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

Virtual meeting, 25–27 August 2020

CONTENTS

		<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
A.	ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK	1-9	3
	Place and date of the meeting.....	1	3
	Attendance.....	2-8	3
	Chair.....	9	4
B.	AGENDA.....	10	4
C.	SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.....	11-105	4
Annex 1	Agreements.....	-	29
Annex 2	List of participants	-	32

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The nineteenth 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 25–27 August 2020.

Attendance¹

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

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

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

5. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were representatives of the Statistics Division, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Development Coordination Office and the Offices of the Resident Coordinator in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica and Uruguay, as well as the Resident Coordinators in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica and Uruguay.

6. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following United Nations funds and programmes: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

7. Also represented were the following specialized agencies of the United Nations: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

8. Also present at the meeting were representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Andean Community (CAN), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI), Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Central American Integration System (SICA).

¹ See the full list of participants in annex 2.

Chair

9. 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

10. The Executive Committee adopted the following agenda:
1. Adoption of the agenda.
 2. The challenges posed by COVID-19 as an opportunity to strengthen the role of national statistical offices.
 3. The role of national statistical offices as data stewards.
 4. A decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.
 5. 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.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

11. 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.

12. After welcoming the participants, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic represented a turning point, which not only directly affected people's daily lives but also created uncertainty about the future. She underscored some of the consequences, especially in the economic and social spheres, including the increase in inequality that ECLAC expected in the region. In order to raise awareness of and monitor the various measures being taken by countries to deal with the pandemic, ECLAC had set up the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean. To date, six special reports had also been published on the impact of the pandemic and specific recommendations to mitigate its effects on people's lives and to facilitate economic reactivation, along with joint thematic reports prepared with several agencies of the United Nations system.

13. ECLAC had worked with countries in the area of statistics to ensure the continuity of operations, and had provided technical support. Through the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, several webinars had been held to exchange experiences on different topics.

The pandemic had highlighted the inequality of the region and its concrete consequences, such as increased exposure to disease resulting from living conditions and precariousness, and labour and education exclusion caused by the lack of access to digital technologies. In that context, the Executive Secretary underscored the importance of statistics and the need for further progress in measuring well-being and highlighting social gaps, and acknowledged the work of national statistical offices and institutes in those limiting circumstances. Finally, she warned that the pandemic aggravated the risk the region already faced of not achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and referred to the regional SDG Gateway, created by ECLAC to serve as a repository and reference for all information related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

14. The Director-General of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia underscored the role of the Conference in addressing the problems being accentuated by the pandemic and the efforts to create innovation scenarios that would allow progress, for example, in the development of metrics of subjective well-being, in order to overcome the false dilemma of choosing between health and the economy. He highlighted the efforts made to ensure that statistical information guided the approach to complex phenomena within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, such as informality, migration, poverty and inequality, the circular economy and social, gender, intergenerational and ethnic equity. The public value of official statistics had gained visibility in all countries, and was now considered essential to decision-making, especially in crises. The countries of the region could take advantage of the opportunity offered by the use of quality, objective and relevant statistical information to guide the revitalization of the social, production and environmental fabric in the context of the new normal, based on empirical data and attention to the particular needs of citizens.

15. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division said that international cooperation was more important than ever, given the need to share solutions in the crisis, and congratulated Latin American countries and national statistical offices for standing together in that respect. He commended the Statistics Division of ECLAC for reaching out to the countries to determine their needs and for the creation of the SDG Gateway to share solutions, adding that a good standard had been set for close international technical and professional cooperation. The guidelines prepared under the leadership of ECLAC in that framework had become inputs into global guidelines, and the region was an inspiration to the rest of the world in terms of geospatial and statistical data integration, the importance of which had become clear in the context of the pandemic. The big challenges ahead included the need to integrate new data tools and to invest in infrastructure for information and communications technologies (ICTs), and the new role of the national statistical offices as data stewards was to produce the best information for public policy decision-making. He stressed that the crisis represented an opportunity for improvement and, despite the magnitude of the challenges faced, he was confident in the statistical community's ability to manage them.

The challenges posed by COVID-19 as an opportunity to strengthen the role of national statistical offices (agenda item 2)

16. Under this agenda item, the participants analysed the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic for statistical work in the region and the innovations implemented by the countries in that regard.

The COVID-19 pandemic as a driver of innovation in statistics

17. This topic was presented by Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, who briefly summarized the Commission's actions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that questionnaires had been sent to national statistical offices to learn about the impact of the pandemic on operations related to economic statistics and household surveys. In order to overcome the obstacles presented by lockdowns, those offices had been operating with telephone surveys, previous samples and calibration methods. In addition, statistical operations had been suspended, population censuses had been postponed, and reliance on alternative data sources, such as administrative records, had increased. Amid that backdrop, ECLAC had provided support with regard to household surveys and economic statistics. For household surveys, and within the framework of the KTN of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, technical assistance had been provided by means of virtual talks, with the collaboration of ILO. With regard to economic statistics, technical assistance had also been provided to statistical offices and central banks, through virtual meetings of the KTN. In addition, two seminars on geospatial information had been held in collaboration with the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas). Thanks to that support, the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean had been created, and served as a repository of the measures implemented by the countries to address the pandemic. Similarly, collaborative work had been carried out with civil society, specifically with the Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI), to determine the effects of the pandemic in the region.

The role of information in the context of the pandemic

18. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Development Coordination Office, Christian Salazar, noted that this was an opportune time to strengthen the role of national statistical offices. It was an important theme to consider since all the projections indicated that Latin America and the Caribbean would be the region most affected by the pandemic, which would have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable populations. In that regard, one of the biggest challenges was the production and disaggregation of statistical data. He also said it was a good time to reflect on innovation. Work had been done in collaboration with 34 countries in the region to design impact plans, which included components to strengthen data generation and use. With respect to innovations, he mentioned that a project was being developed in 10 countries of the region to collect data in real time with perception surveys, through social networks and mobile phones. Various forms of support had also been provided to countries to follow up the SDGs. In closing, he highlighted the role of the Conference and the support provided by ECLAC in statistical matters, as well as inter-agency work to strengthen data production.

Innovations in the face of COVID-19 in the countries of the European Union

19. John Verrinder, Acting Director for Macroeconomic Statistics of the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), spoke of the impact of COVID-19 on European statistics. Different countries had been hit by the pandemic at different times, so responses had varied. However, primary data collection had been the most affected, which posed a challenge for programming in a context of so much uncertainty. That had led to some problems related to statistical quality. European statisticians had met at a very early stage to identify priorities and had held regular meetings. The main challenges had arisen in the collection of primary data on consumer prices and in household surveys. To overcome them, new data sources had been used. For example, some private data had been accessed for strictly statistical purposes. In addition, a series of guides had been developed on issues related to prices, national accounts, balance of payments and the labour market. With regard to the labour market, there had been difficulties in conducting interviews remotely and in continuing them, making it hard to measure unemployment. Finally, Eurostat had also set up a website on COVID-19.

20. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of ILO stressed the importance of joint work with ECLAC on labour surveys. The representative of Suriname raised the issue of suspending price data collection during the pandemic, as they could not be collected retrospectively, unlike in the case of household surveys. The Acting Director for Macroeconomic Statistics of Eurostat agreed that it was not usual to review past prices for the consumer price index, for various reasons. The pandemic had led to an increase in the imputation rates for missing prices during lockdown, but also raised questions about how to maintain the comparability of the series when price data collection was resumed. Eurostat recommended publishing the imputation rates and methodologies used to obtain the missing prices, assuming that the average variation in prices was representative of the prices not collected in a given period, and reviewing any discrepancies between the series once data collection was resumed.

21. The UNFPA representative recommended integrating risk management into statistical operations and mentioned a UNFPA regional initiative to help countries build capacity to estimate excess mortality. The DANE representative underscored the importance of discussing how the current context favoured innovations in data collection and suggested addressing these issues in the KTN. The representative of Costa Rica emphasized that the national statistical offices had prepared to incorporate technological processes, which had allowed them to address the current crisis. However, statistical information was not only produced by these offices, but by a wide variety of actors, who were less prepared to provide continuity in the generation of information, especially in health, where there was great demand for data. Although Costa Rica's National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) had been very transparent with users about its methodologies for the production of statistical information, in some cases the seriousness of the situation had overwhelmed its capacity to collect information, in spite of the exploration of alternative sources. Despite rigorous planning, it had been impossible to go out into the field to collect information for household surveys face-to-face. This posed a dilemma about how much more flexible data collection could be while maintaining the quality and rigour of statistics.

