



Twenty-seventh session
Oranjestad, Aruba, 11-16 May 1998

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

The twenty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will take place in Oranjestad, Aruba, from 11 to 16 May 1998. In a resolution adopted without a vote at the twenty-sixth session (San José, Costa Rica, 15-20 April 1996), which was subsequently approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1996/235, the member States accepted the offer of the Government of Aruba to host the session. The meeting is being held in accordance with the calendar of conferences of ECLAC for the period 1996-1998.*

The session is the most important meeting of each biennium for ECLAC. It provides a forum for consideration of issues of importance for the development of the countries of the region, and for review of the activities of the Commission.

This session will be held in a regional environment characterized by the encouraging performance of the economies of the region and, at the same time, by the risks that the recent instability in international financial markets present. With respect to the activities of the Commission, the session is taking place at a time when the Governments of the member States are studying the Secretary-General's proposals for the reform of the United Nations. As part of that process, the role of the regional commissions is also being studied. It is therefore pertinent for the highest intergovernmental forum to participate in this debate.

With regard to the first of these areas, it appears to be an opportune moment to address the issue of public finance, political institutions and fiscal administration in Latin America and the Caribbean. The session provides an opportunity to undertake a balanced analysis of the central role of public accounts in achieving macroeconomic stability, encouraging savings and changing production patterns with social equity; to identify the problems encountered by the majority of the countries in their efforts to establish public finance on a firm and stable basis; and to come up with guidelines to assist them in this respect.

With regard to the second area, which relates to the functioning of the Commission, in addition to the customary consideration of the report on the Commission's activities, the programme of work and the calendar of conferences, it is also appropriate to evaluate the work of the ad hoc working group established pursuant to resolution 553(XXVI) and the implications for ECLAC of the current process of reform of the United Nations.

In the present document, the secretariat puts forward some suggestions which, if the Governments of member States decide to accept them, would facilitate consideration of the various items on the provisional agenda and contribute to making the best use of the time available. As is customary at ECLAC meetings, these suggestions on the organization of work will be considered together with the

* Resolution 557(XXVI).

provisional agenda at the meeting of heads of delegation, scheduled to be held at the beginning of the twenty-seventh session, on 11 May 1998. The secretariat will provide delegations with working and reference documents for the various agenda items.*

At the previous session, changes were introduced in the structure of the meeting in order to allow more time for the consideration of substantive items. In addition, to facilitate the participation of ministers, the ministerial stage of the session was shortened.

Another change is being introduced at the twenty-seventh session in order to facilitate proceedings still further. Delegations will meet on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 May to consider the report on activities and the programme of work (items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda). On Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 May, a technical meeting will be held, at which government representatives and regional experts will discuss the substantive item and formulate recommendations thereon for submission to the ministers for their consideration (item 3). Also on 13 and 14 May, in parallel, the sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development will meet (item 9). The Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions (item 10) and the ministerial meeting of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) (item 11) will meet on the morning of Friday 15 May. The ministerial stage of the session will be inaugurated on the afternoon of Friday 15 May and will conclude on the afternoon of Saturday 16 May.

The participation of government experts in the work of the session will undoubtedly enrich the debate on the various items. The participation of ministers will give it the prestige necessary to ensure that the conclusions of the session will have the stamp of approval needed to make them effective.

It is suggested that the decisions and conclusions of the first stage of the session, including those on the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, be submitted for consideration and approval at the ministerial stage.

The annotations to the provisional agenda presented below contain background information on the various items and offer suggestions for their consideration during the meeting. In this respect, it might be useful to recall Commission resolution 419(PLEN.14), which states that, in order for the meeting to be a complete success, "government delegations should include experts in the specific matters to be covered".

* See Documents presented at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission (LC/G.2012(SES.27/13)).

II. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the twenty-seventh session.
3. The fiscal covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges.
4. Meetings of subsidiary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences: conclusions and recommendations.
5. Other activities of the secretariat of the ECLAC system since the twenty-sixth session and programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001:
 - (a) ECLAC;
 - (b) Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development;
 - (c) Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Social and Economic Development of Latin America and the Caribbean;
 - (d) Latin American Demographic Centre (CELADE);
 - (e) Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).
6. Calendar of conferences for the period 1998-2000.
7. Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC.
8. Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission.
9. Follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development.
10. Cooperation among developing countries and regions.
11. Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).
12. Fiftieth anniversary of ECLAC.
13. Other matters.
14. Consideration and adoption of the resolutions of the twenty-seventh session.

III. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers

Pursuant to rule 16 of the rules of procedure of ECLAC, the Commission shall, at the commencement of each session, elect a chairman, two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected. In conformity with the practice established at previous sessions of the Commission, the Chairman shall be the head of the delegation of the host country. It should also be noted that rule 20 of the rules of procedure provides that "the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman shall participate in the meetings of the Commission as such and not as the representative of the member by whom he was accredited".

Generally speaking, the officers elected to preside over the debates of the technical stage continue in their functions during the ministerial stage, except that the latter stage is presided over by the heads of the respective delegations.

Should the committees proposed by the secretariat be established, they will be presided over by their own officers, in each case a chairman, two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur.

It is suggested that the composition of these groups of officers be discussed at the meeting of heads of delegation to be held on 11 May 1998.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the twenty-seventh session

Delegations will have before them, for consideration and adoption, the provisional agenda (LC/G.2003(SES.27/1)), prepared by the secretariat in accordance with chapter II of the rules of procedure of ECLAC, bearing in mind the various mandates of the Commission. Members may make such observations or suggest such modifications as they deem appropriate under the aforementioned rules of procedure.

The agenda of the session, the organization of work and the establishment of committees will be considered at the meeting of heads of delegations of member States.

3. The fiscal covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges

Working document

The fiscal covenant: strengths, weaknesses, challenges (LC/G.1997(SES.27/3)).

Reference documents

Changing production patterns with social equity. The prime task of Latin America and Caribbean development in the 1990s (LC/G.1601-P);

Latin America and the Caribbean: policies to improve linkages with the global economy (LC/G.1800/Rev.1-P);

Sustainable development: changing production patterns, social equity and the environment (LC/G.1648/Rev.2-P);

Social equity and changing production patterns: an integrated approach (LC/G.1701/Rev.1-P);

Education and knowledge: basic pillars of changing production patterns with social equity (LC/G.1702/Rev.1-P);

Population, social equity and changing production patterns (LC/G.1758/Rev.1 and Corr.1-P; LC/DEM/G.131/Rev.1 and Corr.1-Serie E, No. 37);

Open regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Economic integration as a contribution to changing production patterns with social equity (LC/G.1801/Rev.1-P);

Strengthening development. The interplay of macro- and microeconomics (LC/G.1898/Rev.1-P);

The economic experience of the last fifteen years. Latin America and the Caribbean, 1980-1995 (LC/G.1925/Rev.1-P).

The equity gap. Latin America, the Caribbean and the Social Summit (LC/G.1954/Rev.1-P).

So far during the 1990s, ECLAC has paid systematic attention to the features of and the necessary conditions for an economic and social development strategy that can take the countries of the region into the next century on a path of changing production patterns with social equity and in conditions of political democracy. Thus, at successive sessions of the Commission and at regional conferences, the secretariat has put forward proposals of a global nature, such as those contained in some of the reference documents, especially relating to changing production patterns with social equity, and more detailed studies and proposals on a sector, dimension or variable of special significance in the overall development process (education and knowledge, sustainable development and population).

At the current session, in response to concerns and requirements expressed by member Governments, the secretariat is submitting a document that examines the contribution of fiscal policy to the work of development at the present time. That contribution is critical, given that the fiscal situation of national and subnational governments and of other public entities determines to a large extent whether there can be stable and coherent macroeconomic management and constitutes the basis for special policies aimed at speeding up the pace of development, increasing domestic savings and investment, improving income distribution and overcoming obstacles in the way of achieving greater international competitiveness. It would therefore not be exaggerated to contend that it is a prerequisite for the proposed task of changing production patterns with social equity that public-sector finances as a whole should be put in order, to ensure that the State is an effective instrument of public policy.

