requirements established by the SDGs and other international initiatives and the lack of availability of such information from official sources in the region. He therefore proposed that, within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, steps should be taken to establish a working group with a mandate to help to prioritize and harmonize such indicators in the region and one of its tasks would be to prepare a basic questionnaire for measuring perceptions.

Presentation: “Why do people’s perceptions matter, and how can we measure them?”

26. The presentation was made by Carrie Exton, Head of Well-Being Data Insights and Policy Practice of OECD. She said that perception indicators provided an opportunity to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation of quality of life as they complemented the customary methods for measuring well-being. The main methodological challenge for the regional statistical system was to achieve constant and comparable measurements both within and between countries. Lastly, she said that one source of error was faulty questionnaire design, which had prompted OECD to develop methodological guides and model questionnaires based on good practice in that area.

Presentation on the measurement of subjective well-being by INEGI

27. The presentation was made by Gerardo Leyva Parra, Deputy Director General for Research, National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico. Describing the experience of INEGI, he underlined the influence of OECD guidelines on both the origins and the development of the Institute’s line of work, and spoke of the work done using sources such as the Self-Reported Well-being Module (BIARE) of the national survey, which had pilot, basic and extended modules, the national time-use survey and the tool that measured the mood of Twitter users. He said that the well-being indicators used provided information not captured by conventional economic metrics and had gained the interest of the press and academia. However, he also noted that there was still a long way to go before that information was seen as official statistics and not just experimental, and stressed the need to strengthen the link between subjective measures of well-being and public policies.

Presentation: “Measurement of perceptions in the National Multipurpose Household Survey of Ecuador, 2018–2020”

28. The presentation was made by David Sánchez, Technical General Coordinator for Statistical Production, National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Ecuador. He spoke of the experience in the use of subjective indicators in measuring the progress in meeting the goals of Ecuador’s National Development Plan. The indicators were selected by a special statistical committee with the participation of various sectors public policy, and the requisite questions for their production had been included in the National Multipurpose Household Survey, launched in 2017. The representative of INEC of Ecuador concluded his presentation by expressing support for the Commission’s proposal for the establishment of a working group to measure well-being on the basis of perceptions in Latin America.

29. In the round of questions and answers, the representative of OECD said that face-to-face surveys were in principle the best tool for determining perceptions, although further studies should also be carried out to assess the effect of different data collection methods on the quality of responses. While all the

speakers agreed that the measurement of well-being in social networks was a promising area, they noted some limitations concerning this type of information. Those included the difficulties in carrying out relevant disaggregations and the poor representativeness of samples. In closing, the Director-General of DANE of Colombia said that it was time to dismiss the notion that perceptions should not be measured. He welcomed the contribution of the OECD guidelines for designing question modules on well-being in the region and supported the proposal by ECLAC for the establishment of a working group on measuring perceptions in the region.

(c) Peer review mechanisms to strengthen statistical institutions in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

30. The debate was moderated by Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC. The aim was to discuss how to develop mechanisms for strengthening statistical production and the institutional framework of national statistical systems.

31. The topic was introduced by Xavier Mancero, Chief of the Social Statistics Unit of the Statistics Division of ECLAC. He said that under the peer review mechanism, reviews were conducted by others working in the same field and able to carry out audits. Peer review mechanisms had been integrated in the Statistical Conference of the Americas in the framework of the overall assessments of the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted in 2011. The process had been led by the Working Group on Institution-building and had been applied in eight volunteer countries. Subsequently, two consultations had been held on the progress of the improvement and implementation of the Code in 2013 and 2017, in addition to the creation of the regional databank of good statistical practices for Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim at that time was to determine the possibility and relevance of creating a peer review mechanism that could be developed on a more continuous basis in the context of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and to establish the interrelation of such a mechanism with other processes carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean (such as the planned CARICOM peer review) and with the various self-assessment tools used in the region.

Presentation: "Peer reviews in the European statistical system – insights into the mechanism used in the past and in the future"

32. The presentation on the peer review mechanism in the European statistical system was made by Claudia Junker, Head of the Task Force on Peer Reviews and Quality at Eurostat. The first round of the peer review had been held following the adoption of the first version of the European Statistics Code of Practice (2005) and conducted by internal experts of the European statistical system. Following the first round of assessments, an updated Code of Practice was published in 2011 and used as a reference for the second round of peer reviews. The second round of peer reviews was conducted by external experts, with more of an audit-like approach. It was based on a more wide-reaching self-assessment, involving not only the national statistical office of the country being assessed, but also other institutions producing statistics. The third round, whose launch was imminent, would involve a panel of both internal and external experts and entail a combination of peer review and audit. Among the lessons learned were the need to complement the Code of Practice with a quality assurance framework; the importance of participation by experts from national statistical offices; the need for as many standard documents as possible that explained methodologies and the harmonization thereof; and the crucial nature of government support for those processes.