The contribution of national statistical offices to public policy actions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

22. This topic was presented by Diego Aboal, Technical Director, and Federico Segui, Deputy Director General, of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Uruguay, who highlighted the fact that Uruguay had been relatively successful in the fight against the pandemic. Shops were already open and the economy was functioning at almost 100%. In order to control the pandemic, case monitoring and random testing policies had been implemented, in which INE had played an important role. The presentation focused on the city of Rivera, which had experienced a large COVID-19 outbreak. An operation coordinated between INE and the public health service had been organized to divide the city into three large areas. It had covered 200 blocks, and tests had been conducted in 5 households per block, reaching 1 in 25 households in the city. Based on administrative records, people had been summoned at agreed times. About 1,000 tests had been carried out, and the estimated prevalence had been 56 cases in the city. In addition, the presentation addressed the strategy that INE had implemented to move forward with the establishment of an integrated system of administrative records, which included basic records on companies, population, wages and activities, and property. That information had been a basic input for the production of statistics in the context of the pandemic.

Experiences relating to opportunities for the statistical use of administrative records

23. Sandra Quijada, National Director of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile, noted that progress had been made recently in consolidating the use of administrative records. Because of the pandemic, telework had been implemented, including for the people responsible for collecting data. Collection had been carried out by telephone. Consumer price index data had been collected from websites and farmers' markets

which had continued to operate. The budget had been cut. With regard to the institutional framework, since the law allowed for other agencies to provide data, these agencies were collaborating to obtain data in good faith. INE had a cooperation unit and followed a process based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), which had allowed processing times to be reduced, as well as two lines of work: an integrated system for the statistical use of administrative records and the statistical record system of the national statistical system (in the planning stage). INE had also participated actively in cooperation projects, within the framework of the working group to prepare a methodological document on conceptual aspects and statistical use of economic administrative records of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and a project financed by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC-Colombia). Lastly, she highlighted the strengths of administrative records in labour statistics.

Panel discussion: Challenges for the sustainability of statistical operations and data collection

24. The panel was moderated by Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC, and included the following panellists: Carol Coy, Director General of the Statistical Institute (STATIN) of Jamaica; Susana Cordeiro, President of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE); and Dante Carhuavilca, Chief of the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Peru.

25. The moderator welcomed the panellists and outlined three issues for discussion. First, he asked them about the challenges their institutions had faced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and what innovations they had implemented and felt should be maintained in the future. The second question was about how the pandemic had affected the work of compiling data from surveys, and what opportunities these changes had presented. Finally, he asked them to indicate which areas of statistics might be most affected in a post-pandemic scenario.

26. In response to the first question, the Director General of STATIN noted that because of a partial lockdown, the first challenge for the organization had been to implement physical distancing of staff through telework, which had involved significant investments in computer equipment and software. The second challenge had been the transition from face-to-face to telephone surveys, as difficulties had arisen in obtaining a sample of telephone numbers to contact households, given that landlines were being used less and less in Jamaica. Other problems had been low telephone response rates and the need to reduce the number of questions in the household survey. The third challenge was related to the increased use of administrative data as an alternative source and the risk of overlooking businesses in the informal sector, which were not reflected in administrative records.

27. The President of IBGE indicated that the two main objectives of the institution during the pandemic had been to maintain statistical production and to capture the economic impact of the pandemic. The three main changes had been the following: (i) the migration of the organization to the telework modality and the creation of a remote work platform to allow all IBGE staff (about 10,000 people in 600 different locations) to carry out their work; (ii) the transition to the virtual production of indicators: for example, in the case of the inflation rate, data were increasingly being collected digitally and this process had to be accelerated, including through web scraping; (iii) the migration of household surveys from in-person to telephone interviews, which had been achieved through a decentralized computer-assisted data collection model rather than through external call centres. The results had been excellent, as all deadlines had been met, recurrent publications had been prepared, and new research projects had been created.

28. The Chief of INEI of Peru described the three objectives that the institution had set for the period of the pandemic: (i) continue producing macroeconomic indicators, (ii) meet the additional demand for information related to COVID-19 and (iii) safeguard the health of INEI staff. One of the biggest challenges

had been the transition to all household surveys being conducted by telephone instead of through face-to-face interviews. It had been especially difficult to build a list of telephone numbers and to reduce the number of questions included in the survey. It had also been decided to supplement those telephone interviews with online surveys. However, some data relating to anaemia, chronic malnutrition in children and household water quality, which were previously gathered in person, could not be collected through the telephone survey. In addition, the use of geospatial information had been enhanced through innovations such as the geolocation of households by block. Finally, a major effort had been made to renew IT infrastructure to allow remote work and move forward with complex processing of data from administrative records and of big data.

29. With regard to the second topic raised by the moderator, the President of IBGE noted that since the organization had been undergoing technological change, instead of being reactive, it had taken the new context as an opportunity to drive that change. She added that the projects being implemented involved a fixed cost, but had proven to be cost-effective. The challenge was to maintain institutional capacity, for which technical assistance had been received from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

30. The Chief of INEI of Peru said that the pandemic provided an opportunity to strengthen the institution. COVID-19-related surveys of businesses and households had been conducted. The web form process had also been strengthened for large and medium-sized enterprises and would involve micro and small enterprises for the first time, thanks to the remote survey. He added that the Peruvian economy had quite a few informal segments, so it would be very valuable to have information on this segment for the first time.

31. The Director General of STATIN of Jamaica said that the pandemic had forced the institute to work more efficiently. Telework had been a positive factor, as it would allow more agility in the future. However, monitoring productivity had proven to be more difficult. Jamaica had formed an inter-agency working group to facilitate rapid access to COVID-19-related data, which had provided information from administrative records that had not been available previously.

32. Referring to the last discussion topic, the Chief of INEI of Peru noted that the pandemic had had a negative impact because companies' sampling frames had changed significantly. In addition, in-person measurements had been discontinued and an income and expenditure survey, as well as the economic census, had been suspended. However, there had also been positive aspects, such as the fact that the use of ICTs and administrative records had increased.

33. The Director General of STATIN of Jamaica said that household surveys had been adversely affected, as the population was not familiar with surveys conducted by telephone or the Internet. However, it had become clear that the use of data was very important, in both the public and private sectors.

34. Lastly, the President of IBGE noted that the main impacts had been, on the one hand, having to change the dynamics of the organization from a more mechanical model to a more synergistic one, and, on the other hand, having to face the challenge of defining a clear set of principles regarding the use of administrative records and of best practices in the area of confidentiality.

Innovations in the 2018 National Population and Housing Census

35. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia, Juan Daniel Oviedo, highlighted six elements that had facilitated the entire phase of data exploitation and production associated with the 2018 census. He began by describing the general characteristics: it was a de jure census conducted to collect information over an extended period and in different phases, the collection method was mixed, through a face-to-face

survey with mobile data capture devices and self-registration (through eCenso, the electronic census), and georeferencing to monitor coverage of operations and route management, for example. The second important point was that, for the first time in Colombia, an electronic data collection method (eCenso) had been used, through a web application that had been made available to the entire population, and that had made it possible to bolster the data collection process, helping to increase coverage. The third aspect was the approach to ethnicity, which had ensured a more equitable consideration of the population, with prior agreement from three ethnic communities in the country (indigenous; Afrodescendent, Raizal and Palenquero; and Roma) on the objective, the method and the different mechanisms of dissemination of the results of ethnic self-identification.

36. The fourth point concerned the use of collection strategies in rural areas. Owing to the geographic heterogeneity of Colombia, DANE had worked with communities to create a social mapping programme for territorial identification in dispersed rural areas —characterized by difficulties in access, low density and large territorial expanses—, establishing routes for the collection of census data according to the areas of influence of each community. As regards the fifth point, he highlighted the integration of census data, administrative records and geospatial information, which had made it possible to consolidate the total population and determine the census omission rate. One of the control mechanisms had been the sending of a text message at the end of the interview, which had allowed the georeferencing of each survey and thus the possibility of comparing that information with administrative records. Finally, the sixth point to note was the dissemination of census information through thematic geographic information system image viewers, which allowed users to view different aspects of census information, even by block.

Experiences carrying out censuses during the pandemic

37. The President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico, Julio Santaella, began by describing the context in which the 2020 census had been conducted in Mexico. He specified that enumeration had taken place between 2 and 27 March, and that the COVID-19 health emergency had been declared on 30 March. Enumeration in the field had been affected by higher non-response rates, and various operational adjustments had been required to ensure compliance with health recommendations, such as the purchase of personal protective equipment and hygiene items and the hiring of additional staff, given the higher attrition rate owing to fear of infection. At the end of the enumeration stage, 95% of private inhabited dwellings had been recorded in the census. The other census processes had been affected to varying degrees. Deadlines had had to be extended for some activities, while other activities had had to be postponed and yet others, such as the post-census survey, had been cancelled. An additional self-enumeration mechanism had been created to reduce the non-response rate, so if a household was not interviewed, an invitation to respond was sent via the Internet.