In order to facilitate discussion of these and related issues at the twenty-seventh session, the document first examines the overall situation with regard to fiscal policy in the region. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of the various components of income and expenditure and their significance in terms of imbalances and the management of public debt. In the final part of the document, issues of

special importance, such as social security reforms and measures adopted to improve the structure and performance of State agencies, are considered separately.

4. Meetings of subsidiary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences: conclusions and recommendations

Working document

Report on the activities of the Commission since April 1996 (LC/G.1993(SES.27/8)).

In order to provide the Governments of member States with information concerning meetings of subsidiary bodies and regional meetings sponsored by ECLAC in preparation for United Nations world conferences, the conclusions and recommendations of those meetings and other pertinent data are included in the report on the activities of the Commission.

5. Other activities of the secretariat of the ECLAC system since the twenty-sixth session and programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001

Working documents

Report on the activities of the Commission since April 1996 (LC/G.1993(SES.27/8));

Draft programme of work of the ECLAC system, 2000-2001 (LC/G.2006(SES.27/10));

Programme performance report of ECLAC for the biennium 1996-1997. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2013(SES.27/9)).

Reference documents

Programme of work of the ECLAC system, 1998-1999 (LC/G.1901/Rev.1 and Corr.1);

Report of the first Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (LC/G.1972(CONF.86/4));

Report of the seventh session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.2016(CRM.7/7));

Activities of the ECLAC secretariat relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean from 1 June 1994 to 30 August 1997 (LC/L.1062(CRM.7/3));

Activities at the Caribbean subregional level relating to the integration of women into the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean from 1 June 1994 to 30 August 1997 (LC/L.1062(CRM.7/3)/Add.1);

Regional Plan of Action of Latin America and the Caribbean on Human Settlements (LC/G.1912);

Human settlements. The shelter of development (LC/L.906(CONF.85/3)/Rev.1).

In order to enable the Governments of member States to take decisions on the work to be undertaken by the ECLAC system during the biennium 2000-2001, the secretariat has prepared a draft programme of work (LC/G.2006(SES.27/10)), which can be amended in the light of the priorities established at the current session.

6. Calendar of conferences for the period 1998-2000

Working document

Proposed calendar of conferences of ECLAC for the period 1998-2000 (LC/G.1992(SES.27/11)).

In accordance with the provisions of resolution 419(PLN.14), adopted by the Committee of the Whole at the fourteenth session of the Commission, in November 1980, the focal points around which meetings of the Commission are organized are the biennial sessions and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole, which are held in years when the Commission does not meet. It was decided in that resolution that sessions should be held in even-numbered years, so as to coincide with the two-year budget programming cycle introduced by the United Nations General Assembly. It was also agreed that, at each session, the complete calendar of conferences and meetings planned up to the next ordinary session should be considered, stipulating where possible the date, duration and location of each meeting.

In compliance with this resolution, the secretariat has prepared a table of meetings programmed for the period 1998-2000 (annex 5 to document LC/G.1992(SES.27/11)), in accordance with the mandates approved by the Governments concerning meetings of ECLAC and its subsidiary bodies.

7. Reform of the United Nations and its impact on ECLAC

Working documents

Report by the Chairman on the work of the ad hoc working group established pursuant to resolution 553(XXVI) (LC/G.2008(SES.27/4));

Report of the ad hoc working group established pursuant to resolution 553(XXVI) (LC/G.2010(SES.27/6));

General review of the regional commissions by the Economic and Social Council: the case of ECLAC. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2009(SES.27/5));

Reform of the ECLAC management scheme: delegation of authority and accountability. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2011(SES.27/7)).

Reference documents

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: role and functions of ECLAC (LC/G.1716(SES.24/18));

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields: an update on its impact on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.1819(SES.25/20)/Rev.I).

Delegations will have before them a note by the secretariat on the work of the ad hoc working group established pursuant to resolution 553(XXVI), providing an account of the three meetings of the ad hoc working group and the twenty-first session of the Committee of the Whole, and the discussions and the agreements reached on priorities for the programme of work and on the secretariat's involvement in the reform process.

