



First session of the
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Santiago, 30 and 31 May 2023

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**PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean was established by resolution 752(PLEN.36) adopted by the member countries of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) at the thirty-sixth session of the Committee of the Whole, held in December 2021. At that meeting, member States approved the renaming of the Committee on South-South Cooperation as the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean endorsed the work of the Presiding Officers of the Committee, which at the time was chaired by Costa Rica, with Argentina, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru as Vice-Chairs.

Some of the objectives of this subsidiary body of ECLAC are: to strengthen national South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms and possible linkages with North-South and multilateral cooperation; to further South-South and triangular cooperation among regional and extraregional stakeholders, including donor countries and international organizations, to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer and joint activities in the field of cooperation; and to examine the experiences of South-South and triangular cooperation in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and to make progress in evaluating them, in conjunction with the relevant subsidiary bodies that conduct studies in this field.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Four decades of the subsidiary body

In April 1979, at the eighteenth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the member States adopted resolution 387(XVIII),¹ by which they requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to establish in the secretariat appropriate servicing machinery directly responsible for promotion, information and coordination activities related to technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, which led to the establishment of the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions. It was also decided that the question of cooperation among developing countries and regions should be examined at each session of the Commission by a sessional committee, following consultation with governments, in order to examine the intraregional and interregional cooperation activities carried out by the secretariat of the Commission with a view to formulating appropriate support measures to promote such cooperation.

The Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions was thus established and met for the first time on 5 May 1981 in the framework of the nineteenth session of the Commission held in Montevideo, when a note by the Secretariat entitled “Activities of the CEPAL system in promotion and support of technical and economic co-operation among developing countries” was presented.² The Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions operated continuously and held periodic meetings from 1981 to 2004.

By its resolution 58/220 on economic and technical cooperation among developing countries, adopted in December 2003,³ the United Nations General Assembly urged developing countries and their partners to

¹ See [online] https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/16270/RES-387-E_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

² See [online] https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/14852/S8100023_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

³ See [online] <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/58/220>.

intensify South-South and triangular cooperation, as they contributed to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. It also urged all relevant United Nations organizations and multilateral institutions to intensify their efforts to effectively mainstream the use of South-South cooperation in the design, formulation and implementation of their regular programmes and to consider increasing allocations of human, technical and financial resources for supporting South-South cooperation initiatives.

In line with the above and pursuant to resolution 611(XXX), adopted by the member States of ECLAC at its thirtieth session in San Juan in 2004, the countries decided to change the name of the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions to Committee on South-South Cooperation and requested, among other measures, modernization of the Commission's strategic approaches with respect to international cooperation for development, including South-South, North-South and multilateral cooperation, in accordance with the new mandates and approaches adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations; intensification of activities aimed at incorporating modalities of South-South cooperation into the various areas of the programme of work of the secretariat, especially with regard to the formulation and execution of technical cooperation projects; and continued strengthening of strategic partnerships with donor countries and institutions, both within and outside the region, to increase levels of North-South and South-South cooperation.

In 2019, the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)⁴ reaffirmed the key role of United Nations system entities in promoting South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since then, various efforts have been made within the United Nations system to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); this has been done through support for and facilitation of policy dialogue, promotion of technical assistance, policy support, development and strengthening of collaborative partnerships, knowledge sharing, active multi-stakeholder engagement, and mobilization of development finance from all sources.

All efforts by the United Nations system to strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda through South-South and triangular cooperation are also being made in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, with outcomes such as: the establishment of a new generation of United Nations country teams; a strengthened United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; revitalization of the resident coordinator system; and an overhaul of the regional approach, including creation of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean in November 2020.

In this context of change, the international cooperation system is also transforming with the same speed and depth as the international reality.

In October 2020, in the framework of the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, Costa Rica, in its capacity as Chair of the Commission, rekindled the proposal to modify the cycle of meetings of the Committee on South-South Cooperation so that it would meet separately from the sessions of ECLAC, in the same way as the other subsidiary bodies of the Commission. This was proposed so that its Presiding Officers could adopt their own decisions on the dates and agendas of meetings, and it would thereby acquire the status of a conference as another subsidiary body of the Commission, as was done in 2012 with the Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development when it became the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which allowed for more and better follow-up of regional implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development, more in-depth

⁴ See [online] <https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/291>.

examination of the issues specific to the Conference, and adoption of agreements such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

Similarly, a regional conference on development cooperation would acquire its own identity and would be able to make decisions on the substantive items to be addressed in its sessions. Those decisions would also guide its work, to be followed up by Presiding Officers, over a two-year period.

The conference would include all member States and associate members of ECLAC: the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with several nations of North America, Europe and Asia that have historical, economic and cultural ties with the region (46 States in total) and the 14 associate members.

The conference would also be able to consider substantive discussion papers and establish an agenda that can be covered in two or three days, as is the case with other meetings of subsidiary bodies of ECLAC.⁵

The new global context, with gaps that have been deepened by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its severe economic and social repercussions, makes it vital to strengthen institutional frameworks in the area of cooperation, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their work and the implementation of their decisions. The task is a very challenging one, calling for discussions, agreements and cooperation actions to overcome the crisis, to build forward better, with a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability, to move towards a sustainable and inclusive development model.

(a) The origin of the proposal

The proposal to transform the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC into a regional conference was made by the member States of the Commission following the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) and in-depth discussions on the importance of this issue, as highlighted by the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region in various forums, such as the thirty-seventh session of ECLAC, held in May 2018 in Havana.

At the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC in October 2020, in resolution 749(XXXVIII) on the Committee on South-South Cooperation, the countries requested “the Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to convene, with the support of the secretariat, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, outside the framework of the session of the Commission, as soon as possible and no later than the second half of 2021, in order to examine ways to enhance its functioning, including the need for institutional changes, with a view to providing recommendations to the Commission on these deliberations”.

The Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, at their tenth meeting held in March 2021, requested the secretariat “to prepare a draft programme for the extraordinary meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, to be held no later than the second half of 2021, as requested in ECLAC resolution 749(XXXVIII) on the Committee on South-South Cooperation, adopted by the Commission at its thirty-eighth session.”

⁵ Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies; Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean; Statistical Conference of the Americas; Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee; Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).

2. The second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)

The Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), in its outcome document, called upon the United Nations development system to assist developing countries, upon request, in building the human and institutional capacity needed to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes for South-South and triangular cooperation. It also recognized the role of the regional commissions in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, in accordance with their respective mandates, and bearing in mind the United Nations development system reform.

Following the guidelines of BAPA+40, the outcome document for which refers to subregional, regional and interregional triangular cooperation, ECLAC offers its capacity to assist the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in building knowledge networks and partnerships, improving technical and research capacities, and providing technical, policy and research support, all with a view to increasing the development impact of South-South, North-South, triangular and multilateral cooperation.

3. Strategy of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation: spur collective and coherent action through the United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, 2020–2024

The growing complexity of South-South and triangular cooperation activities requires the United Nations system to be more strategic, coherent, coordinated, agile, collaborative and results-oriented at all levels: nationally, regionally and globally. Accordingly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his report to the General Assembly on the state of South-South cooperation, requested the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation “to coordinate, in consultation with the United Nations agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy” (United Nations, 2017, para. 94).

Thus, building on existing synergies, a United Nations inter-agency mechanism developed a United Nations system-wide coordination strategy, within prevailing strategic frameworks that guide global sustainable development, taking into account the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Through implementation of this strategy, United Nations entities will be better positioned to coordinate and harmonize their institutional policies and operational and programmatic support for South-South and triangular cooperation at the global, regional and national levels, in order to support the national priorities of the countries of the South, to further the 2030 Agenda and the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, 2020–2024 (United Nations, 2021) addresses the regional dimension by stating in paragraph 40 that the engagement of the United Nations system in South-South and triangular cooperation at the regional level will focus on support to policy formulation, knowledge-sharing, and promoting regional cooperation, including through implementation of regional agreements and policy frameworks. The strategy also acknowledges that because of their mandates and focus on development issues that are regional in scope, regional commissions will play a key role in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation at the regional level, in partnership with other United Nations development system partners. Region-specific arrangements should be developed by regional collaborative platforms, once established.

With regard to support to policy development and regional cooperation, paragraph 41 states that most South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives are developed and implemented within regions owing to

commonality of history, language, culture, ethnicity, geographical proximity and economic complementarities. Regional institutions are important venues for policy dialogue, agenda-setting, policy coordination, and the design and implementation of regional programmes and initiatives. In this regard, United Nations South-South and triangular cooperation activities at the regional level will continue to be targeted towards promoting strategy and policy formulation and coordination; facilitating peer-to-peer learning and knowledge, expertise and technology sharing; and supporting efforts towards regional dialogue and integration through the implementation of regional development frameworks, cooperation programmes, treaties and agreements.

Paragraph 42 also notes that coordination at the regional level strengthens the policy coherence and collaboration of United Nations entities in addressing regional development issues, including in support of South-South and triangular cooperation.

With regard to knowledge-sharing, the strategy recognizes in paragraph 43 that a strengthened United Nations response at the regional level is essential to maximizing the impact of support for South-South and triangular cooperation in every country. The demands of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and the cross-border, subregional and regional challenges that countries face in their efforts to achieve the SDGs require a collaborative regional architecture and demand effective integration and system-wide coherence between the national, regional and global levels.

In addition, knowledge generated at the regional level plays a significant role in informing the common country analysis carried out at the national level, which integrates analysis of relevant regional, subregional and cross-border dynamics (para. 44).

The strategy also recognizes the role of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC by noting that dedicated regional and subregional South-South and triangular cooperation forums have been established in some regions, under the auspices of the regional commissions, to provide mechanisms to share best practices and knowledge on South-South and triangular cooperation. These mechanisms can be further leveraged, as appropriate, for enhanced policy coordination and partnerships to assist member States in accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through increased use of South-South and Triangular cooperation (para. 45).

4. From the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions to the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC

ECLAC is the only regional commission that has had a permanent intergovernmental body for cooperation: the Committee on South-South Cooperation.

The Committee on South-South Cooperation examined various public policy issues in the region, facilitating cooperation and peer-to-peer learning based on comparative experiences, adopting regional consensus in its respective areas of responsibility and issuing mandates for the ECLAC secretariat.

(a) The mandates of the Committee on South-South Cooperation

General Assembly resolution 58/220 on economic and technical cooperation among developing countries of 23 December 2003 encouraged developing countries and their partners to intensify South-South and triangular cooperation and urged relevant United Nations organizations and multilateral institutions to intensify their efforts to effectively mainstream the use of South-South cooperation in the design, formulation and implementation of their regular programme.

In line with this mandate, and pursuant to resolution 611(XXX) adopted at the thirtieth session of ECLAC (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 28 June–2 July 2004), it was decided to change the name of the Committee on Cooperation among Developing Countries and Regions to the Committee on South-South Cooperation, in accordance with the new mandates and approaches adopted by the General Assembly.

One of the key aims of the Committee on South-South Cooperation was to strengthen international cooperation for development, including South-South, North-South, triangular and multilateral cooperation.

Resolution 611(XXX) conferred a mandate upon ECLAC to continue to strengthen strategic partnerships with donor countries and institutions, both within and outside the region, to increase levels of North-South and South-South cooperation; to strengthen contacts and collaboration with the development organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, and especially with other regional commissions, to foster interregional cooperation in the context of globalization; and to request the international community to support the efforts of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to respond effectively to the opportunities and problems associated with globalization so that they can position themselves advantageously in the global economic system, benefit from international trade and investment, strengthen productive development and environmental sustainability and institute appropriate systems of social protection.