Presentation entitled “El Instrumento de Evaluación de Capacidad Estadística (TASC): un punto de partida para iniciar el trabajo”

33. The presentation was made by José Antonio Mejía, Modernization of the State Lead Specialist at Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). He began by noting that the main challenge was ensuring that statistical capacity assessments were actionable to allow for progress, improvement and change. From that perspective, review processes must be equipped with a set of tools to be incorporated in three stages: (i) the establishment of priorities, (ii) an in-depth analysis from which concrete recommendations in specific areas of work could be made, and (iii) the formulation of work plans. Self-assessment tools such as the Tool for Assessing Statistical Capacity (TASC) or Eurostat’s Snapshot were very useful for establishing priorities. Peer review could subsequently be used for in-depth analysis and concrete recommendations in specific areas of work. The purpose of TASC was to measure the capacity of national statistical offices to develop basic statistics, and it made it possible to conduct assessments over time, rather than comparisons between countries. It did not cover the national statistical system in its entirety. TASC was administered through 10 modules which were filled out by the experts working in each area (or module) individually or in groups, as appropriate. The tool had already been used in 23 countries and the results had translated into strategies for improvement.

Panel of countries on lessons learned from the peer review in the region

34. The panellists were Diana Castillo-Trejo, Acting Director-General of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB); Susie Fortier, Director of the International Cooperation and Methodology Innovation Centre of Statistics Canada; Leesha Delatie-Budair, Deputy Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica; and Iván Ojeda, National Director of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Paraguay.

35. First, a question was addressed to the Acting Director-General of the Statistical Institute of Belize regarding the balance between the benefits of peer review for a small national statistical office and the possible perception that the office’s performance was being judged. She said that in her experience, peer review could be perceived as criticism, since small organizations had to make the most of limited resources, so there could be a tendency to be defensive. However, not heeding the comments from peer reviews was a failure to practice what was preached and did a disservice to stakeholders. Taking into account the results of the peer reviews was the starting point for improvement.

36. The Director of the International Cooperation and Methodology Innovation Centre of Statistics Canada said that while strengthening national statistical institutions must always be a priority, the data revolution and the current global context had made that need more apparent. Statistics Canada had participated in three peer reviews, with Mexico, OECD as a reviewee, and Dominica. In general, reviews had been approached as a peer learning process and as an assessment. The value added went beyond best practices in that it prompted reflection on institutions’ own experiences, leading to a process of comparative assessment, re-examination and continuous improvement. In the case of Dominica, the review had been based on others conducted between institutions both within the country and externally. This showed that revisions did not always have to start from scratch, but could and should build on a foundation that different tools could provide.

37. The Deputy Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, replying to a question on peer review mechanisms in the Caribbean context, said that Jamaica had participated in peer reviews in the context of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and there were many similarities with the incipient process in the Caribbean, for which a CARICOM code of good practice existed. There were synergies to be had to improve the peer review process in the CARICOM region.

38. The National Director of INE of Paraguay, replying to a question on the benefits of peer reviews, said that they were a tremendous opportunity for national statistical offices to obtain quality certification. There were private sector agencies generating statistics that would have to be formalized at some point, and peer reviews could help to build production capacity based on the fundamental principles of official statistics.

39. In response to the general question posed to the panellists on the complementarity or possible overlap between self-assessment and peer review processes, the Deputy Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica said that the two were complementary. Self-assessment could be skewed by the benchmark used and did not necessarily align with the public perception of the institution, so linking it with peer review gave a broader perspective. The Director of the International Cooperation and Methodology Innovation Centre of Statistics Canada said that self-assessments, which must be carried out with a clear understanding of what was to be assessed and why, laid the groundwork for peer review. That allowed for clearer and more shareable good practice. The National Director of INE Paraguay agreed that the processes were complementary, as it was important to understand how the institution saw itself, but also how other stakeholders, both national and international, saw the institution.

40. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Italy said that peer review was not only important for evaluating compliance with codes of good practice but was also an occasion to strengthen the coordinating role that national statistical offices played in the national statistical system. It was an opportunity to share the experiences and progress achieved in the national statistical office, passing them on to other institutions in the national statistical system.

(d) Innovations in the production of environmental statistics

41. The discussion under this item was moderated by Marco Lavagna, Director of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina.