In response to a request by the Chairman of the ad hoc working group the secretariat has incorporated the documentation in the report of the Chairman on these issues. Also with respect to the work of the ad hoc working group, and in compliance with Committee of the Whole resolution 563(PLEN.21), a detailed report has been prepared on the implementation of measures for institutional reform and to improve the management of ECLAC, in the general context of the reform of the United Nations.

Lastly, it is recalled that in its resolution 52/12 B, the General Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with Member States and appropriate intergovernmental regional bodies, to conduct a general review of the regional commissions, bearing in mind the individual reviews each commission had already carried out. Accordingly, the secretariat has prepared a note summarizing the progress achieved in the two areas on which the Economic and Social Council review exercise will focus: the participation of member Governments in the review and reform process; and cooperation among the regional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies in each region.

8. Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission

Working document

Some recent resolutions and decisions adopted by United Nations organs which should be brought to the attention of the Commission. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2014(SES.27/12)).

At its fifty-first and fifty-second sessions, held between September 1996 and September 1997, and from September to December 1997 (first part), respectively, the General Assembly adopted various resolutions and decisions which are of special importance to the Commission and which the secretariat is therefore bringing to the attention of member States at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.

9. Follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development

Working documents

Second report on the follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2005(SES.27/19));

Population, reproductive health and poverty (LC/G.2015(SES.27/20)).

Reference documents

Latin American and Caribbean Consensus on Population and Development (adopted at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development, Mexico City, 29 April-4 May 1993);

Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development (LC/G.1920; LC/DEM/G.159);

Report on the follow-up to the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Plan of Action on Population and Development (LC/G.1905(SES.26/10)).

The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development will report on the drafting and implementation of the Regional Plan of Action from its beginning and especially since the twenty-sixth session of the Commission. The Chairman will also address the necessity and possibility of carrying out activities of a regional and subregional nature in the next few years. It is hoped that member States and international bodies, in particular the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), will provide information on activities implemented or planned in the spirit of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Regional Plan of Action.

In the light of Commission resolution 556(XXVI), adopted at the previous session in San José, Costa Rica, the current session will be an opportune occasion to consider the situation with regard to the relationship between population, reproductive health and poverty in the region. At the request of member countries, the secretariat has prepared a technical document which is being made available to delegations to facilitate their consideration of this issue.

The twenty-seventh session of the Commission will be the only intergovernmental forum to meet prior to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999, at which the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development will be evaluated. Countries are therefore invited to undertake a critical review of the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered in meeting the goals and applying the guidelines contained in the Programme of Action.

10. Cooperation among developing countries and regionsWorking document

Activities of the ECLAC system to promote and support technical cooperation among developing countries and regions during the biennium 1996-1997. Note by the secretariat (LC/G.2000(SES.27/14)).

The note by the secretariat contains a review of activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the committee concerned with this issue, held during the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

This document provides an overall appraisal of TCDC activities during the biennium, Organization-wide and at the regional level, including implementation of the mandates emanating from the twenty-sixth session of the Commission. It then reviews specific activities in two areas: (i) activities to promote TCDC in the context of projects of technical cooperation with countries of the region executed under the ECLAC programme of work with extrabudgetary resources; (ii) TCDC support activities which are acquiring increasing importance in certain sectors and thematic areas relevant to the economic and social development of the region.

It also puts forward suggestions which might serve as guidelines for future ECLAC system activities in support of cooperation among developing countries and regions, taking into account the requirements of changing production patterns with social equity and environmental sustainability.

11. Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC)

Since the twenty-seventh session is being held in the Caribbean subregion, it is appropriate that the meeting of CDCC at the ministerial level will take place in parallel to the Commission session. The meeting of CDCC at the technical level is to be held in Port of Spain on 23 and 24 March 1998 and the report of that meeting will be submitted to the Commission. The secretariat will provide information concerning the execution of projects and progress achieved in the area of cooperation between the Caribbean and Latin America.

12. Fiftieth anniversary of ECLAC

In view of the fact that 1998 is the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission, a space has been left on the provisional agenda for a commemorative celebration of this anniversary, should the Governments consider this appropriate.

13. Other matters

This item covers any other issues which Governments may deem it appropriate to consider.

14. Consideration and adoption of the resolutions of the twenty-seventh session