In the area of South-South cooperation, a mandate was conferred upon the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC to: intensify activities aimed at incorporating modalities of South-South cooperation into the various areas of the programme of work of the secretariat, especially with regard to the formulation and execution of technical cooperation projects financed with extrabudgetary resources from bilateral or multilateral sources of cooperation; to take advantage of the ample networking opportunities offered by the Commission's website on cooperation to widely disseminate projects and activities, both of the Commission and of member countries, that promote and strengthen South-South cooperation; and to participate in regional or subregional coordination activities and mechanisms for South-South cooperation in areas in which the Commission has recognized competence. ECLAC was also requested to support the regional activities envisaged by the United Nations Development Programme and the Latin American Economic System with a view to promoting the use of South-South cooperation in the work carried out by organizations of the United Nations system in the region.⁶

(b) Seventeen years of existence of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC

The year 2021 marked the seventeenth anniversary of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC. For close to two decades, the Committee addressed a range of issues intended to strengthen international development cooperation activities, including South-South, North-South, triangular and multilateral cooperation, as well as peer learning through comparative experiences.

A brief review of the resolutions adopted by the Committee from 2004 to 2018 and the agreements of the Presiding Officers from 2004 to 2021 suffices to illustrate the innovation and strengthening of strategic approaches with respect to South-South cooperation and all international development cooperation, including North-South and multilateral cooperation, the analysis of new alternatives for mobilizing the resources necessary for financing the development of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the development of broad sets of indicators to reflect the particular realities in the

⁶ See resolution 611(XXX) [online] <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/16099>.

countries and their needs, so that classification as a middle-income country ceases to be an a priori impediment to participation in official development assistance.⁷

Notable successes in institutional collaboration were agreements with other divisions of ECLAC, such as work on issues related to structural development gaps with the Economic Development Division and its Financing for Development Unit. Similarly, the Committee collaborated with subsidiary bodies of ECLAC—including the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean—on substantive issues such as the promotion of measures in support of the economic, political and physical autonomy of women, the design of methodologies to measure South-South cooperation and the evaluation of South-South cooperation, as well as with various entities involved in international cooperation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to generate synergies and complementarities and avoid duplication of efforts.

With regard to the exchange of technical experience and knowledge related to common problems among the countries of the region, examples include evaluations of South-South cooperation, the design of methodologies and the development of indicators for measuring the social and economic impact of South-South cooperation, and supporting the countries of the region in calculation of structural gaps, which is a valuable tool for helping to measure and visualize development levels in each country beyond per capita income.

In its 17 years of existence, the Committee heard debates on and considered the implementation of development agendas the likes of the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (in the framework of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the preparatory process for BAPA+40 and its outcome document.

The Committee on South-South Cooperation championed support for proposals related to financing for development, calling for “every country to build the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into their international cooperation strategy”, and “to reflect on ways in which to promote the 2030 Agenda through cooperation” (ECLAC, 2017, p.12). Furthermore, in line with the multi-stakeholder approach of the 2030 Agenda and the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, it opened up participation in the meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to multiple stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, foundations and academia, as well representatives of parliaments and local governments, among others, with a view to maintaining a dialogue that would contribute to regional decision-making focused on improving South-South cooperation.

It was thanks to the Committee on South-South Cooperation that the Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean was established, by virtue of resolution 730(XXXVII) of ECLAC. The Network aims to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of governments in the region that are establishing or seeking to establish national mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the 17 SDGs.

As part of the BAPA+40 process, the Committee held regional dialogues on the priorities of the region, including a meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2018, and following up on the implementation of the Buenos Aires outcome document was one of the motives for consideration of the transition from Committee to a conference.

⁷ See ECLAC (2021a).

B. THE WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

1. The economic and social context

(a) Latin America and the Caribbean facing multiple crises

As ECLAC has previously affirmed, Latin America and the Caribbean is facing a series of cascading crises. The region has not yet fully recovered from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and is now facing a global financial crisis, economic tensions among the world's main economic hubs, the conflict in Ukraine, renewed inflation and continuing widespread migration, among other events, as well as a worsening environmental emergency and an accelerating technological revolution (ECLAC, 2023a).

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are now facing degenerating investment and production conditions, combined with worsening economic and social conditions for their populations. This situation calls for all stakeholders in the region, both public and private, to realign their policies and actions to make further progress toward fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. This is especially important for the targets that have been particularly affected by the succession of crises.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the combination of external and internal factors resulting from policy decisions or from a lack thereof, has reduced the capacity for economic growth, limited creation of quality jobs, and hampered the fight against poverty and extreme poverty. The region's economic and social structures have been weakened and the inertia of weak economic performance has taken a firmer hold.

In the decade following the global financial crisis, 2010–2019, the regional GDP growth rate slowed from 6% to 0.2%. In fact, 2014–2023 was the period of slowest growth since the 1950s (0.8%), even below the average rate for the lost decade of the 1980s, which was 2%. The region suffered the worst crisis in its history in 2020, with a contraction of around 7% in GDP. According to the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022* (ECLAC, 2023b), in a situation of external uncertainties and domestic constraints, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean will grow by around 3.7% in 2022, almost half the 6.7% recorded in 2021.

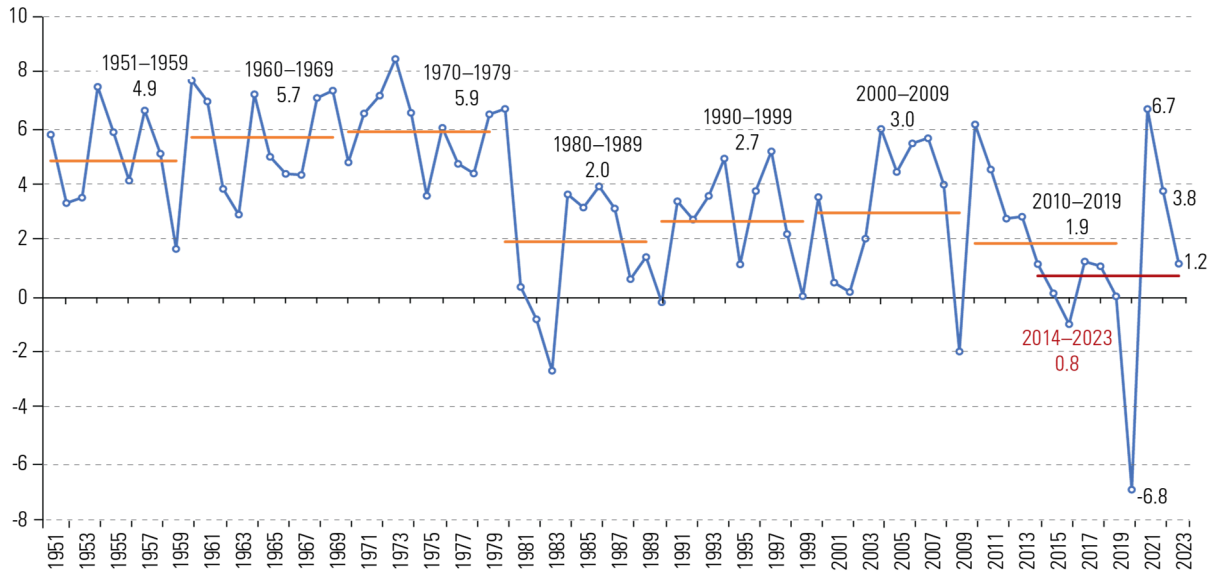
This slowdown in economic growth is expected to continue in 2023, to a regional rate of 1.2% (ECLAC, 2023c).

In 2021, poverty and extreme poverty rates declined in the region, and the middle-income strata expanded; however, it was not enough to fully reverse the harmful effects of the pandemic, with a sharp rise in poverty and a slight increase in income inequality in 2020. In 2021, the poverty rate for the total population of Latin America was 32.3% (down 0.5 percentage points from 2020) and the extreme poverty rate was 12.9% (down 0.2 percentage points from 2020).

From 2021 to 2020, income inequality in Latin America (measured by the Gini coefficient) decreased slightly to 0.458, close to the level recorded in 2019 (ECLAC, 2022b).

ECLAC (2022b) projected that by the end of 2022, 32.1% of the population would be living in poverty (201 million people) and 13.1% in extreme poverty (82 million people), meaning a slight decrease in poverty and a slight increase in extreme poverty with respect to 2021, owing to the combined effects of economic growth, labour market trends and inflation. These figures mean 15 million more people living in poverty than before the pandemic and 12 million more people living in extreme poverty than in 2019.

Figure 1
Latin America and the Caribbean: GDP growth rate, 1951–2023
 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Halfway to 2030 in Latin America and the Caribbean: progress and recommendations for acceleration* (LC/FDS.6/3), Santiago, 2023, on the basis of official figures

Table 1
Latin America and the Caribbean: growth projections for 2023
 (Percentages)

Latin America and the Caribbean	1.2
Central America	3.1
Central America and Mexico	2.0
The Caribbean	9.1
The Caribbean (excluding Guyana)	3.5

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean will grow by 1.2% in 2023 in a context of growing uncertainties”, *Press Release*, 20 April 2023.

Note: Central America includes Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Projected levels of extreme poverty for 2022 represent a reversal of a quarter of a century of progress for the region. In addition, poverty is more prevalent in certain population groups: more than 45% of the region’s children and adolescents live in poverty and the poverty rate for women aged 20–59 is higher than that for men in all the countries. Similarly, poverty is considerably higher among the Indigenous and Afrodescendent populations (ECLAC, 2022b).

The unemployment projected by ECLAC for 2022 (2022b) represents a 22-year setback, which affected women in particular, with female unemployment rising from 9.5% in 2019 to 11.6% in 2022.

ECLAC (2023b) expects lower inflation in both advanced and emerging economies, although levels remain high. In Latin America and the Caribbean, year-on-year inflation averaged 3.9% for 2010–2019, rising to 7.3% in 2022, and is projected to be 4.8% for 2023. Measures to combat inflation have led to tighter global financial conditions and driven up volatility and risk aversion on financial markets. This has driven up debt service costs, further narrowed fiscal space and increased the risk of a global recession in 2023.

(b) The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean need to reinvigorate their economies and transform development models

ECLAC (2022a) has stated that the combination of challenges such as low growth, high inequality, fragile health systems, limited institutional capacities and quality and high levels of informality and poverty make it vital to implement an ambitious recovery agenda, with transformation of development models, shunning gradual or tentative change.

Transformation of the model requires decisive action in at least 10 priority areas, as ECLAC proposed at its thirty-ninth session (Buenos Aires, 24–25 October 2022). These areas include: productive development policies to drive growth and create quality jobs; policies to reduce inequality and improve social mobility; social policies and policies to build and strengthen welfare states, guaranteeing the rights of particularly vulnerable population groups; policies to strengthen formal education and vocational training; elimination of gender inequalities and progress towards a care society; policies to promote an environmental big push, including policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation; digital transformation policies; policies on migration flows with a human rights approach; promotion of integration; macroeconomic policies that foster development (ECLAC, 2022a).