38. The speaker then outlined the factors that had enabled INEGI to meet that challenge, including the fact that the economic census had been carried out the previous year; mapping updated in advance and, as a result, a detailed plan for assignments, workloads and routes; a self-enumeration system, which had provided the capacity and technology needed to suspend field work when required; the use of mobile devices; an enumeration phase of only four weeks; coordination with civil society bodies, the armed forces and other entities, which had facilitated the rapid deployment of personnel in the field; the implementation of a massive communication campaign; sufficient budgetary resources; a permanent operating structure in each state, with an established working culture; daily and targeted progress monitoring; historical information at the block level; staff resilience and commitment; increased connectivity in the country; and more than 2,000 census offices with an operational coordination structure and IT and administrative support since November 2019.

Challenges of implementing the 2020 census owing to the pandemic

39. The Director-General of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Ecuador, Diego Andrade, described the progress of the census project before the pandemic, as well as the status of the census processes conducted and those under way. He explained that a pilot census had already been carried out, which had achieved 99.6% coverage of dwellings and 93.4% coverage of the population. In addition, national identity card numbers had been collected in 94% of cases, 93% of which matched the data in the register. That experience was important as it was the first time that that information was requested in Ecuador. Meanwhile, in the mapping update, 73% of field work and 50% of digitization had already been carried out. The impact of the pandemic had worsened the economic situation in the country, and the government had reduced the 2020 census budget by 79%, rendering the implementation planned in November 2020 unfeasible. Hence, reprogramming, planning and the development of a risk matrix of the census had begun, with implementation expected in November 2021. Although the new plan had been approved in June, funding had not yet been secured. At the same time, efforts had been made along with international organizations to seek other sources of funding, and a positive response was expected from IDB. Census work had resumed with the mapping update in August 2020 and the work required until the delivery of results in August 2022 had been rescheduled.

Experiences conducting censuses in Caribbean countries

40. Regarding the impact of the pandemic on censuses in the Caribbean, Philomen Harrison, Project Director of Regional Statistics for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) noted that the first effect had been changes in countries' census calendars. Originally, six countries were scheduled to conduct their censuses in 2020, but five had to postpone them to 2021 and one to 2022. Meanwhile, of the nine countries planning to conduct their censuses in 2021, two (Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) had decided to postpone them until 2022. With regard to budget and activity reprogramming for future censuses, the situation varied from one country to the next, but actions had been taken that could mitigate the impact of the pandemic, such as the development, in 2019, of an updated common questionnaire and guidelines, and the creation of a website for the 2020 censuses, which provided access to the common questionnaire, international principles and recommendations, and other useful materials.

41. She then described a series of initiatives carried out by CARICOM and different international organizations in recent years, with the aim of building capacity in the region for the 2020 census round. Those initiatives included training in disability statistics, development of census mapping and geographic information systems; the use of mobile capture devices and different activities geared towards learning about systems such as the Survey Solutions programme, the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) software. There were also activities related to communication and promotion of the census, in order to obtain support from governments for implementation. Support had also been provided by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for the renewal of the website that would host data from the countries' 2010 and 2020 census rounds, for analysis and dissemination. IDB, for its part, supported the preparation of a management framework for the census project, based on the GSBPM model.

Statements by the participants

42. Pablo Salazar, Regional Adviser on Population and Development of UNFPA, stressed the importance of financing censuses, especially in the current circumstances where population and housing census information would be of utmost importance for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. He requested that member countries —perhaps at the upcoming session of ECLAC, in which ministers of finance would

be participating— be made aware of the importance of financing for the generation of statistics in general, but especially in population and housing censuses. He said it was necessary to stress the need for empirical data to make decisions and to ask countries for their commitment to conducting and funding censuses.

Panel discussion: Challenges of implementing 2020 census rounds

43. The panel was moderated by Paulo Saad, Chief of CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC, and included the following panellists: Diana Castillo-Trejo, Acting Director-General of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) and Elizabeth Solano, Deputy Manager of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Costa Rica.

44. The Chief of CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC noted that the pandemic had arrived in the region with a census in full swing (in Mexico) and others in the preparation stages. Some countries, such as Brazil and Ecuador, had had to postpone theirs immediately, but, in general, the conduct and quality of all censuses had been put at risk, especially when the budget allocations needed to finance the entire operation were not guaranteed. However, he also said that the crisis provided an opportunity to incorporate technological and methodological advances that had had to be implemented in statistics offices, such as remote interviews, in order to modernize statistical and census work. The first question the moderator asked the panellists was about the main challenges their institution faced in census planning, and the innovations and initiatives that had been implemented because of the pandemic. Second, he asked them about the main challenges statistical institutes would face in the medium term in carrying out population and housing censuses in a timely manner and according to international quality standards, and what they expected from international cooperation in these processes. Third, he asked how they thought the population and housing censuses should evolve with regard to the 2030 round.

45. The Acting Director-General of IBS of Belize responded to the first question by saying that the census in that country was planned for May 2021, but that financial problems had arisen even before the crisis owing to COVID-19. In order to conduct the census on schedule, some activities that had already been started would have to be carried out again, for example updating the form or training instructors. SIB was following up with the government about obtaining the necessary resources and seeking partners for partial funding. Costs had also been cut as much as possible. However, if financial support was not forthcoming, the census could not take place in 2021. Another challenge derived from the health risks posed by the collection of census data. That process had always been carried out through in-person interviews and, in the context of the pandemic, it would mean that the census taker would be in contact with thousands of people, risking their health and that of the interviewees. In addition, there was still the risk that the government would reimpose restrictions on movement, affecting planned census activities. The institute was in a position to conduct its first telephone survey, but did not have a register of household telephone numbers, so in-person interviews had to be carried out first in order to build the register. The fact that it was not known when and how this could be done and that the necessary resources were not available created a great deal of uncertainty. Under those conditions, conducting the census was not feasible at that time.

46. The Deputy Manager of INEC of Costa Rica noted that the pandemic had had a significant impact on census planning and development, as the pilot census had had to be rescheduled and fieldwork suspended. That had meant carrying out census activities through telework, including completing the mapping update with satellite images or training staff remotely, which had made the process difficult. In that context, the main challenges posed by the pandemic for the conduct of the census were, first, planning and organization in times of uncertainty and the design of health security protocols to be applied in the pilot census. Increasing the share of self-reporting—which was originally intended to be used only to follow up non-responses, but which, thanks to the technology already being incorporated, could be used more

intensively— was also being evaluated. Meanwhile, logistics had to be adjusted, focusing on technical details and identifying risks in order to control them and make decisions. Finally, it had become evident that people were afraid to give information and open the doors of their homes, so a good communication campaign was even more important.

47. With regard to the second question, the Acting Director-General of IBS of Belize said that the above-mentioned funding problems were the main challenge for the institute, and that it should be even more proactive in seeking and securing financial resources. It was also necessary to seek alternative methods of collecting information. The crisis had shown that the available infrastructure was only adapted to in-person surveys. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was too long and there was no other type of register that would facilitate the implementation of self-administered surveys. Funding had to be secured to maintain the equipment and to build the capacity and infrastructure needed to ensure the flexibility required in that type of crisis. Financial support deriving from international cooperation was needed to ensure the viability of the census, as well as technical assistance to build the capacity to work with administrative records.

48. The Deputy Manager of INEC of Costa Rica noted the need for new ways of obtaining information and using technology, which had clearly improved many processes and solved a number of problems in the context of the pandemic, but finding and applying best practices to make the most of the benefits was a challenge. There was a need to assess the consequences of the methodological changes that the crisis was expected to bring about and the impacts of combining different sources on census quality. In addition, international cooperation was fundamental because it provided insight into other experiences related to technical and operational aspects, and showed State authorities the importance of the conduct of and investment in censuses. It also facilitated the provision of technical assistance and the strengthening of digital censuses, as well as advice on issues related to data quality in the face of current technological changes, such as the effectiveness of self-administered questionnaires.

49. Regarding the third question, the Acting Director-General of IBS of Belize indicated that censuses had to move towards full integration of data collection technology. Small countries, in particular, should strive to obtain more technological resources, taking advantage of the reduced cost of technologies to access them. There was a need to access administrative records and develop systems that would integrate administrative records and other sources of information, facilitating management and analysis to obtain quality statistical information. In turn, capacities had to be built to allow the use of administrative records and develop alternative ways of collecting data, by telephone, by email or online.