42. In his introductory remarks, the moderator outlined the aims of the discussion, which were to address the main advances, challenges and innovations in the production of environmental statistics and indicators in the Latin American and Caribbean region, in the context of the current climate emergency and the heightened impact of disasters. He added that in the past, economic, social and demographic statistics had been produced in the region more regularly and that more resources had been available for their production. However, given the growing demand from countries to produce environmental statistics, the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Statistics Division of ECLAC were promoting the conceptual and methodological development of environmental statistics, indicators and accounts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Presentation: "Twenty years of work in Latin America and the Caribbean: advances and challenges in the production of environmental and climate change statistics and indicators"

43. The presentation was made by Rayén Quiroga, Chief of the Economic and Environment Statistics Unit of the Statistics Division of ECLAC. She began by saying that the overview of environmental statistics in the countries of the region depicted a weak institutional framework, insufficient budgets, high staff turnover and low investment. Over the past 20 years, ECLAC had conducted workshops, seminars and training in the region to help to advance environmental statistics, and had also made environmental indicators visible through international data series. She emphasized the importance of creating multipurpose national systems for environmental statistics, improving the cost-effectiveness of work. It was also vital to invest in environmental statistics production units, so as to support informed decision-making and strengthen the evaluation and monitoring of public policies. Institutional collaboration was a key tool for

enhancing quality and guaranteeing shared responsibility. Lastly, she recommended promoting the production of environmental statistics in order to respond more efficiently to national plans and international agendas.

Presentation: “Main advances in the production of environmental statistics”

44. The presentation was made by Sandra Quijada, National Director of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile. She spoke of the efforts that had been made to establish a repository for the dissemination of information at national and regional level in the country. INE of Chile had 428 basic environmental variables and a well-coordinated network of about 30 services providing the information, based on the classification and codification model for basic environmental variables. The model also served as the basis for INE work on the processing of statistics for emergencies, disasters and extreme events, thereby contributing to the use of evaluations in decision-making in disaster situations and to disaster risk management.

Presentation: “Experience relating to the development of environmental statistics and consolidation of the National Environmental Information System”

45. The presentation was made by Floribel Méndez, Manager of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Costa Rica. She spoke of the implementation of the country’s national information system for the comprehensive management of water resources, which was underpinned by the legal framework of the national statistics system of 2019. One Costa Rican body that had proved successful was the Inter-agency Technical Committee on Water Statistics, the purpose of which was to consolidate a system of statistics based on a comparable methodology and indicators. The Committee was advised by INEC and the Central Bank of Costa Rica, and was made up of various agencies of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and other agencies that produced water statistics. She said that the Committee had developed a comprehensive overview of water resources and a platform for disseminating information to all types of users, which had enabled the country to have a set of minimum indicators, with good practices, concrete methodologies and improved dissemination of statistics. Lastly, she noted the importance of a relevant legal framework, clarity regarding the country’s information needs in terms of water statistics, a national plan for the comprehensive management of water resources, and the interest and investment of all stakeholders.

Presentation: “System of environmental indicators, sustainability and the circular economy”

46. The presentation was made by Ricardo Valencia, Assistant Director of DANE of Colombia, who presented information on the country’s circular economy within the framework of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. One recent development had been the creation of an information committee on the circular economy information, which focused on the implementation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) used to define the processes for generating official statistics. The circular economy information system monitored the pressure on demand for ecosystem goods and services, the preservation or loss of value of materials in the production system and the pressure that waste disposal exerted on ecosystems. Efforts to strengthen the development of the circular economy information system, continuous reporting, the design of a satellite account for the circular economy and the production of basic and derived statistics would be pursued.

47. In the ensuing discussion, the moderator asked panellists for recommendations on how to organize a set of indicators that made for a robust system of environmental statistics. It was posited that a combination of subjects that were essential for national decision-making and public policy was necessary and that they should be statistically feasible. Reference was also made to the importance of having pre-existing guidelines on environmental regulations governing the production of data and information, with State policies and

national strategies that contained instructions for producing a set statistics and indicators. It was stressed that international commitments, such as the SDGs, had helped to raise awareness on the importance of environmental statistics and their influence on decision-making. Speakers also drew attention to the importance of having entities within the institutional structure that could strengthen the production and dissemination of environmental statistics. Inter-agency collaboration and linkages with the economic and social spheres were also essential. Lastly, there was a call for action and cooperation among countries to develop benchmarks that would strengthen the production of basic statistics and environmental indicators.

Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2020–2021, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 3)

48. Introducing the topic, Xavier Mancero, Chief of the Social Statistics Unit of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, said that the 2020–2021 biennium had been marked by the pandemic, with greater difficulties for the working groups because national statistical offices had faced an increased workload owing to the need to prioritize the production of information for their countries. He also announced two new developments emerging during the period: (i) the incorporation of the gender perspective in outcome documents, and (ii) the possible differentiation of outputs into two types, as decided by the Executive Committee, based on the proposal by the working groups: (a) principles or recommendations of a broad scope and which would constitute a regional standard adopted by the Conference, or (b) compilations of good practices or specific recommendations, which would not be submitted to the Conference for approval. For the 2020–2021 biennium, six working groups indicated that their documents fell into the first category. With regard to the progress made by the working groups, he drew attention to the advancement of the activities planned for the biennium, which was reflected in the progress reports submitted. He added that working groups should share the outputs of their work with the regional statistical community through Knowledge Transmission Network webinars.