The sectoral dimension is crucial to this strategy, to boost growth and create jobs, as it is in that dimension that company strategies, business models and processes for capital formation and job creation are determined. Although their specific characteristics must be defined in each national context, ECLAC has proposed the following sectors that can boost or drive the economy and are particularly promising: the energy transition; renewable energies; green hydrogen; e-mobility; the circular economy; the bioeconomy; the pharmaceutical industry; the life sciences industry; the medical device industry; exports of Internet-enabled modern services; advanced manufacturing; the care society; sustainable tourism; e-government; and taking advantage of the geographical relocation of production as part of the reconfiguration of global supply chains (ECLAC, 2023b).

2. Structure of the document

This technical document has been prepared to support the work of the first session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. The document describes the path that the topic of cooperation has followed within ECLAC, and summarizes how various authors have analysed the issues to be discussed at the first session of the Conference.

The first chapter outlines the evolution and milestones of South-South and triangular cooperation, as a basis for planning the region's future in these areas. The issues discussed in the chapter include the early years of South-South cooperation, its underlying values and propositions, and the institutional milestones of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA) and the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40). The chapter also highlights, at the national level, consolidation of cooperation institutions and, at the regional level, the growing importance of cooperation between subregional and regional integration organizations and mechanisms.

The second chapter addresses the prevailing global and regional narratives on cooperation and focuses, among these, on the proposals and concepts developed by ECLAC, which have been shared and discussed with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: middle-income traps, structural development gaps, development in transition and the specific situation of Caribbean small island developing States.

The third chapter underscores, by examining selected cases, the importance of the institutional framework for cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the different formats of international development cooperation in the countries of the region, against the backdrop of graduation from official development assistance (ODA).

The fourth chapter reviews assessment and evaluation of South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. To provide some background, the chapter describes the work of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, and provides examples of the progress made through the *Reports on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America* published by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concept of Total Official Support for Sustainable Development and quantification of South-South cooperation to mobilize funds for the United Nations SDGs.

The fifth chapter discusses changes with respect to cooperation, which is increasingly multi-stakeholder, and opportunities to forge broad public-private partnerships in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This chapter also outlines the experiences of some countries in the region, demonstrating how decentralized governments, civil society and the private sector have become key stakeholders, with increasingly leading roles in this area.

The sixth chapter deals with international cooperation in comprehensive risk and disaster management, examining the repercussions of disasters in the region, disaster risk management and cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, international cooperation, and the regional solutions that have been adopted. This section also briefly highlights the importance of the Fund for Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Response to Natural Disasters of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Lastly, the seventh chapter highlights some challenges relating to international development cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the new global context.

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I. A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PATH OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

A. THE EARLY YEARS

South-South and triangular cooperation has been shaped over decades, although earlier forms differed from those that characterize it today. Huitrón Morales (2016) suggests that the conceptualization of South-South cooperation can be traced back directly as far as the first congress of the League against Imperialism, held in Brussels in 1927. This, says Huitrón Morales, was “the commencement on which the political principles of a partnership from the South would be built”, but it was to be in 1955, at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung (Indonesia), that the “discourse of the South” which has lasted to this day, and whose main principles are non-interference, respect for sovereignty and the pursuit of mutual cooperation, would be developed. Huitrón Morales (2016) also notes that “although economically the ‘spirit of Bandung’ did not prevail, politically and ideologically it represented the admiration and liberalization of countries that were under the colonial yoke, allowing a new voice to be heard and inspiring an international political discourse that positioned them as an independent force”.

After the Second World War, international cooperation concentrated on actions involving the collaboration of more developed countries with more disadvantaged ones (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021). The most developed countries became aware of the existence of endemic problems such as hunger, illiteracy and poverty that made it impossible to improve living conditions in some societies. Between the 1940s and 1950s, in what is known as the first generation of international development cooperation, underdevelopment was associated with the backwardness of non-industrialized societies.

The 1960s were marked by developmentalist proposals. The Third World was the subject of numerous conferences, papers, studies and publications in which a linear view of progress from traditional to modern societies prevailed. Cooperation strategies pursued rapid economic growth with investment in productive infrastructure. The Bandung event (1955) contributed to the first Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade (1961), whose participants united around a discourse that identified developing countries. 1961 also saw the creation of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the purpose of which was to establish guidelines for the cooperation policy of the organization’s members. Also in this decade (1964), the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was held in Geneva (Switzerland), resulting in the creation of the Group of 77 (later expanded to 118), which for the first time provided a framework for joint action by developing countries, while also inaugurating the so-called North-South dialogue (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021).

B. THE BUENOS AIRES PLAN OF ACTION FOR PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (BAPA)

In the 1970s, as a result of ongoing changes in economies and societies, a critical view dividing the world into centre and periphery was born; however, values of solidarity, equity and justice were incorporated into this outlook, with a demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), embodied in the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (1974) (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021). This was the decade in which South-South cooperation was most actively defined and promoted, a fundamental milestone being the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECLAC, 2021),

convened in Buenos Aires in 1978, where representatives of 138 Member States of the United Nations agreed on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA).

“The objectives of BAPA included promoting national and collective self-sufficiency among developing countries, while taking due account of the necessary support of global interdependence on the path to development. BAPA emphasized that technical cooperation among developing countries was intended to complement traditional development cooperation, and it sketched out broad guidelines for that endeavour. BAPA became a regional and global reference point: its outcome document—which laid the foundations and set the principles for horizontal technical cooperation, leaving behind the vertical, assistance-focused vision of traditional hegemonic cooperation that had prevailed prior to 1978—was the most frequently quoted work in the field of South-South cooperation until 2020” (Oviedo, 2021, p. 13).

“Another of the many contributions of BAPA was to promote the institutional strengthening of technical development cooperation. By way of example, its influence can be seen in the establishment of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1980 (known as the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation since 2003), the creation of the Inter-governmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1981, the launch of the South Commission in 1986 and the inauguration of the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation in 1995” (Oviedo, 2021, pp. 13–14).

C. REGIONAL INTEGRATION ORGANIZATIONS AND MECHANISMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

“In the 1990s, amidst the political and economic realignments brought on by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the development and consolidation of globalization, the definition and scope of South-South cooperation became broader and more complex. In 1995, the United Nations General Assembly recognized South-South cooperation as an important element of international development cooperation, an essential basis for national and collective self-reliance and a guarantee for the participation and inclusion of developing countries in the world economy. The General Assembly also introduced the concept of ‘pivotal countries’ to refer to developing countries with the capacity to provide aid and expertise to other countries with similar or lower levels of gross domestic product (GDP)” (Oviedo, 2021, p. 14).

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) also notes that regional and subregional integration mechanisms began to gain recognition in the 1990s as important instruments of South-South cooperation (ECLAC, 2021). These mechanisms attained full development after 2000, when countries became increasingly involved in discussions and agreements on the construction of a fairer development architecture.

Perhaps the most significant example of the importance of cooperation for regional integration bodies and mechanisms is provided by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Since its foundation, CELAC has treated cooperation as a fundamental instrument of regional integration.

CELAC was established in 2010 by virtue of the Latin American and Caribbean Unity Summit Declaration to consolidate the unity and political integration of the region by pursuing synergy, coordination and complementarity between cooperation actions. The 2011 Caracas Declaration “On the Bicentenary of the Struggle for Independence towards the Path of Our Liberators” made cooperation the basis for relations between States and a pillar of economic development (para. 27). At the first CELAC Summit in 2013, a Working Group on International Cooperation was created by unanimous agreement, and one of the objectives it recognized was to move forward with the construction of a South-South and triangular cooperation policy aimed at contributing to the reduction of asymmetries, coordinating bilateral and subregional agendas, forging common positions and enabling regional consensus to be reached on specific issues. In the 2014 Havana Declaration, the countries of CELAC reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing regional, subregional, bilateral and triangular development cooperation programmes alongside a regional South-South and triangular cooperation policy that would take account of the specific characteristics and needs of the various areas and subregions and of each of the countries in the grouping (para. 22). In 2015, in Costa Rica, CELAC issued the Political Declaration of Belén, recognizing the importance and specificities of South-South cooperation and reaffirming its vision of cooperation as a concrete manifestation of solidarity between the peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, improves their self-sufficiency and facilitates the achievement of the development objectives established at the national and international levels. In the 2016 Political Declaration of Quito - Middle of the World, with a view to identifying regional cooperation priorities, CELAC reiterated that the Declaration of Santiago, the Havana Special Declaration on International Cooperation and the CELAC Conceptual Framework on International Cooperation would guide cooperation in the Community (para. 36). In 2017, in Punta Cana (Dominican Republic), member States approved a template for the development of a CELAC South-South and triangular cooperation policy, and in 2018, at the request of El Salvador as the chair pro tempore, ECLAC presented a proposal for a regional policy on South-South and triangular cooperation.

As an example of developments during the years of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, CELAC formed a strategic partnership with ECLAC and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on a regional pandemic strategy. In April 2021, ECLAC launched the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean to continue to support monitoring of the medium- and long-term spread of the virus and report on the policy measures taken by the countries with a view to containing the pandemic and reducing its economic and social impacts. As a regional public good, the Observatory has generated and disseminated information to support evidence-based decision-making by governments, businesses, academic institutions and civil society organizations in the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2022, an agreement was reached in Buenos Aires to create the Fund for Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Response to Natural Disasters (FACRID) in order to implement disaster prevention, mitigation, response and recovery projects (see chapter VI of this document for more information).

In the 2000s, conceptual refinement of what constituted fair and effective aid for development was accompanied by an economic boom that led to a significant increase in aid flows. In addition to the work of CELAC described above, another milestone in that decade was the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey (Mexico) in 2002, which resulted in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development. This included as a priority the establishment of partnerships between donors and recipients, particularly in support of those most in need, and stressed that, to be effective, these partnerships should be guided by the development plans of the recipient countries, among other guidelines relating to the mobilization of private and public resources, foreign trade and external debt. Another notable event was the 2009 High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Nairobi, where it was reaffirmed that South-South cooperation was a

common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South, born out of shared experiences and sympathies, based on their common objectives and solidarity, and guided by, inter alia, the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free from any conditionalities. The Nairobi outcome document encouraged developing countries to “improve South-South and triangular cooperation through the dissemination of results, the sharing of lessons and good practices, and replication, including through the voluntary exchange of experience for the benefit of developing countries, and according to their policies and priorities for development” (para. 20(d)). The document also stated that South-South cooperation should not be viewed as official development assistance, among other reasons because it is a partnership among equals based on solidarity (para. 18).

In 2015, the international community adopted the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognized a prominent role for South-South cooperation in achieving its goals and targets. The 2030 Agenda, like other important frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, treats South-South cooperation activities as complementing North-South, triangular and multilateral cooperation in the effort to strengthen international development cooperation.

D. THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40)

At the second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) in 2019, the countries attending highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation and proposed actions at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen it, including devising methodologies to measure the impact of South-South cooperation and gathering empirical evidence to support the mobilization of additional resources for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Buenos Aires outcome document encouraged developing countries to build their own systems to evaluate the quality and effects of South-South and triangular cooperation programmes and improve data collection at the national level in the interests of cooperation on the development of methodologies and statistics, bearing in mind the specific principles and unique characteristics of South-South cooperation. It also encouraged actors to support initiatives relating to information and data collection, coordination and dissemination and to the evaluation of South-South cooperation, at the request of developing countries. Furthermore, interested developing countries were invited to engage in consultations and forums on non-binding voluntary methodologies that would build on existing experiences, take account of the specificities and different modalities of South-South cooperation and respect the diversity of this type of cooperation and of national approaches. Like the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), in 2019 the BAPA+40 Conference charted a way forward for the coming years in the effort to develop stronger ties between the countries of the South through increased technical, financial, social and political cooperation (Oviedo, 2021).