50. The Deputy Manager of INEC of Costa Rica noted that building capacity in countries and national statistical institutes was crucial to the evolution of censuses. Progress had to be made towards greater incorporation of technological tools and solutions, not only for data collection, but also for statistical processing. In the same vein, there was a need to evaluate in depth the implementation of self-enumeration and to move towards the use of administrative records to improve the efficiency of statistical production, and especially censuses. INEC had a long-term project to develop a population register, which was expected to be implemented before the 2030 census round, in order to have a structure that would allow for efficient registration and complement the information. Administrative records were a very powerful tool that should play a greater role in countries' institutional frameworks.

The role of national statistical offices as data stewards (agenda item 3)

51. Under this agenda item, the following presentations were given.

The new roles of national statistical offices: data stewardship from the perspective of the Conference of European Statisticians and Canada

52. The presentation was made by André Loranger, Assistant Chief Statistician of Statistics Canada, who began by stating that, regardless of where they were from, everyone attending the session considered data a strategic asset. In the new data ecosystems, questions had arisen about the roles and responsibilities of national statistical offices. Many countries were in the process of defining the modes of operation and role of those ecosystems. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the modernization of statistical production, highlighting the importance of data strategies and data management opportunities. Data management had been a prominent topic for the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), which had produced 21 considerations regarding the role of national statistical office during its plenary session in June 2019. In the case of Canada, a lack of horizontal governance for strategic direction on data issues, a lack of data literacy, a shortage of adequate digital infrastructure and a complex rules framework, and problems in acquiring, governing and managing large, disparate data volumes, had been identified as challenges and drivers for a Data Strategy Roadmap for the Federal Public Service.

53. Canada's strategy for overcoming those challenges followed six guiding principles—it was user-centred, reliable, agile, open, empowering and purposeful—and its goals were: providing people with the knowledge and tools to access, use and share data; ensuring that data were strategically managed through effective and horizontal governance and administration; and ensuring that data were accessible and secure, and that they could be stored and were accessible in a digital infrastructure. In addition, data literacy, scientific method and analysis remained core competencies at Statistics Canada. The crisis generated by COVID-19 reflected the importance of data: in those situations, citizens were asking for timely information and a solid data system was needed to respond to their requests. Statistics Canada's work was based on ethics, privacy and transparency, as well as on metadata, standards and data protection, quality guidelines and the infrastructure needed to produce such data. The four focal points of that framework were data collection, data storage, data enhancement (through innovation and integration with other data) and data dissemination.

National statistical offices as data stewards, from the perspective of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

54. Mariano Poledo, National Director of Planning, Institutional and International Relations of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina, began his presentation by noting that the data stewardship concept or approach was gaining ground in a new data ecosystem that posed a challenge to official statistics with the emergence of new actors, while the demand for data and statistics was increasing. Meanwhile, new technologies were emerging that produced huge volumes of information from user interaction on the Internet, in mobile applications or on social networks, among other platforms, which also deserved the attention of governments in terms of the handling of those data and their privacy. In addition, data were a strategic asset for many of the world's most valuable companies, which based their business models on collecting huge amounts of information on user behaviour. In that context, national statistical offices had an opportunity to transform their role as producers of official statistics to that of stewards of the large volumes of data being generated.

55. The concept of data stewardship went beyond just data administration, as it included additional elements such as governance, oversight and coordination. Data stewardship involved four interdependent

dimensions or perspectives: (i) governance, which incorporated the institutional context, legislation, access to administrative records and the complexity of government; (ii) collaboration, which corresponded to the agreements and possibilities for secure data exchange with other agencies; (iii) methods, which involved an integrated data strategy and unique methods capable of processing large volumes of data; and (iv) access, which related to open data publishing, training, dissemination and learning processes. Those dimensions could not be analysed in isolation, as they formed a whole, and their interrelationship and scope would determine different starting points for countries in their change of role to data stewardship. Governance was one of the dimensions that could end up affecting the others when defining that starting point.

From users to co-producers? New roles in the data ecosystem

56. Juan Daniel Oviedo, Director-General of DANE of Colombia, said that, in the context of data stewardship, the aim of national statistical offices, in addition to generating official statistics that supported or guided decision-making and the adoption of public policies, was to ensure that users, empowered by information, became co-producers of data, so that the generation of official statistics ceased to be a monopoly and became an industry or regulated sector where national statistical offices promoted quality frameworks. Based on the 21 considerations regarding the role of national statistical offices prepared by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (ECE/CES/2020/10), Colombia had wanted to transform the methods of DANE and its relationship with the national statistical system. Colombia's institutional strategic project founded its own production on the rigour of statistical production, based on the Code of Good Practices in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean, and on the visibility of the operating processes of data collection, which ensured quality. Own production was likened to a three-storey house, with each storey representing the three pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (environmental, social and economic), but which interacted with communications and technological challenges. That interaction facilitated the interconnection of the national statistical system, innovation processes and new producers and forms of data production.

57. That had led to reflection on a statistical production process, aligned with the GSBPM, in which the most important concept was organizational learning that would catalyse innovation processes and the relationship with users and co-producers of information, and which would be incorporated into the national statistical system update. The four pillars of the national statistical system were ensuring basic official production, encouraging coordination, fostering the knowledge and use of statistical information, and using administrative records. Under that system, coordination elements were presented through a data ecosystem focused not necessarily on the user or the producer, but on the more abstract concept of statistical information. In Colombia, the Technical Advisory Council of the National Statistical System, composed of 15 experts, had been established to generate a dialogue between the national statistical office and the various members of the national statistical system, both public and private. That council had five specialised bodies, which were linked to other committees in the field of statistical monitoring. There was also the Data Stewardship Committee, composed of DANE, the National Planning Department (DNP), the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies, and the authority for the protection of privacy rights. In the process of advancing national statistical offices towards a role as data stewards, legal frameworks that facilitated network-building and the management of the changes needed to move forward were of great importance.

58. In the ensuing discussion, participants spoke about striking the right balance with stakeholders who handled data but were sometimes reluctant to share them. The National Director of Planning, Institutional and International Relations of INDEC of Argentina noted that governance may sometimes end up influencing other dimensions, but that, in turn, collaboration depended on the regulatory framework and the context. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia was asked whether municipalities had been considered a source of information, given their importance to the economy. He replied that the Data

Stewardship Committee sought to establish cross-cutting guidelines for the production of information to guide public policy. However, administrative decentralization had to be respected, so in the case of municipalities, the aim was to empower them as producers, allowing the use of the administrative records they generated. Another topic discussed was guaranteeing the quality of the information provided by the private sector, to which the Director-General of DANE of Colombia responded that the quality assurance framework applied not only to national statistical offices, but to all members of the national statistical system. Also, since there was a legal mandate for companies that provided public services (such as electricity or gas), they could not refuse to provide information. However, for other private companies that did not provide public services, there was a cost for that information exchange.

59. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC reflected on the importance of national statistical offices having access to the information obtained by government offices, and of them all being able to incorporate information with statistical quality guidelines. One of the fundamental challenges for the region was encouraging and managing that process, and leveraging that to achieve similar linkages, for example, between statistics offices and central banks, which generated so much information on national accounts. There were very strong examples in countries such as Argentina, Colombia and Mexico. For instance, the National System of Statistical and Geographical Information in Mexico had been promoted by INEGI through the constitutional reform. The possibility of holding a series of meetings on this topic within the framework of the KTN, to ensure continuity and to try to develop initiatives, was suggested.

Panel discussion on the role of national statistical offices as data stewards

60. The panel was moderated by Claudio Perez, Project Coordinator for Statistics Canada, and included the following panellists: Floribel Méndez Fonseca, Manager of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Costa Rica; Halim Brizan, Director of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of Grenada; and Iván Mauricio Ojeda, Director General of the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC) of Paraguay.²

61. The moderator asked the panellists to begin with some opening remarks on the current situation and the role of national statistical offices and statistical laws in their respective countries. The first question was whether they saw opportunities for their organization to take on a greater role in the new data ecosystem, and what the main challenges would be in that regard. The second topic of discussion he raised related to data stewardship. He noted that that was a broad concept that could be closely linked to a data strategy. With regard to a data strategy, three pillars could be considered: people and skills, tools and infrastructure, and processes and approaches. The moderator asked each panellist to choose a pillar and to describe recent successes or lessons learned in reference to that element as part of the new data ecosystem and its role in the evolution of national statistical offices and national statistical systems.