Guide for the implementation of a quality assurance framework for the production of official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean

49. The representative of Colombia began by noting that the Guide had been designed with the aim of supporting the implementation in the region of the quality assurance framework for the production of official statistics, developed by the United Nations statistical system. The document was intended to be a regional standard and, it was hoped, would be adopted by the Statistical Conference of the Americas. The guide had two parts: the first contextualized the quality assurance framework for the production of official statistics in the region, and the second laid out the steps to implement or strengthen it, by adapting the self-assessment questionnaire to the regional context and recording experiences on progress in implementing quality assurance methods. Most of the work of the working group to develop a guide to the implementation of a quality assurance framework for official statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean had focused on the second part, which involved the adaptation and specification of the questionnaire for assessing the quality of statistical processes and outputs (principles 10 to 19 of the United Nations national quality assurance frameworks manual for official statistics). The work had been carried out through country consultations, subsequent to which minimum requirements were defined and a pilot questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was then completed by 7 of the 15 participating countries. Each step of the process had taken longer than expected due to the constraints faced by statistical offices amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

A harmonized methodological framework for measuring disaster-related indicators pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

50. The representative of Peru said that the main aim in drafting the framework document was to facilitate the systematic and regular generation of statistical information on disaster risk, based on best practice codes for the validation of data with a view to contributing to disaster risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean. The document would have two main chapters, presenting a theoretical context for harmonization and a methodological context. He shared the progress made on the agreed activities and said the lack of staff dedicated solely to that task and the isolation measures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic were the main obstacles to their fulfilment. Lastly, he outlined the next steps, which included the participation of the working group to prepare a document on a harmonized methodological framework for measuring disaster-related indicators pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in regional seminars and international groups, in addition to the work on a regional proposal for a statistical disaster classification, including socionatural and anthropogenic hazards.

51. In the ensuing discussion, the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC commended the effort to build a harmonized methodological framework for disasters for the entire region, but expressed concern that the agreed deadlines for delivery might not be met given the comprehensive and ambitious nature of the document. The representative of the UNDRR said that the experiences and progress made in other regions in that area were being studied. She also said that participation in global expert groups was ongoing, and that consideration was being given to the progress made in the working group to prepare a document on a harmonized methodological framework for measuring disaster-related indicators pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

Methodological guide on time-use measurements in Latin America and the Caribbean

52. The representative of Mexico reported on the progress made by the working group to prepare a methodological guide on time-use measurements in Latin America and the Caribbean, noting that the aim of the document was to develop guidelines for conducting surveys on time use and unpaid work in the region. In that regard, it contained principles or recommendations of a broad scope and would constitute a regional standard adopted by the Conference, and mainstreamed the gender perspective. She outlined the content of the document, which comprised five chapters. She said that the main obstacles had included the increased workload for national statistical offices caused by the pandemic and the need to expand the initial objectives reflected in the methodological guide, especially with regard to information gathering in crisis situations. In the light of those circumstances, the calendar of work had been adjusted promptly and subgroups had been formed for drafting the document. One of the next steps would be to convene meetings of the subgroups to continue working on the pending chapters, and to prepare the presentation of the final document.

53. In the discussion that followed, participants welcomed the work done on the subject. A representative of the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC, which served as technical secretariat for the group, said that the international Expert Group on Innovative and Effective Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics was following regional developments closely. The representative of ILO said that her organization was interested in the issue and was working with Chile on the inclusion of a rotating module on unpaid work in the national employment survey, since it had not been possible to carry out a national time-use survey. The representatives of Argentina and Costa Rica stressed that it was vital to take into account changes that had been exacerbated by the pandemic and determine how to interpret them based on the new

normal. The representative of the Dominican Republic said that a module on time use, burden of care and unpaid work had been included in that country's survey.

Protocol for the collection and dissemination of data from studies involving children and adolescents

54. The representative of Panama presented the progress report of the working group to develop a protocol for the collection and dissemination of data from studies involving children and adolescents, and described its general and specific objectives. He underscored the importance of weighing the ethical imperatives involved in collecting data from children and adolescents. Only 10 countries in the region had protocols for processing such responses, and the guide being developed would be a good tool for countries interested in implementing it. He then provided some details on the protocol that was being drafted, which contained a conceptual outline of the various stages to be followed in a study in order to preserve the rights and privacy of children and adolescents. The protocol would be presented to countries at a virtual seminar to be held in the coming months.

Manual on the design of security and criminal justice statistical systems

55. The representative of Mexico presented the progress made in activity of the working group to develop a manual on the design of security and criminal justice statistical systems. The objective of the manual was to guide national efforts to generate statistical information on security and criminal justice. He noted that the general characterization of the components of the national statistical systems and of the statistical systems on security and justice were among the content that had already been prepared. Content currently being worked on included specific aspects of security and criminal justice statistical systems, such as their regulations, components, coordination mechanisms, information-generation role, users and scope of statistics by component. Work had not yet begun on the chapters on cross-cutting methodological and technical aspects and the implementation route. He also mentioned a number of obstacles, such as the limited availability of information on the composition, functioning and methodologies used in criminal justice systems and the variation in institutional arrangements in different countries. To obtain a more comprehensive view in terms of good practices, national statistical offices were consulted and that was complemented by information provided by the Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Public Security, Victimization and Justice (UNODC-INEGI Centre of Excellence), which coordinates technical cooperation activities between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INEGI of Mexico and UNDP.