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II. REGIONAL NARRATIVES ABOUT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

A. THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In recent decades, international cooperation and the adoption of international objectives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been important complementary tools in the pursuit of development and economic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, notwithstanding high economic growth, sometimes sustained by boom periods that have improved poverty rates and access to education and health care, there are still multiple challenges stemming from structural conditions in the region's countries.

A new architecture of international development cooperation, and specifically of South-South and triangular cooperation, has taken shape in recent years, boosting the generation of innovative ideas and concrete projects and allowing the voices of the South to be heard in the drive for innovation and development. In the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, this important process of change has contributed to the reorganization of institutions, the creation of cooperation programmes, projects and actions and the work of reflection, political dialogue and reinforcement of common regionwide positions.

Ayllón (2012) described this process of change in cooperation practices and highlighted a number of major developments that are closely associated with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a road map towards a new development paradigm and that serve to guide and support multilateral cooperation. They are: (i) the formulation of renewed approaches centred on the human development perspective and capacity-building; (ii) the inclusion of an expanded range of topics in a fuller and more complex agenda with a variety of interconnected themes such as gender, governance, human rights, the environment and public goods; (iii) the creation of new instruments and mechanisms designed to make the fight against poverty, among other developing country priorities, more participatory and effective; (iv) the identification of different forms of financing in addition to official development assistance (ODA) that mobilize the private sector in partnerships with the public sector and include financial flows such as remittances; (v) consensus-building around a new agenda that emphasizes effectiveness and quality in the management of the aid provided and received on the basis of a number of principles set out in paragraph 43 of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002) and subsequently adopted by the donors of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), multilateral financial institutions and some recipient countries (the “partners”, in the new jargon) in the Rome Declaration on Harmonization (2003), the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), the Accra Declaration (2008) and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011); and (vi) the proliferation of cooperation actors, especially philanthropic actors and those from the global South, with the arrival on the scene of emerging economies, most of them middle-income countries, whose cooperation efforts are focused on countries and sectors that have been neglected by traditional donors or that are usually the preserve of DAC organizations.

Given the change in cooperation practices, ECLAC (2021) has argued for the need to reconfigure traditional models of cooperation and move towards a multilateral version operating on multiple scales and including all types of actors. It is hoped that cooperation modalities will have a large toolbox incorporating, among other things, financing instruments, climate change funds, blended finance and debt swaps for environmental protection measures, as well as the necessary mobilization of local resources.

B. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, A MIDDLE-INCOME REGION

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region of high-income and upper middle-income countries. Only four countries are lower middle-income (El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), while one (Haiti) is considered low-income. According to ECLAC (2023), this situation makes it harder to mobilize resources, whether in the form of ODA or funding from a variety of other sources.

Since Latin America and the Caribbean was designated a middle-income region, there has been a significant decline in ODA in relation to average gross national income (GNI) and to what other developing regions receive, and this decline has accelerated since the 2000s (ECLAC, 2012). In 2017, starting with Chile, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) began to “graduate” Latin American and Caribbean countries, which meant that they would no longer receive ODA, a process which was to be extended to the whole region.⁸

The DAC of OECD distinguishes between two groups of countries to establish an “objective” criterion for the receipt of ODA: “developed countries”, which are basically the high-income countries in the World Bank classification, and “developing countries”, the low-, lower middle- and upper middle-income countries in the same classification, which are the potential recipients of ODA (DAC, 2018). When a country moves into the high-income bracket, it “graduates” according to the DAC criterion and stops receiving ODA on the assumption that countries have more resources and tools to fight poverty and finance their development as their per capita income levels improve (Sanahuja, 2020). Although the DAC criterion has some flexibility, in that a country which exceeds the high-income threshold remains on the list of potential ODA recipients for three years and only drops out of it at the end of that time if this level has been sustained, it treats development as a stage or goal that is reached. The DAC does not seem to envisage the possibility that the improvements achieved by countries may not be sustainable over time, or that changes in the economic, social or environmental context may set a country’s development back to an earlier stage.

The changes in the international cooperation system since the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,⁹ which excluded many Latin American and Caribbean countries from ODA, have led to a deterioration in relations between the region’s economies and those of the North. Latin American and Caribbean countries that have undergone “graduation” have argued that it excludes them from international cooperation resources and from a channel for official dialogue between countries, and consequently limits their ability to mobilize other financial resources (ECLAC, 2021). Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the region’s countries has highlighted the importance and potential not only of the financial dimension, but also of technical cooperation, capacity-building and technology transfer as key contributions that South-South cooperation can make to economic and productive recovery (FAO, 2019; FAO/UNOSSC, 2022).

As relations between the economies of the North and South have deteriorated, traditional donor countries have sought new opportunities for interaction and a greater presence in the region through triangular cooperation, programmes operated by international organizations and other multilateral spaces and platforms (Morasso and Lamas, 2020). Some bilateral donors have also maintained their development

⁸ ODA comprises all net disbursements of credits and grants made according to OECD criteria on concessional financial terms and having as their primary objective the economic and social development of the recipient country.

⁹ This concerns commitments made alike by donor and recipient countries, international agencies, international financial institutions and civil society organizations to achieve effectiveness in development outcomes. These commitments are grouped around five main principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.

programmes even in countries not eligible for ODA when they consider that strategic partnerships are in place in specific thematic areas or sectors (ECLAC, 2021).

C. ECLAC FORMULATIONS

A country's income level does not necessarily indicate that its level of development is sustainable, and nor does it reflect the country's capacity to access development finance and mobilize domestic and external resources for development. Latin America and the Caribbean currently faces particular challenges in the areas of inclusion, reduction of inequalities and sustainability.

In recent years, both the countries of the region and those of the North have strongly articulated the need to move towards the development of complex multidimensional taxonomies with the capacity to clarify the disparate challenges facing the countries in their pursuit of progress and thence to guide cooperation policies (Sanahuja, 2020). ECLAC has been working on this issue for more than a decade. In the ECLAC framework, there are three complementary cooperation formulations relating to the need for Latin American and Caribbean countries to mobilize resources for development: middle-income traps, structural development gaps and development in transition.

1. Middle-income traps

Situations in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean still vary greatly, whether they are viewed at the level of territory, of social groups or sectors or of branches of economic activity, among others. They include predicaments such as poverty, social exclusion and lack of productive, institutional and financial capacity comparable in some cases to those in the least developed countries.

According to ECLAC (2021), countries may fall into the middle-income trap because they are unable to carry through a process of structural change oriented towards innovation and more knowledge-intensive production. ECLAC/OECD (2018) indicates that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are facing middle-income traps, since they are reaching their technological frontier but are unable to compete globally, partly because of low wages and because they have not developed innovation capabilities in the production of knowledge-intensive goods and services.

2. Structural development gaps

ECLAC has argued for more than a decade that higher GDP is not enough by itself to overcome inequality and exclusion or to improve the targeting and efficiency of public policies, and that Latin America and the Caribbean needs a different development strategy if it is to make simultaneous progress in the dimensions of growth and equity.

ECLAC (2012) proposed the structural development gap approach, in contradistinction to existing proposals that relied almost exclusively on per capita GDP as an indicator of the need for international cooperation and the ability to mobilize resources for development. The gap approach is an alternative to the exclusive use of per capita GDP to allocate official development assistance flows. The ECLAC approach analyses the heterogeneity between Latin American and Caribbean countries and thereby refocuses the discussion on the economic and social situation of countries and their ability to mobilize internal or external resources for development.

Table II.1
**List of recipients of official development assistance from the Development Assistance Committee,
flows in 2022 and 2023**

Subregion	Least developed countries	Low-income countries (per capita gross national income of US\$ 1,045 or less in 2020)	Lower middle-income countries (per capita gross national income of between US\$ 1,046 and US\$ 4,095 in 2020)	Upper middle-income countries (per capita gross national income of between US\$ 4,096 and US\$ 12,695 in 2020)
Latin America			El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Plurinational State of Bolivia	Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, ^a Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru
The Caribbean	Haiti			Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname
Total	1	0	4	19

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “DAC List of ODA Recipients: effective for reporting on 2022 and 2023 flows” [online] <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2022-23-flows.pdf>.

Note: The DAC list of ODA recipients shows all ODA-eligible countries and territories. These are all low- and middle-income countries based on per capita gross national income (GNI) as published by the World Bank, with the exception of members of the Group of Eight (G8), members of the European Union and countries with a firm date to join the European Union. The list also includes the least developed countries as defined by the United Nations.

^a According to OECD, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has an estimated placement on the list because it has been temporarily (July 2021) unclassified by the World Bank pending release of revised national accounts.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean share the common features of high inequality, low productivity and insufficient taxation and, at the same time, a set of persistent structural gaps that impede development. To achieve development, the countries of the region need to eliminate structural gaps in the areas of per capita income, inequality, poverty, investment and saving, productivity and innovation, infrastructure, education, health care, taxation, gender and the environment that hinder dynamic and sustained economic growth and limit their potential to create more inclusive economies and societies.

3. Development in transition

Development is a process of continuous evolution. As some problems are addressed by public policy, others previously overshadowed by the most pressing needs emerge, examples being technological backwardness, distrust of institutions, environmental degradation and difficulties in moving towards welfare States (Sanahuja, 2020).

Given the prospect of “graduation” for a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries, dialogues have been held in recent years between the countries of the region, the member countries of the European Union, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the European

Commission and the OECD Development Centre. One outcome of these discussions has been a new conception of development called “development in transition”, based on the understanding that development is neither linear nor continuous. This new conception of development views income-based measures as inadequate to assess countries’ situations or to support the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and proposes a shift from processes of graduation to processes of gradation (ECLAC, 2021).

The development in transition approach incorporates the middle-income trap and structural gap approaches, provides a basis for orienting cooperation, transcends development assessments based only on the dynamics of per capita GDP and highlights the multidimensional character of development and the important role of structural gaps. The gradation mechanism “adopts a gradual, phased approach that flexibly combines public and private financing instruments for all countries on the basis of their ability to mobilize domestic and external resources, their willingness and capacity to contribute to regional and global public goods, and a common, prioritized diagnosis of the problems that need addressing” (ECLAC, 2021, p. 18).

The concept and propositions of the development in transition approach have not been multilaterally agreed and are not to be found in United Nations resolutions dealing with development. In 2021, some countries in the region, such as Brazil, expressed a critical position regarding the relevance of the concept for Latin America and the Caribbean and pointed out that they had not participated in its development; they then acknowledged that it was of an exclusively analytical or academic nature. In contrast, countries such as Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay have discussed and moved ahead with proposals that have the concept and propositions associated with development in transition as a background.¹⁰

Outside the region, Spain has used the concept of development in transition in its recent Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity Act (Law No. 1/2023)¹¹ and recognized that, in their transition to development, countries continue to require increasingly skilled and far-reaching technical cooperation and expertise in respect of project ideas, designs, strategies and cycle planning and likewise implementation, follow-up and evaluation.