62. With respect to the situation in her country, the Manager of INEC of Costa Rica said that a recent legal framework allowed the decentralization of the national statistical system, with the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) as coordinator. The legal framework supported INEC in its role as data administrator, since it incorporated fundamental provisions, such as the fact that data was a public good, and determined the roles of each party within the system. Thus, it defined the role of INEC as governing body and the forums for collaboration, as well as access to administrative records, their use and intervention for statistical purposes. Furthermore, it stipulated that all statistical production should be carried out through a standardized system to

² Owing to the connection problems experienced by the representative of Paraguay, the presentation summarized in this report corresponds to that provided by means of an audio file sent later.

ensure quality. Currently, the national statistical office and the national statistical system as a whole were in an implementation phase, which had become more complex because of the pandemic, but was ongoing.

63. The Director of CSO of Grenada explained that his country was in a modernization phase, with a statistical bill that expanded the functions of the national statistical office, in line with United Nations recommendations. The entry into force of the new law would allow the development of an integrated national statistical system for the collection and publication of official statistics. The project increased the office's capacity for data collection and dissemination through two functions: the development, promotion and maintenance of a national system to advise the government, and collaboration with other State actors in the compilation of statistics. The concept of data stewardship was new to CSO, so the institution had no experience in that area.

64. The Director General of DGEEC of Paraguay noted that that country had the oldest statistical law in Latin America and the Caribbean (1942) and, together with El Salvador, was one of only two countries where statistical offices still functioned as statistics departments. Although Paraguay's constitution had been amended in recent decades, the statistical law had not, so urgently needed an update, since in some cases it referred to institutions that no longer existed. A bill had been submitted that was in line with the current constitution (of 1992) and with good practices recommended by the United Nations, and that referred to existing institutions. The bill aimed to modernize the national statistical system and to create a national institute of statistics. He underscored the support received from the Statistical Conference of the Americas, through resolution 11(X), adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference in 2019. The bill had been submitted in January 2020, had already been adopted by the Senate Finance and Budget Committee, and was scheduled for debate in the Senate at the end of August. In response to the first question posed by the moderator, the representative of Paraguay said that the biggest challenges facing DGEEC were the continuity of the Permanent Household Survey, the strengthening of administrative records, and the preparation of the 2022 population and housing census and the national economic census.

65. Next, the Director of CSO of Grenada, also referring to the first topic raised by the moderator, said that it was possible to take advantage of technology and alternative forms of data gathering. The major challenges posed by the new data ecosystem were linked to the development of the necessary IT structure, as well as the cost and everything related to the need to develop human resources in public administration. The current environment was not conducive to a culture of data sharing, there were difficulties in building more trust among all stakeholders, including citizens, and there was also a lack of security with respect to data privacy. To overcome those challenges, efforts were being made to engage the private sector and other alternative data providers, which required further support from international partners, as well as legal and other institutional support, especially in the area of higher education, for human resources training.

66. The Manager of INEC of Costa Rica said that the office assuming a greater role in the new data ecosystem was considered a responsibility rather than an opportunity, since that was part of the function the governing body of the national statistical system was meant to take on. Owing to the pandemic, deficiencies had become apparent in the regulation of the data produced, as well as in the exchange, integration, safeguarding, accessibility and usability of the data. One of the challenges in that regard was to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of the provisions of the legal framework. Other challenges were related to capacity-building in the areas of ICTs and data security and accessibility. Support from other countries and the sharing of their experiences would be very useful.

67. With regard to the second topic of discussion, data stewardship, the Director General of DGEEC of Paraguay said that there were many opportunities in the field of data strategy, especially in the context of the pandemic, during which the statistical office had experienced great demand for information from

citizens. In that regard, he noted that the institution had adapted to the context of the pandemic by adjusting the Permanent Household Survey and including a question aimed at gathering information about effects on household income. The biggest challenge was still technological. There were also regulatory obstacles, but, as already mentioned, progress had been made in the new statistical law of Paraguay. The update of the new legislative framework for statistics in the country, together with international support and cooperation, helped to reduce the existing gaps that made it difficult for the national statistical office to exercise leadership and produce information in the best possible way and, within the framework of good statistical practices, the data that the government and above all, citizens, needed.

68. The Manager of INEC of Costa Rica spoke about tools and infrastructure. While her country was still in the early stages, in order to successfully implement the data stewardship strategy, tools were required to review and protect data with an approach that did not neglect good practices or the principles of confidentiality. It was necessary to design policies, guidelines and protocols, in other words, a framework for proper data management, which defined aspects related to technology, human resources and security management.

69. The Director of CSO of Grenada focused on people and skills, as well as capacity-building in data management. He noted that in relation to human resources, three dimensions needed to be considered: the relationship of national statistical offices with alternative data, the use of statistical data and a human resource development strategy. In addition, the culture of data sharing had to be extended to the national statistical system and to all non-conventional data providers. Furthermore, efforts were needed to promote the data, through consultations with all data providers, and to understand the needs of users in order to determine the type of information required from those non-traditional sources. In terms of infrastructure, additional office space, encryption software and servers were needed, among other things, to ensure better processing of information. Finally, the infrastructure had to ensure system interoperability across the national statistical system.

70. In the ensuing discussion, the Regional Adviser on Population and Development of UNFPA noted the importance of that topic to the achievement of the SDGs in the region, and the need to rethink legal frameworks. He also said the agency was ready to provide support to countries for the development of a modern vision with respect to legislation, to provide quality data and, above all, to promote their use.

A decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals (agenda item 4)

71. Participants in this session included Francesca Perucci, Chief of the Development Data and Outreach Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division; Gemma Van Halderen, Director of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC; Gemma Santana, Director of the 2030 Agenda of the Office of the President of the Republic of Mexico; Andrea Fernández, Deputy Director General of Dissemination and Public Information Service of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico; Fernando Quiroga, National Director of International Relations and Institutional Communication of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies (CNCPS) of Argentina; and Martín Chojo, Coordinator of International Relations of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) of Argentina.

Progress chart relating to The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020

72. This presentation was given by the Chief of the Development Data and Outreach Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division, who introduced the methodological aspects underlying the development of the progress chart relating to *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*. The objective of the chart was to provide a synthetic and visually appealing picture of progress and delays in achieving the SDGs and it was based on the progress charts initiated in 2005 with reference to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It had been developed by an expert group that included representatives from

15 international and regional bodies, who had addressed the multiple challenges posed by the SDGs, including the large number of indicators of various kinds and the lack of quantitative targets.

73. The chart simultaneously provided two types of information: (i) on trends, classified into four categories and represented by a ‘traffic light’ system, and (ii) on levels of progress towards the target, divided into six categories and represented by a speedometer. It covered all SDGs and included 36 indicators selected according to their importance to each SDG and the availability of information, taking care to balance the number of indicators per SDG. The base year was 2015, or 2010 if no data were available for 2015. In most cases, the most recent data available corresponded to 2018 or 2019, meaning that the effects of COVID-19 were not reflected. She stressed that it was still a work in progress, congratulated the regional commissions for the work they were doing in measuring progress, and highlighted the role of that forum in facilitating the beginning of a dialogue to advance in the harmonization of methods and tools.

Evaluation of progress towards the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific

74. This presentation was given by the Director of the Statistics Division of ESCAP, who outlined the Commission’s approach to achieving the SDGs. She underscored the importance of evaluating progress in fulfilling the SDGs and the need for tools to identify whether the necessary public policies were in place and whether they were working. She then posed two important questions that formed the basis of that exercise: first, how much progress had been made and, second, whether it would be possible to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The main challenge related to the scope of the 2030 Agenda, which included 17 goals, 169 targets, their respective indicators and the disaggregation of each one. The methodology followed three guiding principles. The first was to evaluate regional progress through numerical targets, using time series data and defining a fixed baseline; the second was to use the entire SDG indicator framework with global data and indicators and incorporating disaggregated data; and the third was to provide countries with a standard tool and methodology that would promote capacity-building and serve as a gateway to SDGs in Asia and the Pacific. The two measures used in the methodology were the current status index, which allowed for reporting on progress since 2000, and the anticipated progress index, which helped determine the likelihood of the target being achieved in 2030 or earlier. She also outlined the components of the methodology, which were: (i) data and indicators, (ii) regional objectives, (iii) forecasts for 2030, (iv) indexation and (v) presentation of the data. In concluding, she underscored the advantages of that approach, highlighting the fact that it allowed for an assessment of the progress in the SDGs at the global, regional and subregional levels.