56. In the comments that followed, Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of DANE of Colombia, said that that working group was one of those facing the greatest challenges in terms of standardization, and valued the contribution of the UNODC-INEGI Centre of Excellence. When asked whether the working group's upcoming activities would be conducted under the umbrella of the Knowledge Transfer Network, the representative said that it would be possible to hold workshops through the platform, invited participants to join and said that the manual would be presented at a seminar organized by the UNODC-INEGI Centre of Excellence.

Methodological document on statistical use of economic administrative records

57. The representative of Colombia commended the collective and collaborative participation of the eight member countries of the working group to prepare a methodological document on conceptual aspects and statistical use of economic administrative records and the efficient coordination by Mexico and Colombia. Both factors had been instrumental in advancing the drafting of the 11 chapters of the document, which was 80% complete. The consolidated document would be delivered in July 2021. However, he also

pointed out some of the main challenges affecting the drafting of the document, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the conceptual and linguistic differences between countries in the region. The group hoped that the set of common guidelines, the inclusive glossary and the recognition of good national practices would become a regional standard that would comprehensively support the production of official statistics by national offices in order to build a system of administrative records that the countries of the region may use as an input for generating economic statistics. The request by ECLAC to incorporate a gender perspective in the document was welcomed as it was in line with statistical and academic trends.

58. Replying to questions from the representatives of Panama and Spain, the representative of Colombia highlighted the importance of including pilot cases of the use of administrative records, such as Colombia's Unified Social Security Contributions Form (PILA), in order to define a conceptual framework, establish a production value chain and identify statistical process tools that would support and foster bilateral feedback. He acknowledged that it was worthwhile to reflect on data management for official statistics, but that was outside the scope of the group's work. He said that the latter was an issue that merited further consideration and highlighted the experiences of advanced countries, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, with very strong frameworks for basic and corporate records. He added that for there to be progress, company records must be improved and informality should be taken into account, since a significant share of economic activity was not visible in economic administrative records.

Manual on conceptualization and measurement of prices and volumes in the services sector

59. The representative of Colombia reported on the progress made by the working group to develop a manual on conceptualization and measurement of prices and volumes in the services sector. The aim of the manual was to address the scarcity of relevant information in the region and to serve as a reference by identifying and documenting experiences and good practices in measurement in Latin America. He outlined the structure of the document, which had been coordinated by DANE and included contributions from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. The first stages outlined the work plan had been completed and the next steps would be receiving inputs from countries, compiling the document and refining the final product. He underscored that the document was in line with the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean with regard to the use of internationally agreed recommendations on classifications, standards, methods and procedures. The work had also been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had delayed the submission of agreed documents from some countries. Lastly, he said that the group would remain in contact with the countries that were working on the manual to finalize the revision, so that a first draft would be available in June and the final version in September 2021.

Recommendations for generating environmental statistics and indicators with geospatial information and non-conventional sources

60. The representative of Mexico reported on the progress in the output document being prepared on by the working group to prepare a document of recommendations for generating environmental statistics and indicators using geospatial information and non-conventional information sources. The document was divided in five parts: project strategy, diagnosis, common problems, good practices and recommendations. She said that it had not been possible to finalize the document as the COVID-19 pandemic had led to a reduction of staff in the coordinating country (Mexico). Furthermore, the working group had been compelled to switch from face-to-face meetings and workshops to a virtual format and to adjust planned activities in order to meet the project goals. She then described good practices: online workshops and trainings had been held, the original programme of work revamped, and the scope adjusted, taking into account the use of guidelines and documents. Lastly, she said that the next steps would be the receipt and revision of questionnaires, convening of workshops with countries and the drafting of recommendations.

Guidelines for census data capture: a review of data capture methods with a view to the 2020 census round

61. The representative of Chile reported on the progress made by the working group to prepare a document on guidelines for census data capture: a review of data capture methods with a view to the 2020 census round in Latin America and the Caribbean by systematizing the most relevant experiences in the region and adapting the United Nations recommendations on the capture of census data. After outlining the contents of the five chapters of the document, he said that the main obstacles encountered had been in defining the scope of the document, especially in relation to electronic capture methods, the implications of the capture method on statistical quality, and the workload of the coordinating teams. Good practices included the systematization of the experiences of the countries in the working group, for which country fact sheets had been prepared and presentations conducted via videoconferences. Meetings had also been held with the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC to define the scope of the document and coordinate the joint drafting thereof. He said that the next steps would include revision of the draft and its subsequent review by the countries.