4. Caribbean small island developing States and their vulnerability in the “graduation” process

ECLAC has emphasized the need to pay special attention to Caribbean small island developing States because they are in a geographical area prone to natural disasters that are increasing in number and severity. The destructive effects of natural disasters on production sectors result in sudden disruptions to countries’ productivity. They also lead to higher levels of debt and reduce governments’ ability to improve productivity through spending on education, health care and infrastructure, among other things.

¹⁰ See the seminars “Processes of graduation to processes of gradation: towards renewed international cooperation for development post-COVID-19”, held by ECLAC in Santiago on 6 and 7 December 2021, and “New challenges and new perspectives on international cooperation: development approaches from Latin America and the Caribbean”, held by ECLAC, the OECD Development Centre, the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on 13 and 14 September 2022.

¹¹ The first paragraph of section II of the preamble to the Act states that “the developing world is characterized by increasing heterogeneity: extreme poverty has been concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, while other countries in Asia and Latin America now have to deal with a particular agenda of development in transition, with higher incomes but multiple inequalities. In both types of countries, there are still situations of poverty that can only be understood through multidimensional concepts and indices”.

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III. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

A. INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY

To understand the development framework for cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is vital to examine the institutional framework in the countries of the region. The 2000s and 2010s saw the creation of the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI) in 2002, the Ecuadorian Agency for International Cooperation (AGECI) in 2007,¹² the Uruguayan International Cooperation Agency (AUCI) in 2010, the Colombian Presidential Agency for Cooperation (APC-Colombia) in 2011, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) in 2011, and, more recently, in Central America, the El Salvador International Cooperation Agency (ESCO) in 2020. In the remaining Latin American and Caribbean countries, development cooperation policy, programmes and activities were strengthened through offices or departments within one or more government ministries (see table III.1).

Table III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: institutional frameworks for cooperation

	Cooperation agencies	Ministry of foreign affairs		
		Only ministry of foreign affairs	Ministry of foreign affairs and other government ministries or agencies	Another ministry or government agency
Latin America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay	Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua	Cuba, Plurinational State of Bolivia
The Caribbean		Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago	Barbados, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of E. Oviedo (coord.), *Evaluating South-South cooperation in six Latin American and Caribbean countries: shared challenges for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (LC/TS.2021/121), Santiago, ECLAC, 2021.

Note: In Colombia, El Salvador and Uruguay, in addition to the agency, there is a department (office of the deputy minister or directorate) for international cooperation in the ministry of foreign affairs.

¹² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility is in charge of international cooperation for development in Ecuador. In 2007 (Executive Decree no. 699 of 30 October 2007), the Ecuadorian International Cooperation System (SECI) and the Ecuadorian International Cooperation Agency (AGECI) were created, the latter as a technical management institution attached to the then National Development Secretariat. AGECI was transformed in 2009 into the Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation (SETECI), an institution attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but with legal and financial independence (Executive Decree 1577 of 11 February 2009). SETECI was dissolved in 2016 (Executive Decree 1202 of 13 October 2016). Negotiation, monitoring, evaluation and registration of non-reimbursable international cooperation became the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility.

In both Barbados and Jamaica, South-South cooperation is overseen by the ministries of foreign affairs, in conjunction with other ministries or public agencies. In Barbados, responsibility lies with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, along with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, and the Research and Planning Unit and the Statistical Services Department play key roles in managing development and gathering data on external development cooperation. In Jamaica, cooperation issues are managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, through its Multilateral Affairs Division and its Bilateral, Regional and Hemispheric Affairs Division. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), through the External Cooperation Management Division (ECMD), also plays an important role in managing the cooperation agreements and programmes entered into by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (Byron and Laguardia Martínez, 2021a).

In Cuba, international cooperation was established through the State Committee for Economic Co-operation (CECE); in the 1990s the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation (MINVEC) was created and, in 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX) was established (Guerra Rondón, 2021a).

Among the South American countries, Paraguay has a Directorate for International Cooperation, which is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it is in the process of creating a political agency for international cooperation with the support of the Ibero-American Programme to Strengthen South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) (Vaccotti Ramos, 2021). In Colombia, APC-Colombia and the International Cooperation Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been in charge of cooperation since 2011 (Guerra Rondón, 2021b).

A more in-depth look at the institutional diversity of the region is possible by examining the cases of Costa Rica,¹³ Peru and Uruguay (see table III.2). Costa Rica currently has two institutions that oversee international cooperation. The Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy has the internal steering role and exclusive responsibility for management and technical negotiation with national entities, agencies and institutions, to ensure they are aligned with the 2023–2026 National Development and Public Investment Plan; it also has the power to set national priorities for international cooperation, in terms of both technical supply (South-South cooperation) and demand.¹⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, through the International Cooperation Division, holds the steering role for external non-reimbursable international cooperation. It is also responsible for diplomatic representation and negotiation at the international level, as well as alignment of international cooperation projects and programmes with foreign policy priorities. This ministry is in charge of external relations on issues relating to the international agenda. In this dual management model of the State, close coordination and collaboration is needed between the institutions, each in its own field of action, in accordance with the law.

The institutional framework of Costa Rica includes its International Cooperation Policy, which guides cooperation, promoting dialogue, building national capacities and increasing the effectiveness of international cooperation. The Policy enables efficient management and use of resources entering or leaving the country, through an innovative agenda, identifying development stakeholders, formats and strategic areas. The International Cooperation Policy is a clear and orienting guiding mechanism, allowing resources to be invested in priority regions, sectors and issues, as well as in the most vulnerable or unprotected groups.

¹³ Article 140, paragraph 12 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Costa Rica grants the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, and the President of the Republic, the power to conduct international relations.

¹⁴ See The National Planning Law and Executive Decree No. 35.777 amending the Regulations of article 11 of the National Planning Law [online] http://www.pgrweb.go.cr/scij/Busqueda/Normativa/Normas/nrm_texto_completo.aspx?param1=NRTC&nValor1=1&nValor2=75112&nValor3=97134&strTipM=TC

Its plan includes the contributions and coordination of the three branches of government, the decentralized public sector, the ombudsman's office and the five public universities, in addition to direct and indirect stakeholders. The Policy focuses on traditional bilateral, multilateral, multi-bilateral, South-South, triangular, border, cross-border (binational), regional and bi-regional cooperation.

Table III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean (3 countries): comparison of institutional frameworks

	Costa Rica	Peru	Uruguay
Institutional framework	International Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, area of international cooperation	Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Uruguayan International Cooperation Agency (AUCI), Office of the President of the Republic Directorate-General for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Functions of the governing institutions	The International Cooperation Division oversees external non-reimbursable international cooperation; promotes cooperation received from and provided to other countries; negotiates and processes initiatives in the country; formalizes projects and communicates progress and incidents in their management and implementation; is responsible for relations with diplomatic missions and accredited international organizations and diplomatic and consular representations abroad; applies principles of south-south, triangular and decentralized cooperation; works in coordination with the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, which is the internal governing body for international cooperation.	Identifies the supply of official international technical cooperation received by the country; evaluates and selects demand for international technical cooperation; selects the Peruvian supply of international technical cooperation and prepares the catalogue of the Peruvian Supply of International Technical Cooperation; develops and runs training programmes and provides information on international technical cooperation projects; manages the registers of non-governmental development organizations and international technical cooperation entities and institutions established abroad; opens processes to assign specialists and volunteers; starts the processes to refund General Sales Tax (IGV) and the municipal development tax (IPM).	AUCI strengthens the National International Cooperation System (SNCI); promotes the south-south and triangular cooperation strategy; manages and disseminates scholarships for training abroad; democratizes access to opportunities throughout the country; positions Uruguay on the world stage of international cooperation.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from the countries.

In Peru, APCI, a government agency attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is in charge of planning and organizing the country's international technical cooperation.¹⁵ In Peru, the cooperation system initially functioned in conjunction with a planning framework. In 1962, the National Planning Institute (INP) was established by law and in 1971, the first International Technical Cooperation Law (Decree-Law no. 18.742) was enacted. Almost 20 years later, Peru's institutional framework has been reinvigorated. The second (Legislative Decree no. 603 of 1990) and third (Legislative Decree no. 719 of 1991) Laws on International Technical Cooperation were enacted, and the Organic Law on the Ministry of the Presidency established the Executive Secretariat for International Technical Cooperation (SECTI) (Decree-Law no. 25.556 of 1992). This process resulted in establishment of registers of private entities and non-governmental development organizations and foreign international technical cooperation entities and institutions. In the 2000s, the cooperation situation changed. In 2002, the Law Establishing the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (no. 27.692) was enacted, the Agency being attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed in 2006 by the Law establishing the National Decentralized System for Non-Reimbursable International Cooperation (SINDCINR). In the strategic area of cooperation management, the first and second national Policies for International Technical Cooperation (PNCTI) were established in 2007 and 2012, respectively, and the Policy Statement on International Technical Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019. In 2019 the SINDCINR Regulations were established, followed in 2020 by the Technical Standard for Planning, Management and Negotiation of Demand for International Technical Cooperation and the Technical Standard for Planning, Management and Negotiation of the Peruvian Supply of International Technical Cooperation.¹⁶ SINDCINR has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as its governing body and APCI as executive secretariat, and interacts with ministries and specialized public agencies, regional and local governments, legislative and judicial branches, autonomous constitutional bodies, and non-governmental development organizations and foreign international technical cooperation entities and institutions.

In Uruguay, AUCI is the lead agency for cooperation policy (Law no. 18.719 of 2010)¹⁷ and operates under the aegis of the Presidency of the Republic. AUCI has a Board of Directors (with a Chair) and an Executive Board (with an Executive Director). The functions of AUCI include strengthening the National International Cooperation System (SNCI), promoting the South-South and triangular cooperation strategy, managing and disseminating scholarships for training abroad, democratizing access to opportunities throughout the country and positioning Uruguay on the world stage of international cooperation.

The Directorate-General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay is responsible, among other areas, for identifying sources of financing, negotiating cooperation agreements (including project financing), externally coordinating bilateral and multilateral cooperation received by Uruguay, following up on relations with multilateral cooperation organizations and national cooperation agencies, and monitoring and analysing ongoing projects. In this regard, it informs and instructs missions and representations abroad on matters within its areas of responsibility.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Law Establishing the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (no. 27.692) [online] <http://portal.apci.gob.pe/informacion/atach/Ley%20Nro.%2027692,%20Ley%20APCI.pdf>.

¹⁶ These measures have been accompanied by the Organic Law on the Executive Branch (no. 29.158 of 2007), the Law on Organization and Functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (no. 29.357 of 2009) and Decree-Law no. 1.451 of 2018, on the strengthening of national, regional and local government entities.

¹⁷ Article 98 states that the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI) shall be created in paragraph 2 on the Office of the President of the Republic, as a decentralized body, acting with technical autonomy and communicating with the executive power through the Office of the President of the Republic. The article also charges it with the planning, design, supervision, administration, coordination, execution, evaluation, follow-up and dissemination of international cooperation activities, projects and programmes in pursuit of the country's development policies.

¹⁸ See [online] <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-relaciones-exteriores/institucional/estructura-del-organismo/direccion-general-cooperacion-internacional>.

Uruguay has information tools, including the Integrated International Cooperation System (SICI-Uy), which contains an information module on international development cooperation initiatives that Uruguay participates in, aimed at facilitating decision-making and promoting coordination of cooperation supply and demand, analysing and raising awareness of the state of cooperation, as well as generating inputs for reports and repositories. In addition to SICI-Uy, Uruguay has an AUCI scholarship portal with free access to the training on offer according to needs, for institutions and individuals, from which forms and related information can be downloaded. The portal also allows applications to be tracked. Lastly, the information tools include georeferencing of international development cooperation initiatives in the country.