Projections of SDG indicators for 2030 in Latin America and the Caribbean

75. In his presentation, the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC highlighted the efforts made by the Division with respect to measuring progress in the achievement of the targets of the 2030 Agenda, referring to a regional projection exercise of 72 statistical series of SDG indicators for Latin America and the Caribbean. The exercise, the results of which were presented in April 2020, focused on the set of SDG indicators prioritized by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean and was based on the length and robustness of the series available in the Global SDG Indicators Database and CEPALSTAT. In most cases, panel data and autoregressive projection models had been used, considering the most probable scenarios, and four additional scenarios had been projected assuming growth of 10% and 20% above and below the projected growth of the explanatory variable chosen for each indicator. To evaluate the effect of COVID-19, projections had been made considering, in addition to the original scenario, a 1.8% decrease in regional GDP in 2020.

76. To represent the results, a ‘traffic light’ system had been used, which showed whether the countries were lagging behind, on the right track or had reached the target for each specific geographic dimension. ECLAC was working on updating and expanding the exercise to cover more indicators of the global indicator framework and to better capture the impact of COVID-19. In addition, work was under way with the statistical divisions of the regional commissions and the United Nations Statistics Division to harmonize the various approaches in order to ensure coherence in the communication of results. The speaker concluded by saying that it was essential to continue working along these lines in conjunction with the countries of the region, in order to seek and promote a common methodology that would allow the assessment of the degree of progress and guide decision makers in the implementation of specific policies that would leave no one behind. In that respect, he said that the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean was seen as an appropriate body to address the methodological and conceptual challenges posed by that process.

Mexico in the context of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals

77. The Director of the 2030 Agenda of the Office of the President of the Republic of Mexico began by saying that Mexico had a system which allowed the consultation of all available information on the SDGs. However, there was not yet a national approach. In that regard, she stressed that the country’s approach from 2015 to date had focused on developing the institutional framework needed to follow up on the 2030 Agenda, through the consolidation of the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the establishment of six thematic committees at the national level. She described the characteristics of the council, noting that it included the three levels of government, the private sector, academia and civil society. She highlighted the work done with the 32 State councils for the 2030 Agenda to align the State governments’ plans with the 2030 Agenda, as well as the consolidation of the information needed to follow up on the targets. As a result of that process, the 49 priority targets and their 51 corresponding indicators, as well as the associated costs for monitoring them, would be presented in November 2020.

78. Next, the Deputy Director General of Dissemination and Public Information Service of INEGI highlighted that the process had allowed the development of a prospective approach, which involved the definition of specific indicators for Mexico. Those indicators allowed the measurement of the targets proposed by the national council and the development of projections for 2030, considering the progress made thus far and the explanatory variables that could affect the future behaviour of those indicators. She presented an example of the process, stressing that the exercise was focused on the ownership of the targets by the actors implementing public policies related to the 2030 Agenda. All that took place within the framework of the national council, which brought together all the actors involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the public policy level. After that initial conceptual exercise, INEGI then began conducting the technical review of the exercise through the collegiate body that had been created to review the methodological aspects of the SDGs. She concluded by stating that future challenges were related to the consolidation of the exercise from a methodological perspective.

Argentina in the context of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals

79. The National Director of International Relations and Institutional Communication of CNCPS began by commenting on the second voluntary national review of Argentina, presented to the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in July 2020. He stressed that the results of the review had been based on the matrix inherited from the previous government and had yielded some figures that posed challenges for progress. In that regard, the Inter-agency Commission on Implementation and Follow-up of the SDGs had been convened to review the existing matrix and link it to the new guidelines and national development agenda. That review

of the targets had led to the identification of the necessary policies. He described the main actions related to the new SDG matrix and concluded by referring to the effort that it had represented for Argentina to meet the commitment to present the second voluntary national review, highlighting that the results obtained had motivated the creation of new public policies.

80. The Coordinator of International Relations of INDEC presented the aspects related to the participation of the institute in the development of the new SDG matrix in Argentina. He described the early partnership between INDEC and the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies as a success, stressing the importance of the institutional framework that had been established. He mentioned the institute's participation in the cross-cutting review of the SDG indicators, establishing baselines and contributing statistical feasibility to the development of the national indicator framework, which encompassed the programmatic inclusion of different government plans and the linkage with the national budget to support those plans and programmes. Lastly, he emphasized the work that had been done to strengthen statistical operations that served as sources of information on compliance with the SDGs.

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 5)

81. Under this agenda item, participants reviewed the overall progress of the working groups of the Conference.

82. The representative of Colombia explained that the guide for the implementation of a quality assurance framework for the production of official statistics was an adaptation of the United Nations National Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual for Official Statistics, published in 2019. The document was in development and based on a defined thematic table of contents, which addressed the following aspects: (i) summary of the United Nations National Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual for Official Statistics; (ii) feedback on the manual from countries in the region; (iii) experiences of the countries of the region in formulating and using statistical quality assurance frameworks; (iv) adaptation and specification of the questionnaire for assessing the quality of statistical processes and outputs (principles 10 to 19); (v) actions to develop, implement and strengthen national quality assurance frameworks in the region, and (vi) guidelines for the implementation of the assurance framework for SDGs and alternative sources of information. The speaker also reported on the stages of the work that had begun with a survey of countries related to a self-assessment on the quality of official statistical production and referred to the schedule of the working group's tasks.

83. The representative of Peru presented the progress made in the work done along with Paraguay to prepare a document on a harmonized methodological framework for measuring disaster-related indicators pertaining to the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The aim was to draft a framework document that facilitated the systematic and regular generation of statistical information on disaster risk, based on best practice codes for the validation of data and information through official statistics, contributing to disaster risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean. The document was being prepared and its thematic table of contents consisted of the following chapters: (i) Introduction; (ii) Contextualization and harmonization; (iii) The role of national statistical offices in disaster risk reduction, management and monitoring; (iv) Existing tools in the region; (v) Good practices of member countries regarding statistical and geospatial data for disaster risk management and reduction; (vi) Challenges, opportunities and prioritization; and (vii) Conclusions and recommendations. He specified the future tasks of the working group, which would consist of training, sessions for the sharing of good practices, global training of instructors on the Sendai Framework monitor, the global technical forum on the Sendai Framework monitor, and the translation and contextualization of global references on this topic.

84. The representative of Mexico said that the main aim of the methodological guide on time-use measurements in Latin America and the Caribbean was to develop guidelines for the conduct of time-use surveys and the calculation of indicators on time use and unpaid work in the region. To that end, there was a plan to systematize methodologies on time use and unpaid work in the region, examine the use of time-use classifications in the region—the Classification of Time-Use Activities for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL) and the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics (ICATUS)—and define a minimum list of activities for time-use surveys. She then reported on the progress made in preparing the document and its thematic table of contents, which consisted of the following chapters: (i) Frame of reference, (ii) Conceptual framework, (iii) Methodological aspects of time-use surveys, (iv) Measurement of time-use indicators in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and (v) Information on time-use indicators for the design of public policies. Finally, she said that some adjustments would be made to the table of contents based on the comments received, and work would continue in the subgroups set up for the preparation of each chapter, through virtual meetings with the members.

85. The representative of El Salvador said that the main aim of the protocol for the collection and dissemination of data from studies involving children and adolescents was to present a proposal to improve the capacities of statistical offices to address the ethical challenges related to the collection and dissemination of data on children and adolescents. One specific objective was to assess the ethical aspects of current practices in the countries of the region in data collection and dissemination. Up to that point, the working group had been working on defining the table of contents of the manual and a questionnaire would soon be sent to countries to gather information on the practices and protocols currently in place. He pointed out some difficulties faced by national statistical offices owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, which could cause some delays in the original work plan.

86. The representative of Mexico then referred to the assessment of the capacities of statistical systems to measure international migration, presenting the general and specific objectives of the working group, as well as its different components, which were coordinated by Chile, Colombia and Mexico. She highlighted, in particular, the coordination efforts to include different initiatives in that area which were being carried out simultaneously in the framework of other regional projects and initiatives, with the aim of achieving synergies between countries and agencies, and avoiding duplication and overlap between different projects and activities. The tasks developed by the working group in the first half of the year included the specific definition of some of the original objectives; the coordination of activities with different organizations working in the region; the analysis of a questionnaire on the state of migration statistics, designed by the United Nations Statistics Division and adapted by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC; and the exchange of various experiences of the group's member countries. She also said that that adapted questionnaire would begin to be implemented in early September 2020, and could involve the participation of different national institutions, depending on the governance of the migration issue in each country.