Assessment of the capacities of statistical systems to measure international migration

62. The representative of Mexico reported on the progress made by the working group to prepare an assessment of the capacities of statistical systems to measure international migration. She described the structure of the document being drafted, which included different aspects related to the measurement of migration based on information from censuses and administrative records and surveys. Part of the work had included coordination and systematization of the activities of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system working in that area in the region. Various capacity assessment tools had been applied to national statistical offices and other government entities, and existing global tools had been taken into account and adapted. Good practices in the area had been identified and made available to the members of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. A timeline indicating the activities in each chapter for completion by the end of the biennium was presented.

Document of good practices for the adoption of the new international standards of the International Labour Organization

63. The representative of Chile referred to a document being prepared by the working group on good practices for the adoption of the new international standards of the International Labour Organization. He outlined the chapters of the document, which contained an assessment of good practices, progress in the implementation of ILO recommendations in each of the countries, a review of different measurement approaches, and recommended standards and good practices. As with the other working groups, a number of difficulties had been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which had particularly affected the areas producing labour statistics. Lastly, the timeline of pending activities, which included several workshops to be held by the end of the calendar year, was presented.

Report by the secretariat on the regional follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the dissemination of regional statistics (agenda item 4)

Fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (SDG Gateway)

64. The Secretary of the Commission noted the changes in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development since its establishment and said that the methods used to follow up on the implementation of the Agenda were shifting. He highlighted three innovative aspects

of the Forum in 2021. The first concerned the high level of civil society participation, both as panellists and in discussions with the Chair to address the pressing concerns arising from the pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean and its cross-cutting effects on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Second, the “Caribbean first” strategy had been deepened and, third, a presentation had been given to the countries on the reform of the United Nations system at the regional level, which was reflected in the creation of a joint mechanism known as the Regional Knowledge Platform and in the cross-cutting approach to the Agenda through the issue-based coalitions. As in previous years, ECLAC had presented its annual report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which illustrated how the setbacks caused by the pandemic were putting at risk the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Progress in the dissemination of regional statistics through CEPALSTAT

65. The new CEPALSTAT interface was presented by Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, and Daniel Taccari, Chief of the Statistical Innovation, Dissemination and SDG Unit of the same Division.

66. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC said the new CEPALSTAT interface was a gateway to statistical information on Latin America and the Caribbean. He outlined the key features of the platform and highlighted its new geographic component. The more than 1,200 indicators contained in CEPALSTAT covered demographic, social and economic topics, with 6,500,000 unique records. Since 2020, the data had been open, consolidating an interface for geovisualization of available indicators, with versions for computers and mobile phones that were compatible with all browsers.

67. The Chief of the Statistical Innovation, Dissemination and SDG Unit navigated through the new CEPALSTAT interface to present its features in greater detail. He described the structure of the platform and the advantages over the previous version. It had thematic profiles, including energy. A navigation menu had been created with a visual overview of the information in the databases, including the definitions and metadata of the indicators. Users could perform specific searches, select more than one indicator and download in XLSX, JSON and HTML formats. The statistical information was linked to a territorial viewer in which more than one indicator and different layers could be applied, with the option of comparing the selected indicators. There was also a repository of methodologies and classifications of international official statistics. One of the purposes of presenting the CEPALSTAT project at the Conference was to highlight the need to address and promote development of online information with open data at the national level, to achieve interoperability between systems, allowing information to be shared more easily and dynamically and in real time.

68. In the ensuing discussion, the Director-General of DANE of Colombia thanked ECLAC for its efforts, which embodied United Nations reform at the regional level. He said the reform would enable agencies’ work to further contribute to closing statistical gaps in countries, and in this regard would build capacities and improve the monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda and its set of global and regional indicators. Members of various delegations and representatives of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system welcomed the progress and work on the CEPALSTAT platform. The representative of the Dominican Republic acknowledged the effort invested in CEPALSTAT. She said her country was creating a statistical viewer and requested technical assistance from ECLAC to establish relevant capacities.

Other matters (agenda item 5)

Presentation of the World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives

69. The presentation was given by Dean Mitchell Jolliffe and Daniel Gerszon Mahler, Economists in the World Bank Development Data Group.

70. Dean Mitchell Jolliffe said data contributed to improving economic growth, reducing corruption and even saving lives. There were three institutional pathways through which data could improve lives: governments and international organizations; civil society and academia; and the private sector. It was important for data to be reusable and to find ways to have data with more value-added. This required a new framework to ensure data security and access.

71. Daniel Gerszon Mahler described the Integrated National Data System (SNID). He said such systems differed from national statistical systems in that they were expansive, whereas the latter were centralized. Integrated national data systems were data governance systems, involving civil society and the private sector, with everyone playing a role. The vision offered by such systems was lasting and continuous; they produced quality data that were protected, circulated and reused. Their five pillars were human capital, trust, funding, censuses and high demand for data.