Coordination and linking of the work at the national level connects AUCI with the focal points and interlocutors in the field of cooperation of the entities that form part of SNCI. The System is made up of the international cooperation offices of the executive, legislative and judicial powers, autonomous entities, decentralized services, departmental governments and comptroller bodies, as well as development agencies, organizations, funds and programmes and diplomatic missions of countries providing cooperation in Uruguay, civil society organizations, private sector organizations and Uruguayan academic institutions.

B. FORMS OF PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Peru, upper-middle-income countries, are still among the countries receiving official development assistance (ODA) from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

Colombia is recognized for its work in the field of international cooperation in Latin America. Its foreign policy involves bilateral cooperation, regional cooperation, international assistance and special programmes. Since 2010, Colombia has expanded the scope of its impact and outreach in financial cooperation at the global level by consolidating joint regional agendas, called regional cooperation strategies, which it now has in place for the Caribbean Basin, Mesoamerica, Africa, South-East Asia and Eurasia. Despite the large number of countries receiving bilateral and triangular technical cooperation projects, Colombian cooperation focuses on the countries of Central America and the Caribbean Basin. Colombia has also signed South-South cooperation framework agreements with many countries in the region (Guerra Rondón, 2021b).

Costa Rica has a history as a provider of technical assistance through triangular cooperation. This has included partnerships with Germany and Japan and the triangular cooperation programme with Spain, which has been running for 12 years.¹⁹ In terms of multilateral cooperation,²⁰ in multilateral forums Costa Rica seeks to coordinate, position and negotiate its vision of the role, governance and trends in the country's international cooperation and to strengthen identification of cooperation partners. This is done to open up opportunities to participate in multilateral initiatives focused on sustainable development, in line with national priorities and with an emphasis on vulnerable populations in coastal, border and rural areas. The International Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship is, by law, the governing body of external non-reimbursable international cooperation.²¹ In Costa Rica, all international cooperation

¹⁹ Triangular cooperation with the European Union (under the ADELANTE 2 programme) is scheduled to begin in 2023, with a view to further strengthening the country's role as a provider of technical cooperation.

²⁰ With international organizations and regional and subregional integration and coordination mechanisms.

²¹ The International Cooperation Division is in charge of promoting cooperation with exterior, both incoming and outgoing (dual status), negotiating and processing the initiatives formulated in Costa Rica, formalizing projects

programmes, projects and specific actions must first be submitted to the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy for analysis, technical assessment, approval and recording in the International Cooperation Project Management System (SIGECI), before being forwarded to the International Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship (or the Public Credit Division of the Ministry of Finance), for formalization with the corresponding cooperation partner.

Cuba has a long track record in South-South cooperation —particularly in health, education and disaster prevention— and, like other middle-income countries, it plays the dual role of provider and recipient of ODA. In the framework of its South-South relations, Cuba channels its projects through various regional organizations and multilateral institutions. One notable example of its South-South cooperation is Misión Milagro, which was created within the framework of the Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, following discovery of a high percentage of eye ailments among the Venezuelan population. In the education sector, the Yo Sí Puedo programme is a noteworthy initiative and in terms of emergency aid and disaster prevention one significant initiative was the creation in 2005 of the Henry Reeve Medical Brigade, tasked with providing aid to the population affected by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, United States (Guerra Rondón, 2021a).

In Peru, international technical cooperation management stakeholders and instruments include the Annual Statement of International Technical Cooperation, the Integrated Framework of International Cooperation Projects (MIPCI) and the Integrated Management System for International Technical Cooperation (SIGCTI), the last of which is currently being rolled out. International technical cooperation by APCI takes forms such as advisory services (sending specialists and volunteers), training (national and international courses), donations (for example, equipment supplies or infrastructure construction), counter-value funds and South-South and triangular cooperation. APCI provides services²² such as identifying official international technical cooperation received by Peru, evaluating and selecting demand for international technical cooperation, selecting the Peruvian supply of international technical cooperation, preparing the international technical cooperation catalogue (*Catálogo de Oferta Peruana de Cooperación Técnica Internacional*), developing and running training programmes, supplying information on international technical cooperation projects, managing the registry of non-governmental development organizations and international technical cooperation entities and institutions established abroad, opening the process of secondment of experts and volunteers, and processing refunds of general sales tax (IGV) and municipal development tax (IPM).

Peru was one of the first countries in the region to have a catalogue of its cooperation supply. First prepared in 1986, it has been updated over the years. In 2022, the catalogue, called *Catálogo de Oferta Peruana de Cooperación Técnica Internacional*, included information on 80 Peruvian institutions in 8 thematic areas and 401 successful initiatives. The aims of Peru's international technical cooperation are to promote South-South cooperation as a tool for development and foreign policy; to contribute to fulfilment of the SDGs, while maintaining alignment with the goal of becoming a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); to cultivate Peru's image and prestige at the

and communicating progress and issues relating to their management and implementation; it is responsible for relations with diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited in the country and with diplomatic and consular missions abroad, and for the application of the principles of South-South, triangular and decentralized cooperation as part of the operational conceptual framework. It is also in charge of coordination with the International Cooperation Management of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, the internal governing body of international cooperation.

²² APCI does not manage international technical cooperation funds, does not finance projects or sponsor events or other promotional activities, nor does it sign agreements with public entities to give them access international technical cooperation.

international level, as a country of emerging international importance in the region; to steer South-South cooperation towards priority areas for investment in Peru (such as labour inclusion, trade, promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and development of technology); and to position Peru in terms of South-South and triangular cooperation in various integration processes such as the Pacific Alliance, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Andean Community.

Barbados, Jamaica and Uruguay are three Latin American and Caribbean countries that do not receive ODA.

Barbados, classified as a high-income economy, has seen its access to concessional development finance constrained for more than a decade. In response to this constraint, Barbados has been active with a critical voice in international forums, advocating for more inclusive development support mechanisms and a global environment more conducive to considering the vulnerabilities faced by developing countries in the Caribbean. In addition, Barbados participates in multilateral forums, accesses credit financing from regional development banks and maintains strong bilateral relations through South-South cooperation. The country has been a notable beneficiary of and contributor to cooperation projects for knowledge-sharing and training; since the 1970s it has had significant South-South cooperation experiences with countries in the region and, more recently, with China and other Pacific small island developing States and Commonwealth partners such as Ghana and Kenya,²³ building capacities in the areas of health and education, sports development, agriculture and food security, energy programmes and cultural cooperation (Byron and Laguardia Martínez, 2021b).

Jamaica has seen its access to development finance restricted but has a long history of strong South-South cooperation partnerships with Latin America and the Caribbean, which have expanded since the 1990s. Among the most effective governance mechanisms for these processes are the bilateral joint commissions. Multilateral agencies and partner countries working through triangular cooperation agreements have supported Jamaica in building the capacity it needs to make further progress with implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Local leadership from public sector agencies, along with civil-society actors, has been instrumental in the implementation of South-South cooperation programmes. In addition, the country has established an extensive network of partners in the global South, located in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The partners include Cuba and the member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Since 2010, China and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have been its two key partners. In Jamaica, the impact of South-South cooperation has been most visible in health, education, energy, social protection and other areas of social policy. The country is also emerging as a contributor to South-South cooperation in certain areas of expertise, including sports development, election monitoring, tourism development and social protection programmes (Byron and Laguardia Martínez, 2021a).

In Uruguay, South-South cooperation began to come to the fore in 2005, initially in connection with political and institutional matters and, later, in technical areas. After 2010, following the creation of AUCI, Uruguay forged ties with all of Latin America, in a dual role and as a provider of cooperation in areas such as agriculture, health, industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), environment, governance, social protection, poverty and social cohesion. The current cooperation mechanisms and formats of AUCI include multilateral, regional, bilateral, South-South, triangular and decentralized

²³ The focus of the most recent regional and extraregional cooperation efforts has been on environmental protection and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, as well as capacity-building for disaster risk management and the development of a green economy.

cooperation and training abroad. AUCI works with reimbursable cooperation, loans to support the country's development (infrastructure, connectivity, engineering) that give rise to public debt and come from multilateral lending agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). AUCI also has access to non-reimbursable cooperation, which is to say funds donated to support developing countries.

The South-South cooperation offered by Uruguay does not generally involve the transfer of financial resources to the recipient country, the construction of infrastructure or the purchase of equipment.²⁴ AUCI stresses that in most cases, South-South cooperation actions and projects involve an exchange of experiences that is financed through cost-sharing between Uruguay and the partner country, the Uruguayan International Cooperation Fund (FUCI), bilateral funds (such as the one established between Mexico and Uruguay) or with a contribution from a developed country or multilateral organization (triangular cooperation). The methodology of AUCI is based on good practices, whereby assessments are performed to identify achievements that can be emulated with valuable effects in other countries, through South-South cooperation. AUCI also highlights that this is particularly useful for Uruguay's national institutions because it has enabled them to systematize what they offer, take on well-defined commitments, improve visibility and strengthen the sense of belonging of their staff as a form of recognition. In 2023, Uruguay's catalogues include cooperation with other southern countries in the areas of education, renewable energies, innovation and development, health, national emergency systems, software developed for the State and open government. In the context of South-South cooperation, AUCI has defined its endeavours through projects, not through specific activities or actions. The main formats include exchanges of experiences, technical assistance and training activities: courses, seminars, workshops, internships or a combination of them. AUCI receives, analyses and determines the priority level of requests from national institutions and partner countries, coordinating with counterparts abroad, assisting in formulation of projects, financing activities and monitoring implementation of initiatives (both technical and financial). Financing is provided through shared funds (such as FUCI), contributions from national institutions in which the counterpart makes financial contributions to the extent possible and in-kind contributions, multilateral funds for triangular cooperation and bilateral funds such as the Uruguay-Mexico Joint Cooperation Fund.

²⁴ The lines of work of AUCI for 2021–2025 include supporting national and subnational governments' decision-making; including the private sector and forging partnerships; channelling funds and fostering development of sustainable finance; supporting the creation of the territorial statistical and information system; including the academic and educational system in research and training; working simultaneously with national and international programmes to finance activities and initiatives at the local level; deepening localization of the SDGs to enhance the impact of projects at the territorial level.

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IV. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

A. WHY ASSESS SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION?

In Latin America and the Caribbean, South-South cooperation is particularly noteworthy for its principles of horizontality, reciprocity, equity, recognition, orientation towards common goals and shared solutions, bidirectionality, shared responsibility, non-conditionality, moral principles, multidimensional linkage, participation in technical as well as economic, commercial, social and political assistance and cooperation activities, mutual benefit and respect for sovereignty. In addition, South-South cooperation has a flexible format, with wide scope, with development of the nation State at its core and, based on that, improvement of living conditions (Fernández-Sánchez, 2020). South-South cooperation is conducted on the premise that all participating partners must share solutions that meet development needs, while engaging in such cooperation for mutual benefit (Pereira, 2014).

South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean is a valuable tool for the international cooperation system; however, there is no single notion of such cooperation. According to Sanahuja (2020) South-South cooperation is apparent in multiple dimensions, economic, technical and political, but there is no single universal metric of exchanges under this form of cooperation.