87. The representative of Mexico spoke of the document of recommendations for generating environmental statistics and indicators for the SDGs with geospatial information and using non-traditional sources. She said that two subgroups had been established: (i) one on environmental records, with the participation of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, with the objective to propose methodological guidelines for the use of administrative records on waste and to generate information on the achievement of the SDGs; and (ii) another on Earth observations, with the participation of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which aims to develop methodological and regional recommendations for the use of images through Earth observations relating to soil cover, in order to contribute to the measurement of SDGs 6 and 15. The speaker presented the table of contents of the final document and mentioned the various meetings held from March to August 2020. In August 2020, a virtual workshop had been organized on progress in the

region, which had been attended by the current Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. The speaker also mentioned a planned diagnostic questionnaire, which was already in an advanced preparation stage and was being reviewed by the working group.

88. The representative of Colombia reported on the progress made by the working group in charge of preparing a guide on the conceptualization and measurement of prices and volumes in the services sector. He highlighted the growing importance of that sector in the region's economic activity and the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had had on economic activities, which made good measurements in the area of services crucial. The objective of the document was to disseminate best practices in measuring price and volume indices in the services sector, in accordance with international benchmarks and based on the experiences of Latin American and Caribbean countries. He described the table of contents with the main topics to be addressed in the document and the structure of work, which would start with the process of documenting both the frame of reference and its conceptual elements, and the practices of participating countries in the measurement of the services sector.

89. The methodological document on conceptual aspects and statistical use of economic administrative records was presented by the representative of Colombia, who highlighted the importance of using administrative records to improve the quality of statistical work and, at the same time, reduce the burden on respondents. In that regard, he mentioned some international experiences that were complex to implement in Latin America and the Caribbean, owing to the existence of certain common factors in the region that made it difficult to have standard criteria and to build an adequate statistical infrastructure from administrative records. For that reason, Colombia and Mexico had encouraged the preparation of a methodological document with the aim of providing guidelines for the statistical use of economic administrative records, which would integrate the best practices and IT tools of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in accordance with standardized and harmonized criteria. Those guidelines would be based on the GSBPM, with the aim of providing all statistical offices with a common base. He then presented the work plan, the structure of the document and the deadlines for the different stages to be carried out through two working groups, with the goal of completing that methodological document by April 2021.

90. The document on guidelines for the processing, validation and consistency of census data was presented by the representative of Chile, who began by clarifying that although the proposal originally focused on data processing and validation, after the first draft of the document had been prepared, various comments had been received from the countries to place more emphasis on data collection. The recommendation had been accepted and some modifications had been made to the document, so the new objective was to develop guidelines for data collection. He presented the table of contents of the document, which comprised five chapters: (i) Considerations on data collection methods in census project management and planning, (ii) Background on census data collection in Latin America and the Caribbean, (iii) Data collection methods, (iv) Decision matrix of data collection methods (newly incorporated) and (v) Monitoring and follow-up systems in data collection (coverage and quality). He then announced the next steps, which included a restructuring of the schedule because of the pandemic, and noted that, for the same reason, a seminar scheduled to be held in 2020 had had to be cancelled and telework had become the favoured work modality. Finally, he announced that in September, countries would be requested to begin collaborating on the preparation of a draft of the final document.

91. The representative of Mexico spoke about the manual on the design of security and criminal justice statistical systems, noting that its development responded to the need to improve the availability and standardization of international security and criminal justice statistics, which required, *inter alia*, the development of operational guides for the application of international classifications (especially the

International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes). He said that the manual was intended to guide national efforts to generate statistical information on security and criminal justice and to support the management of new projects for the production of crime statistics. There was an agreed table of contents, which incorporated the comments of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and included topics such as national statistical systems and sectoral statistical systems, statistical data ecosystems, components of the criminal justice system and their role in the production of statistics, the scope and content of statistics and the implementation route. He concluded his presentation by identifying the next steps in the development of the manual, which included holding follow-up meetings of the working group (the following meeting was scheduled for September 2020), compiling good practices in the region, making bilateral calls to gather information, and preparing the first draft of the manual for dissemination and feedback.

92. The representative of Chile presented the document of best practices for the adoption of international recommendations on statistics on work relationships, which aimed mainly to incorporate the changes foreseen in the work relationship statistics included in the International Classification of Status in Employment. The aim was to achieve the conceptual and methodological harmonization of labour statistics and to produce a manual adapted to the Latin American and Caribbean context. The speaker said that a questionnaire would soon be sent to the countries to determine their practices and uses, in order to assess their situation.

93. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Panama congratulated the working group coordinators and asked to be included in two of the working groups: the one on measuring prices and volumes in the services sector and the one on using administrative records for economic statistics.

Other matters (agenda item 6)

94. Under this agenda item, the following topics were discussed: the System of urban development indicators and standards (SIEDU), the 2020 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework for the SDGs, the Data For Now initiative, development in transition and statistical production, and the upcoming activities of the Knowledge Transfer Network.

95. With respect to the first topic, Raúl Ponce, Head of the Geography Subdepartment of the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile, described the institute's progress in the generation of indicators of urban quality of life, and referred specifically to maintaining and updating SIEDU. He said that SIEDU had emerged with the objective of monitoring and following up on Chile's National Urban Development Policy, detecting territorial inequalities in terms of urban quality of life within and between the country's cities. The system included 76 indicators classified into 8 priority urban development policy areas and a set of 191 thematic maps covering 80% of the national population. It was the result of inter-agency work and operated under a governance model in which INE was responsible for updating and maintaining the system. In that respect, the institute's institutional structure and recognised track record in integrating statistical and geospatial information had allowed it to play a central role in generating territorial information sustainably over time.

96. He also said that, since 2015, INE had been working on the development of a geostatistical framework based on a geostatistical open data platform that was constantly updated, that integrated information on censuses, surveys and administrative records, and that provided feedback on the operations of INE and other national bodies. The platform had allowed INE to gradually develop a series of by-products that went beyond basic mapping, such as the location of green areas, services, equipment and infrastructure, as well as the analysis of urban growth in terms of density and expansion of the country's cities. The speaker ended by stating that those advances had been possible thanks to the constant support

of the management team and the professionals of the different departments of INE, in addition to cooperation and coordination with other institutions within the national statistical system.

97. The Director-General of the National Statistics Office of the Dominican Republic, Miosotis Rivas, gave an introductory speech, highlighting several strategic areas for the statistical development of her country and the region, and then gave the floor to the Director of the Coordination Department of the National Statistical System of the Dominican Republic, Juan Arias, who presented the process and results of the 2020 comprehensive review of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals. He noted that the review had been carried out by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and had provided an opportunity to improve the indicator framework and contribute to the global monitoring of 2030 Agenda, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/313. In the process, efforts already made at the national and international levels had been taken into account, and improvements had been made by ensuring that changes were limited and the number of indicators in the framework remained almost unchanged. The review had been conducted between March 2019 and March 2020, and had included consultations with experts, the receipt of proposals for improvements and an open consultation of those proposals, which had consisted mainly of suggestions for replacements, deletions, refinements or adjustments to indicators and, in specific cases, additions of indicators. Some 200 proposals had been received, of which 50 had been submitted for open consultation at the global level. The final results, adopted at the fifty-first session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, had resulted in 36 major changes to the current framework, namely, 14 replacements of existing indicators; 8 revisions of indicators; 8 additions of indicators and 6 deletions of existing indicators.

98. Fredy Rodríguez, Data Coordinator of the Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI), then presented the Data For Now Initiative, launched in September 2019, which aimed to coordinate partnerships to close information gaps and promote real-time data generation to improve the monitoring of SDGs. He said that the initiative was supported by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), the World Bank, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations Statistics Division, and that, in its first phase, it included eight countries on three continents—including Colombia and Paraguay—and considered four thematic areas prioritized by countries according to their own needs, namely: education, human mobility, poverty and land use. CEPEI was leading the initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean, and had worked together with Colombia and Paraguay to map information gaps and identify needs to consolidate partnerships, with the ultimate aim of strengthening capacities to implement new methodologies and measurements, and to generate synergies within the cross-cutting teams of national statistical offices.

99. Colombia had prioritized education and poverty, and hoped to make progress in building capacity in updated poverty measurement strategies, using geographical analysis methods and tools. In Paraguay, work was under way on land use and human mobility, with a view to generating a water information system that would facilitate rapid decision-making in the event of extreme natural phenomena. The speaker noted that, to date, capacity-building workshops had been held through the exchange of experiences with other countries and governance workshops with local actors, among others. In conclusion, he highlighted some points of the initiative that were considered fundamental to guarantee its sustainability and impact, including the importance of considering the needs of national actors to respond to real demands, of building trust with different actors to develop local capacities, of aligning multi-stakeholder efforts and of having the support of authorities to accelerate the project, and the benefits of using ICTs to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience in a pandemic.