72. In the ensuing discussion, the Director-General of DANE of Colombia reaffirmed the preceding ideas and noted that the aim was to take full advantage of statistical systems. It was essential to make such systems more robust, but at the same time to build resilient networks within the international statistical community. There was also a need to insist on national statistical offices' role as custodians of statistics. It would probably be possible to align national statistical offices and national statistical systems. Dean Mitchell Jolliffe agreed, noting the need for leaders to promote a change of mindset on data use, and invited the audience to champion this message.

Urban mobility surveys (origin and destination surveys)

73. The topic was introduced by the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, who said it was important to address statistics on cities and invited the countries to form a group on urban statistics within the framework of the Conference. In that regard, certain points justified national statistical offices addressing city statistics: the comparative advantages of national statistical offices in the design and implementation of statistical operations at the national and city levels; the participation of national statistical offices in the design and testing of the degree of urbanization (DEGURBA) classification for the delimitation of functional urban areas; the advanced work of national statistical offices on implementation of territorial statistical plans; the progress of national statistical offices in integrating statistical and geospatial information; and the existence of national statistical offices that not only maintained and disseminated urban indicator systems, but also calculated urban indicators for other government agencies.

74. Pauline Stockins, Statistical Assistant of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, presented some of the conclusions, recommendations and next steps of a study prepared by ECLAC on origin and destination surveys in selected cities in the region, which analysed the comparability of the different surveys. The next steps included holding a technical workshop, during which suggestions and contributions would be collected from the actors who were part of the study, and incorporated into the outcome document.

75. In discussion that followed, the Director-General of DANE Colombia expressed his appreciation for the invitation to form a group on urban statistics and stressed the importance of mobility statistics to

shed some light on labour trends in a region characterized by high demographic concentration in metropolitan areas. The representative of INEGI of Mexico expressed his institution's interest in forming part of that group, and agreed that it was beneficial to address cities and different sources of information that could contribute to the New Urban Agenda. The representative of INEC of Costa Rica also supported the idea of forming a group on urban statistics. The representative of the INDEC of Argentina expressed appreciation for the work on origin and destination surveys and underscored the need to consider movement between cities using administrative records.

Presentation of the project entitled “Desigualdad: enfoques innovadores para examinar la desigualdad mediante la integración de diferentes fuentes de datos en América Latina y el Caribe”, by ECLAC

76. The presentation was given by the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, who said that the project had been financed with resources from the United Nations Development Account. The basis came from the SDGs, from leaving no one behind, from the inequalities that had been exacerbated by the pandemic, and from the fact that knowledge about inequalities was constrained by the limited availability of information. The components of the project comprised: (i) measurement of income inequality using data from household surveys, tax records and national accounts; (ii) integration of statistical and geospatial information; and (iii) disaggregation of information using small-area estimation methodologies. The planned activities for the 2021–2023 period included technical assistance and training missions; meetings of experts to discuss methodologies; national multi-stakeholder workshops to identify needs and draw up road maps; regional workshops to exchange experiences and best practices; and training materials, online courses and publication of results.

77. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Costa Rica highlighted the initiative described. She said that disaggregation was increasingly demanding, so there was a need to learn how to integrate various sources. A vital component was training, including workshops to train staff.

Renewal of the mandate of the member countries of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

78. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, gave the floor to the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC to announce the results of the regional consultation on the countries to become members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC said that as the renewal of the global groups was currently under way, the consultation had been held to identify countries interested in representing the region for the next biennium as members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-Level Group on Collaboration, Coordination and Capacity-Building in Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Based on the consultation, the five member countries representing the region in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators for the 2021–2023 biennium would be: Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. The countries that would represent the region for 2021–2023 in the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were: Argentina, Belize, Mexico and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. One representative was still to be designated.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 6)

79. The Executive Committee adopted the agreements contained in annex 1.

Closing session

80. In the closing session, statements were made by Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, and Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

81. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC said the meeting had been very intensive and productive and had raised critical issues on which to reflect. The progress of the working groups had been reviewed and enriching presentations had been made at side events. The region was well positioned in the international statistical arena and had the resources to build capacity. The meeting had also consolidated the support of national statistical offices as a regional whole to move forward with decision-making and support to governments in the region.

82. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, said that the principles of dialogue, feedback, innovation and accountability had prevailed at the meeting, which would contribute to identifying the needs and opportunities arising from the complex economic, social and environmental circumstances, and in the area of public health. There was consensus on the vital role of data ecosystems—which were the extended version of national statistical systems—in which development banks, the United Nations system, and particularly ECLAC, with its strong leadership in the region, also participated. Dialogue was needed with societies, as well as capacity- building and technological strengthening, so that in the years to come it would be possible, as had been stated at the meeting, to stop wanting what was measured and start measuring what was wanted.