Although there is consensus in the vast majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries that South-South cooperation needs to be valued in monetary terms, achieving this has not been a priority for the region. Some countries have made progress with designing and applying valuation formulae; however, there is no such initiative at the subregional or regional level. This slow progress is partly a result, among other potential causes, of many countries and stakeholders in the region viewing valuation as part of an agenda of traditional cooperation partners or an inherited process from an approach based on aid effectiveness. They do not consider valuation of South-South cooperation to be a concern for the countries of the region, or a process that can improve results, estimating contributions to sustainable development and increasing transparency of processes (Alemany and Vaccotti, 2021), nor one that can identify shared priority areas of financial agencies, cooperation partners, donors and applicants (Rodríguez and Aramendis, 2019).

Sanahuja (2020) highlights the involvement of the countries of the region in the new development cooperation framework based on progressive adoption of a dual role (as providers and recipients of cooperation), which is aligned with the multidimensional approach to development set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, Fernández-Sánchez (2020) argues that given the growing momentum and importance of South-South cooperation, a system is needed to quantify, measure and assess it, in a wider sense, not only producing information on numbers of projects and economic flows, but also providing insight into outcomes, costs and benefits of initiatives for partners, and above all on the contribution to capacity development and comprehensive development of recipient countries.

Fernández-Sánchez (2020) also notes that that it would be helpful to have a system to track the outcomes of the aid received and thus whether the demand and needs of the recipient country have been met effectively and positively. This would facilitate follow-up of South-South cooperation activities, projects and programmes and reduce the deficiencies in systematization of experiences that are apparent in the region.

Nevertheless, there are some experiences of assessing South-South and triangular cooperation in the region. These experiences include the work of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) from 2010 onward; the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America*, published by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) since 2007;²⁵ the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) international standard to measure Total Official Support for Sustainable Development, since 2017; and the project “Quantifying South-South cooperation to mobilize funds for the Sustainable Development Goals”, of the United Nations Development Account (2023–2026).

B. THE COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION OF ECLAC AND ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

As part of the work of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, assessment of South-South cooperation has been on the agenda since 2010. In that same year, in resolution 647(XXXIII), ECLAC requested the secretariat to develop, together with national authorities responsible for cooperation matters, a set of indicators for measuring the social and economic impact of South-South cooperation. The efforts made by ECLAC were reflected in the 2012 publication *Middle-income countries: a structural gap approach* (ECLAC, 2012).

From 2012 to 2013 work was done on the methodological aspect of the ECLAC proposal. In 2013, the seminar-workshop on a methodology for calculating structural gaps was held in Santiago to share and further develop the analysis methodology, and to refine the calendar for work with the countries over the 2013–2014 period. Representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay attended. As a result of this workshop, it was proposed that countries that wished to form part of the process should establish national working groups so that, together with the Commission, they could begin to assess their development gaps or challenges quantitatively and qualitatively. The ECLAC secretariat indicated that the gap analysis should be conducted based on the information provided by national authorities and that the team should evaluate the forms and formats in which international cooperation could provide support to overcome these challenges and gaps. Subsequently, international cooperation needs should be translated into specific proposals and requests for action to be presented to donor country agencies and international organizations, among other entities. In addition, the most appropriate forms and formats of channelling aid should be assessed, in conjunction with the cooperating country. Over 2014 and 2015, a study of structural gaps was conducted in Costa Rica (ECLAC, 2016).

In 2014, the Committee on South-South Cooperation approved a case study for the design of a methodological approach to measuring South-South cooperation, to be prepared by Peru. The aim of the study was to further consolidate the theoretical and conceptual aspects of South-South cooperation and to continue to develop calculation or verification of its value, to contribute to discussions and decision-making by Latin American and Caribbean countries. The results were presented in Lima, during the thirty-fifth session of ECLAC. The issues addressed included identification of characteristics of regional South-South cooperation in terms of interaction between stakeholders, project implementation and outputs, comprehensive estimates of resources invested and mobilized, and the framework for results and replicability.

²⁵ Formerly the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America*.

Also in 2014, in resolution 678 (XXXV) ECLAC expressed its satisfaction at the inclusion in the activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the analysis of new thematic areas and methodologies that enabled better tracking of economic, social and environmental matters, including quantification of South-South cooperation. In August 2014, during the thirteenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the programme of work presented by the Task Force on Quantification of South-South Cooperation (coordinated by Colombia) was approved. The programme concerned preparation of a glossary of statistical terms relating to South-South cooperation, contributing to international discussions on the facets of South-South cooperation to be measured and strengthening the work between statistical institutes and cooperation agencies of the countries. Also in 2014, ECLAC, in resolution 688(XXXV), requested the Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation to take steps to ensure that the Committee was invited to meetings of the Task Force on the Quantification of South-South Cooperation set up within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

The Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC worked together to develop an initial methodological design to quantify, in monetary terms, the direct costs of South-South cooperation and the value of the intangible products and services involved in this type of cooperation. To this end, work was performed to prepare a glossary of South-South cooperation terms, to identify the aspects of South-South cooperation that should be quantified in monetary terms and to establish the basic common information that countries should have available in order to quantify South-South cooperation.

In parallel to the work of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, two assessment proposals were made: assessment of the outcomes and impacts of South-South cooperation (Social Development Division of ECLAC) and measurement through satellite accounts that are part of the central framework of countries' national accounts (Statistics Division of ECLAC).²⁶

The results of this work were discussed at regional seminars held in 2014 and 2015. In December 2015, a seminar was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, on analysis of progress on proposals for measuring South-south cooperation, bringing together government representatives and specialists. The meeting highlighted tensions between the technical and the political spheres, the need for greater transparency in countries' actions and the need for available information to be taken into account in countries' projects and programmes, which was not being done. Reference was also made to the need to prioritize the quality variables of projects and programmes over their quantity when measuring South-South cooperation. In addition, participants underscored the need to take into account the paradigm shift that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development entailed. With regard to outcome evaluation, they emphasized that the costs of evaluation, measurement and monitoring should be factored into programme and project design. Those attending the seminar also stressed that it was important to analyse processes before evaluating outcomes. Lastly, with regard to models, strategies and mechanisms, during the seminar it was highlighted that the priority at that time was the collecting information to assemble comparable data and the region should give due attention to the work of professionals who export knowledge, as this was a fundamental part of South-South cooperation.

²⁶ Satellite accounts are a set of tables that describe in detail the structure and behaviour of certain specific socioeconomic areas or fields (such as health, education and tourism). These accounts can use complementary or alternative concepts to reflect additional dimensions of the socioeconomic reality, making it possible to construct new variables and indicators, suited to analytical and decision-making needs, through sociodemographic and socioeconomic analysis.

Between 2019 and 2020, the South-South Cooperation Committee conducted six studies on assessment of South-South cooperation in countries in the region —Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay— to contribute to reflection on regional standardization of South-South cooperation assessment and to support the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices on South-South and triangular cooperation, to contribute to sustainable development.

In 2021, ECLAC published the book *Evaluating South-South cooperation in six Latin American and Caribbean countries: Shared challenges for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Oviedo, 2021). The publication was the result of reflection, research, systematization and discussion by authorities, researchers and professionals linked to the area of cooperation, conducted within the framework of the commitments of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC in following up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40). It offers keys to understanding the value of South-South and triangular cooperation in the region, while providing data on the relevant experiences of Latin American and Caribbean countries, as essential inputs for the process of sharing and standardizing methodologies for measuring cooperation at the regional level. The publication describes the South-South cooperation evaluation experiences of Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay. They offer examples of what is happening in Latin America and the Caribbean with this form of development cooperation and how its worth or merit is estimated in the region. To make its values —so often set down and confirmed by the region’s countries— apparent, South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean must undergo evaluation processes, studies and data analyses. It must also provide responses based on policy frameworks that define the expected impacts of its initiatives, in the medium or long term, as well as on evidence that clarifies facts. This will enable decisions to be made that offer a solution to development problems, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All of the progress made by the Committee on South-South Cooperation was preceded by the recognition that the United Nations system is the multilateral forum par excellence in which to contribute to the redefinition of the way that development is measured, taking into account the national priorities of each country, emphasizing the multidimensional approach to development enshrined in the 2030 Agenda as a contribution to the discussion on the criteria used to guide the various modalities of international cooperation, with a view to leaving no one behind.

C. THE REPORT ON SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA, PUBLISHED BY THE IBERO-AMERICAN GENERAL SECRETARIAT (SEGIB)

One of the longest-running systematic efforts to record, process, analyse and disseminate information on assessment of South-South and triangular cooperation at the regional level is the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America*, published by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB). The document is a point of reference for governments, those responsible for cooperation and researchers in the subject, both in Ibero-America and in other regions of the world (SEGIB, 2018).

The *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America* has been presenting data annually since 2007, when it was first published as part of the seventeenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Santiago.²⁷ Over the course of 15 years, the report has systematized

²⁷ The first edition was presented at SEGIB headquarters in Madrid on 28 January 2008. The countries then decided to continue to publish the report annually (see SEGIB, 2018).

and analysed cooperation initiatives participated in by countries of the region. The report covers programmes (sets of projects with a shared goal), projects (sets of interrelated actions with a shared goal) and actions (one-off activities).

As indicated in the 2020 report, in recent years, for the purpose of analysis, South-South and triangular cooperation has been classified into 30 sectors of activity, grouped into 7 areas of action. This enables more precise analyses and guidance for decisions in this area.

D. TOTAL OFFICIAL SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Total Official Support for Sustainable Development is an international standard to measure flows of official support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is designed to track all official resources that are received by developing countries, as well as private resources mobilized through national interventions. Countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico have participated in development of this standard. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) acts as secretariat for the standard.

Substantial progress has been made on several aspects of the statistical framework for the standard. The United Nations Statistical Commission, in March 2022, recognized this standard as a data source for reporting on indicator 17.3.1 of target 17.3 (mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). OECD and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are the custodians of the indicator. In addition, the methodology of the standard has been adapted to provide data on the conceptual framework for measuring South-South cooperation included in indicator 17.3.1. The framework has been spearheaded by Brazil and Mexico, among other countries of the global South, and pilot studies will be conducted by UNCTAD in the coming years, in collaboration with OECD and United Nations regional commissions.

Entities that provided input for development of the standard include bilateral providers (traditional and non-traditional) and multilateral providers (multilateral development banks, other international financial institutions and United Nations entities, among other multilateral organizations).

The components of Total Official Support for Sustainable Development include official development assistance (ODA), other official flows (OOF), South-South and triangular cooperation, expenditures at regional and global levels (including international public goods (IPG) and responses to global challenges) and private resources mobilized through official interventions.

The International Total Official Support for Sustainable Development Task Force was established in 2017, following the call in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development for open, inclusive and transparent discussions on the proposed measure of “total official support for sustainable development” (paragraph 55). The Task Force has been in charge of formulating and refining the methodology for Total Official Support for Sustainable Development. It comprises traditional providers, countries that receive and provide South-South cooperation, recipient countries and international organizations.