100. In the ensuing discussion, the Director General of the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC) of Paraguay, Iván Ojeda, expressed gratitude for the initiative and said that it was of great importance to his country, since it had made the institution begin to think beyond traditional statistics and had promoted coordination among actors. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia, Juan Daniel Oviedo, stressed that the initiative had been fundamental in his country to strategically align statistical production with national needs. Colombia had embarked on a strategy of increasing the granularity of various important statistics related to poverty and multidimensional poverty, disaggregating them at the municipal level and even at the block level, through the integration of alternative sources, satellite images and administrative records, and by engaging in big data and data governance initiatives, which were very useful in producing timely information. He added that Colombia also intended to move forward in strengthening the administrative records of the different education systems and noted that the idea was to be able to transmit those capacities to the region and extend the initiative to other countries in the region in order to strengthen the learning community.

101. He then referred to the concept of “development in transition”, a new paradigm that had been coined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and ECLAC in 2017 and that referred to the situation of many countries in the region that were no longer receiving official development assistance because of their economic indicators. He mentioned Colombia’s interest in advancing in statistical production, which would respond to that narrative and help countries to avoid falling into the traps of productivity, lack of confidence in institutional frameworks and social vulnerability, as well as the environmental trap, and invited countries to be part of that initiative, which aimed to guide statistical production to make those traps visible.

102. With regard to the upcoming activities of the Knowledge Transfer Network, the National Director of INE Chile, Sandra Quijada, began by pointing out that that platform aimed to strengthen statistical cooperation and knowledge in the region and, therefore, had played a central role during the pandemic in the integration and management of statistical knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean, through the dissemination of events, documents and other methodological materials. During the first half of 2020, 13 videoconferences—including four for the English-speaking Caribbean countries—had been held on measures taken to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in various areas (such as the collection of prices and other economic statistics, household surveys or population and housing censuses), in which 1,305 people had participated. The website had also recorded more than 17,000 visits. In the second half of 2020, a process of consultation and systematization had been carried out to define new themes of regional interest, in order to address them in future videoconferences. The topics of interest included the impact of COVID-19 on statistics from household surveys, economic and price statistics, and population and housing censuses; environmental statistics; administrative records; new ways of collecting data owing to the pandemic; new sources of information; automatic coding; evaluation of imputation methods; SDMX as a standard for the exchange of statistical data and metadata; and the implementation of the GSBPM model in the national statistical offices of the region.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 7)

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

Closing session

104. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC congratulated the participants of the nineteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas for the fruitful and enriching work carried out over three days of presentations, seminars and parallel events, which had been well attended. He highlighted the presentations on methodological comparisons between regions, the messages of the United Nations Statistics Division and the agreements adopted, which reflected the meaning and importance of statistical activity in the region and of the working groups. He also said that the Knowledge Transfer Network had played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic by helping to consolidate the work of all countries in the statistical field. He welcomed the countries that had joined the working groups and highlighted the renewed dynamics of these groups. In conclusion, he thanked all those who had contributed to the successful realization of the virtual meeting.

105. The Director-General of DANE of Colombia, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, stressed the great value of the Conference as a learning community, since, to paraphrase Eric Hoffer, in times of change such as those currently being experienced, those who were open to learning would reap the benefits of that change. He also stressed that through the Knowledge Transfer Network, bilateral contacts and the constant and unconditional support of the entities of the United Nations system present in each country, national statistical offices had succeeded in fulfilling the important mission of providing information in times of great uncertainty. He noted that one of the biggest challenges ahead was the efficient management of the existing information overload so that that information reached citizens and outlined the path to sustainable development and accelerated the implementation of the SDGs. Finally, he thanked the participants for their work over the three days and concluded the meeting.

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 nineteenth meeting, held online from 25 to 27 August 2020,

1. *Commends* the various actions of national statistical offices and other agencies producing official statistics to provide continuity in statistical production in the framework of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and recognizes the role of official statistics in public policymaking in the context of an emergency and economic reactivation;

2. *Encourages* national statistical offices and other agencies producing official statistics to identify innovations and good practices implemented during this period that can be adopted on a permanent basis to strengthen the efficiency of statistical operations and the quality of official statistics, and underscores the importance of continuing to make progress in the work of disaggregating data by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

3. *Highlights* the work carried out by the secretariat to provide the necessary technical support for the continuity of statistical operations and to collaborate in the dissemination of good practices identified by national statistical offices and agencies producing official statistics;

4. *Requests* the secretariat of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to continue to identify good practices and provide the required technical assistance for the continuity of statistical operations, both through the regular programme of work and through specific projects developed for this purpose, drawing on ongoing global and subregional initiatives to minimize duplication of effort;

5. *Draws attention to* the fact that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many economies in Latin America and the Caribbean have contracted or are expected to contract, thus reducing the resources available to the governments in the region and to statistical offices, against a backdrop of increased resource requirements to address the emerging data collection problems caused by the pandemic and requests to increase the frequency and volume of statistical production;

6. *Expresses concern* about the impact of the pandemic, which has led to the postponement of, among other things, the 2020 census round in several countries in Latin America and especially in the Caribbean, and to the growing uncertainties regarding the development of census projects, and underscores the importance for member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, through the good offices of each government, to provide the financial and human resources needed to guarantee the proper conduct of censuses, which are a source of essential information for public policymaking, as well as an indispensable input for the proper implementation of a large number of statistical operations;

7. *Calls on* the public and private entities that compile administrative records and other data sources to facilitate national statistical offices' access to this information, considering its usefulness for statistical purposes and recognizing that these sources allow for greater and more timely data disaggregation, particularly in the context of the pandemic;

8. *Conveys its thanks* for the presentation on progress made at the global and national levels relating to the consolidation of national statistical offices as data stewards and requests the secretariat to evaluate the actions of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to foster this approach in the region;

9. *Also conveys its thanks* for the presentation of global, regional and national experiences in the measurement of progress towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); calls upon the member States to develop metrics to calculate the achievement of the targets; recommends that these metrics be considered within national development plans; and requests the secretariat to pursue the implementation of this type of harmonized measurement for the region in line with other current developments;

10. *Welcomes* the implementation of the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, the SDG Gateway, developed in conjunction with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in the region under the leadership of the steering committee co-chaired by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the technical coordination of the Commission; and urges the continuation of the tasks that ensure that this platform is constantly maintained and updated;

11. *Takes note* of the outcomes of the comprehensive review of the global SDG indicator framework and urges the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean to pursue the implementation of the indicators prioritized for regional follow-up of the SDGs—considering that these outcomes do not contravene the agreed prioritization—in the synthetic measurement for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—progress, gaps and projections at the national level—, and in the undertaking of activities that encourage coordination and synergies among the various regional initiatives that seek to close gaps in data and statistics production for the 2030 Agenda;

12. *Also takes note* of the *First 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

13. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the progress achieved by the working groups in producing the agreed outputs and urges them to continue their activities, ensuring the necessary adjustments in the light of the restrictions imposed on the operations of national statistical offices because of the COVID-19 pandemic;

14. *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;

15. *Expresses its satisfaction* with the actions of the Knowledge Transfer Network to exchange experiences and recommendations relating to the challenges and solutions adopted by the countries of the region in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and encourages the continued consolidation of dissemination and exchange activities, in particular those related to issues highlighted by the countries at this meeting of the Executive Committee, such as the role of national statistical offices as data stewards and how to ensure the continuity of statistical operations in emergency situations, among other matters;

¹ LC/CE.19/3.

16. *Expresses its commitment* to address the discussions on the production of urban statistics and on the link between statistical production and the challenges of development in transition as part of the forthcoming activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas;

17. *Thanks* the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico, the National Institute of Statistics of Chile, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Division of Gender Affairs of ECLAC for organizing the seven 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;

18. *Urges* the member countries of the Statistical Conference to participate actively in the celebration of World Statistics Day on 20 October, and in the United Nations World Data Forum that will be held virtually from 19 to 21 October 2020;

19. *Requests* that, at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC to be held virtually from 26 to 28 October 2020, the Chair report on the main activities undertaken by the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

Annex 2

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Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

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Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (UNFPA)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

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Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito (UNODC)/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

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Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA)/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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Oficina de las Naciones Unidas para la Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres (UNDRR) / United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

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Specialized agencies**

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Intergovernmental organizations**

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