Annex 1

AGREEMENTS

The Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), at its twentieth meeting, held online on 7 and 8 April 2021,

1. *Thanks* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the European Union for their presentations on the concept of development in transition and recognizes its relevance in identifying priorities for statistical development in the countries of the region and in fostering the contribution of statistics to public policymaking;
2. *Agrees* on the importance of producing information based on the measurement of perceptions to complement the information routinely collected on the physical living conditions of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean, in the context of the generation of official national statistics;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to conduct, in conjunction with the countries of the region that so wish, a regional consultation to ascertain the thematic areas of interest for the measurement of perceptions in the region, and to prepare the terms of reference for the possible creation of a working group on the measurement of perceptions at the next meeting of the Conference;
4. *Emphasizes* the importance of mechanisms for evaluating compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, including peer review processes, to strengthen the quality of statistical production and the institutional framework of national statistical systems;
5. *Encourages* countries to share national experiences in the use of peer reviews in national statistical systems, which is useful for quality assurance in administrative records and other information sources, through Knowledge Transmission Network webinars;
6. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare, in collaboration with the Chair and the countries of the region that so wish, a proposal on a peer review mechanism for the Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be submitted for consideration by the Statistical Conference of the Americas at its eleventh meeting;
7. *Urges* countries to foster the production of national statistics to strengthen the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental), recognizing the need to consolidate methodologies and ensure the regular production of data for environmental indicators, by integrating specialized units in institutional programmes and budgets, developing national strategies and plans for statistical development, and establishing inter-agency coordination committees, which are essential given the cross-cutting nature of sustainable development;
8. *Also urges* users and producers of environmental statistics to join the regional network on environmental statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to enhancing the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in this area;

9. *Takes note of the Second report on the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2020–2021, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;*¹

10. *Expresses its satisfaction with the progress achieved by the working groups of the Statistical Conference of the Americas in producing the agreed outputs and urges them to continue their work in order to complete the agreed activities and outputs by the next meeting of the Conference;*

11. *Appreciates the efforts made by the working groups to mainstream the gender perspective into their work, in pursuit of better integration of gender issues and the gender perspective in the production, analysis and use of statistical information, and encourages them to intensify these efforts in line with the guidelines and recommendations to be shared by the secretariat;*

12. *Takes note of the requests of six working groups, which will be considered and responded to by the Executive Committee in May 2021, for the documents being prepared to be submitted for adoption by the Conference at its eleventh meeting;*²

13. *Requests the working groups to disseminate the outputs of their work to the regional statistical community through Knowledge Transmission Network webinars;*

14. *Expresses its thanks to the national statistical offices and other agencies producing official statistics for having maintained regional collaboration and the production of the agreed outputs of the working groups, despite the restrictions imposed on their work as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;*

15. *Also expresses its thanks for the support and collaboration of the international organizations that have contributed to the activities of the working groups, either by acting as technical secretariats or by providing cooperation, technical assistance and financing for the implementation of the planned activities;*

16. *Requests the secretariat to conduct, in coordination with the Chair and members of the Executive Committee, a regional consultation for the preparation of proposals for the formation of the working groups for the biennium 2022–2023, for discussion at the eleventh meeting of the Conference;*

17. *Takes note of the Report on the activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean*³ and requests the Group to continue updating the diagnosis of national statistical capacities for the production of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into consideration the results of the 2020 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework as well as the indicators prioritized for the region;

¹ LC/CE.20/3.

² Guide to the implementation of a quality assurance framework for the production of official statistics; A harmonized methodological framework for measuring disaster-related indicators pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030; Methodological guide on time-use measurements in Latin America and the Caribbean; Protocol for the collection and dissemination of data from studies involving children and adolescents; Manual on the design of security and criminal justice statistical systems; and Methodological document on conceptual aspects and statistical use of economic administrative records.

³ LC/CE.20/4.

18. *Invites* national statistical offices and other agencies producing official statistics to coordinate actions with the secretariat to include information on national monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (SDG Gateway);

19. *Welcomes* the progress made in updating the technologies of CEPALSTAT Databases and Statistical Publications, and urges the secretariat to promote the development in the region of online systems for the dissemination of statistical information that use open source code and data and integrate geospatial information;

20. *Thanks* Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their work as representatives of the region, to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and to the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, respectively;

21. *Welcomes* the election of Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago as representatives of the region to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators for the coming biennium, as of June 2021;

22. *Also welcomes* the election of Argentina, Belize, Mexico and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as representatives of the region to the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity- Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the coming biennium, as of June 2021, bearing in mind that one representative is still to be appointed;

23. *Encourages* national statistical offices in the region to actively participate in the production and dissemination of social, economic and environmental statistics at city level by defining standards and promoting quality assurance processes for urban statistics produced by other institutions, and by adopting robust methodologies and using complementary data sources to produce disaggregated statistics at city level;

24. *Thanks* the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina, the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico, the Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI) and the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for organizing the side events held in the framework of the meeting, and takes note of the presentations, discussions and topics explored which serve as input to the work of the Statistical Conference.

Annex 2

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
States members of the Commission****ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA/ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**Representante/Representative:

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