The standard currently includes data from more than 100 providers, including countries and international organizations. In 2022, 14 providers in the field of South-South cooperation and 20 providers in the field of South-South and triangular cooperation reported on their activities in the previous year. Providers in the area of South-South cooperation in 2022 were as follows: nine countries, Brazil, Chile,

Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, Mexico (which provided 2020 data), Nigeria, Peru, Thailand and Türkiye, and five organizations, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC).²⁸

E. QUANTIFICATION OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION TO MOBILIZE FUNDS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“Quantifying South-South cooperation to mobilize funds for the Sustainable Development Goals” is a United Nations Development Account project (fifteenth tranche), with an estimated duration of four years (2023–2026). Its objective is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to measure and report the contribution of South-South Cooperation to progress on the 2030 Agenda, mobilize resources for the 2030 Agenda, and enable a more inclusive, resilient and green recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The target countries include developing countries in the areas of four regional commissions participating in the project: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (Nigeria and South Africa), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (Ecuador and Peru), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (India and Thailand) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (Saudi Arabia and Tunisia).²⁹

The project is based on the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation,³⁰ which encouraged all actors to support initiatives for information and data collection, coordination, dissemination and evaluation of South-South cooperation, upon the request of developing countries.

In April 2020, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators established a Working Group on Measurement of Development Support. The Working Group developed a proposal for SDG indicator 17.3.1, which defines the key measurement principles and the main components of development support, including South-South cooperation. That work resulted in an agreed voluntary framework for measuring South-South cooperation, developed by the countries of the global South, which led to strong national demand for capacity development support.

Currently, the lack of information on target 17.3 of the SDGs (mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources) hinders progress on resource mobilization to achieve the SDGs. The project will present early estimates on resource mobilization for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, while methods, instruments and country capacities for measurement are being refined. In the long term, dissemination of the resources and the tools developed under the project is expected to enable global reporting on SDG indicator 17.3.1.

²⁸ All data concerning Total Official Support for Sustainable Development are available at [online] <https://tossd.online/>.

²⁹ See [online] <https://unctad.org/project/quantifying-south-south-cooperation-mobilize-funds-sustainable-development-goals>

³⁰ A/RES/73/291.

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V. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW PARTNERSHIPS

A. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

Human dignity and equality are at the centre of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which therefore entail the broadest participation of all stakeholders, including the State, civil society and the private sector. The role of the various stakeholders is crucial for mobilizing resources for development and for making more efficient use of those resources.

South-South cooperation creates multi-stakeholder environments, in which a spirit of participation, dialogue and understanding prevails, promoting project ownership. Authors such as Amorim, Dale and Fakhri-Kairouz (2015) see similarities and parallels between South-South cooperation and the social and solidarity economy, since it fosters regional and interregional knowledge- and experience-sharing networks at the national level, based on the principle of solidarity and with human well-being at the centre.

South-South cooperation is grounded in identifying local, regional or national needs and negotiating them, and in the mutually agreed actions taken by the parties that establish the relationship (Ojeda Medina and Echart Muñoz, 2019; Ojeda Medina, 2020). South-South and triangular cooperation are notable for their effective contributions to the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda and have brought together numerous public, private and civil society actors, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international agencies to take action on the different dimensions of development (Oviedo, 2021). Strengthening broad multi-stakeholder participation will help build a new international development cooperation system that is committed to creating innovative and diverse forms of dialogue and understanding between non-State actors and the State (Huitrón-Morales, 2020).

Civil society, foundations, academia, the private sector, cooperatives, social economy organizations and regional and local governments, among other stakeholders, have always played an active role in development cooperation, although often in a less visible way at the national and international levels (Huitrón-Morales, 2020; Balbis Pérez, 2013). Low visibility could be the result of a natural and historical regional centralization of cooperation, the size of the programmes and projects at the subnational level, or the various channels through which stakeholders in countries are connected with international cooperation agencies, which cannot always be monitored at the central government level. However, the combined experience of all non-State stakeholders means they are a source of knowledge, resources, capacities and technology. In addition, as a result of greater visibility and activity, there is now pressure to find new ways to link the private and public sectors at a variety of levels in countries, to foster coordinated and effective cooperation.

The implementation of national, regional or local sustainable development strategies requires knowledge and understanding of the economic, social and cultural stakeholders at different territorial scales. Strategy design and implementation is an opportune stage in which to include stakeholders other than those representing States themselves (central governments) and to seek political consensus, develop technologies, and alternate between, complement and strengthen the role of the main agents in each territory, to boost the results and impact of international development cooperation (Correa, 2022).

Local and regional governments, whose participation and visibility in spaces for international dialogue and cooperation has traditionally gone unrecognized, are now taking a leading role through South-South cooperation —specifically decentralized cooperation— and triangular cooperation, both in multilevel planning

and in implementing public policies to achieve the SDGs in regions outside capital cities (Ojeda-Medina, 2020). For local and regional governments, as at the central government level, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs present major challenges in terms of actions in more remote regions and coordination with different levels of government, such as with the necessary alignment of local, regional and national planning; mobilizing and managing resources, primarily technical and budgetary resources; traceability or monitoring of actions, projects and programmes through the use of accurate information; and building longitudinal datasets that are made publicly available in a timely manner. All of this also requires the strengthening of institutional capacities.

Ojeda Medina (2020) emphasizes that decentralized South-South cooperation is a natural space for local and regional government action because it is widespread and promotes opportunities for gatherings that strengthen the capacities of local institutions while enabling them to participate in policy decision-making and to gain visibility, promote shared solutions for shared problems, diversify and broaden sources of funding and share best practices, among other activities.

B. SOME COUNTRY EXPERIENCES IN LATIN AMERICA

To achieve a sustainable future for all and to address ongoing global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice, public policies are required that improve quality of life in communities and rural areas. The capacity of local stakeholders must also be strengthened so that they can take advantage of their own and external resources, for example to consolidate the institutional and social fabric and the local economic and productive system.

Decentralized cooperation is an excellent tool for supporting local governments and communities in meeting the challenges of guaranteeing universal and quality access to public services, promoting greater equity and solidarity, and ensuring environmental sustainability, as shown by the examples of Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico (see table V.1).

Table V.1
Latin America (4 countries): decentralized cooperation

Country	Institutional framework	Decentralized cooperation experience
Colombia	Colombian Presidential Agency for Cooperation (APC-Colombia), Directorate for Inter-agency Coordination of Cooperation, subnational government cooperation offices	The city as a focus of decentralization
Ecuador	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, International Cooperation Information System (SIGECI), decentralized autonomous governments	Northern Border International Technical Cooperation Roundtable
Chile	Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID), financing to support training for subnational governments	Programme with regions and municipalities focused on neighbouring countries
Mexico	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), Directorate-General for Policy Coordination	Alianza Euro-Latinoamericana de Cooperación entre Ciudades (AL-LAS), which strengthens and boosts international relations between cities

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from the countries.

In Colombia, decentralized cooperation is centrally managed by the Colombian Presidential Agency for Cooperation (APC-Colombia), which has a Directorate for Inter-agency Coordination of Cooperation that provides technical guidance and support to the territories. In recent years, cooperation offices have also been created within subnational governments, such as those of municipalities and departments, which coordinate cooperation requests and offers. These units or offices submit projects to calls for proposals managed by APC-Colombia, to be presented in the context of technical cooperation programmes that are negotiated on an ongoing basis by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Colombia has good examples of decentralized cooperation at the city level. Decentralized cooperation in cities is important, since it links local institutions, which articulate the wide-ranging interests of city residents. As an example, in Medellín, culture and education play an important role in the progress of the city and contribute to the development of a city model. Significant progress has been made since the creation and implementation of “library parks” (in 2004). In 2015, Medellín became part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network, which incentivizes population groups to participate in a variety of areas, promoting art, music and technology, among other interests. By including Medellín in the Creative Cities Network, the international community validated its efforts as a city that promotes the creative industry and innovation.³¹

In Ecuador, decentralized autonomous governments are organized into regions, provinces, cantons, or municipalities and parishes, and include *mancomunidades*.³² Although decentralized autonomous governments are empowered to negotiate cooperation projects and programmes for the territories, they must register their activities in the International Cooperation Management Information System (SIGECI) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador. National Skills Council (CNC) resolution 0009 of 2011 decentralizes the management of non-reimbursable international cooperation so that each decentralized autonomous government can manage its cooperation. The territories are entitled and authorized to plan, implement and monitor their projects. The role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to support local and regional authorities.

A successful example of coordination and management in cooperation is the Northern Border International Technical Cooperation Roundtable, in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, CNC, the Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities (AME) and the Consortium of Provincial Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE) are cooperating on a specific issue. This exercise is unprecedented in the country and is one of the projects that receives the most cooperation because of the situation at the border. It is hoped that the initiative can help to better organize the border (the provinces of Carchi, Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Sucumbios). The cooperation partners have focused their resources on this situation because of increased migration.

³¹ The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded the 2009 Access to Learning Award, with a prize of US\$ 1 million, to Fundación EPM for the innovative use of technology in Medellín's public libraries to promote community development.

³² Ecuador is organized into decentralized autonomous governments, which are governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (arts. 238 to 241) and the Organic Code on Territory, Autonomies and Decentralization (COOTAD). Decentralized autonomous governments are decentralized institutions with political, administrative and financial autonomy and they are governed by the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, equity, interterritorial integration and citizen participation. The concept of *mancomunidad* refers to the merger of a decentralized government with the same level of government in a neighbouring or adjacent area (provinces, cantons, municipalities or parishes). When decentralized autonomous governments join forces based on interests rather than proximity, they are called consortiums. Both administrative arrangements require the political will of the parties to spur progress in cooperation programmes.

In Mexico, the General Directorate of Political Coordination (DGCP) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs³³ is the institution that assigns jurisdiction to state and other subnational governments. Among other tasks, it provides methodologies for internationalization of local governments, for example through manuals for internationalization of cities.

The Mexican model, cited here, emerged in 2012 through the Alianza Euro-latinoamericana de Cooperación entre Ciudades (AL-LAS) initiative, a European-Latin America cooperation network that strengthens and promotes international relations between cities.³⁴ In that regard, the actions of Mexico City stand out, where, in 2013, with support from the European Union,³⁵ it led a cooperation project together with Quito, Lima, Medellín (Colombia), Morón (Argentina), Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Montevideo, along with the Andalusian Municipality Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI) and French United Local Governments (CUF). European Union funding was used to review the legal and institutional framework for international relations for the cities of Latin America, which was adapted to better respond to the requirements of today's world. The project also financed a series of consultations with civil society and other non-State stakeholders to develop the cities' international strategy through a participatory process. AL-LAS also established a community of experts, institutions and specialized civil servants from Europe and Latin America, through an online knowledge-management platform. On-site and distance training and university certification in these subjects were also offered.

Through the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID), Chile has worked on decentralized cooperation by creating financing facilities to support training so that subnational governments can offer cooperation rather than receiving it. The idea is for subnational governments to work on international development cooperation, with an understanding of the national perspective and with the conceptual and methodological tools for cooperation in hand. Since 2014, AGCID has been working on a programme involving regions and municipalities and focused on neighbouring countries, specifically Argentina. In 2017, for the first time, Argentina and Chile called on regional governments and provincial governments, respectively, to submit projects of mutual interest and thus to contribute to the development of capacities and institutional strengthening on a variety of topics, with a focus on border issues. The aim of this was to contribute to Chilean-Argentine integration by strengthening relations between their regions. Decentralized cooperation is also a new line of work with Peru, where projects are currently under way in Tacna. Today, there are also exchanges with Brazil, Costa Rica and Ecuador.

³³ In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DGCP is the area responsible for institutional coordination with the main political stakeholders in the country. Among other matters, it handles requests for information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on foreign policy actions from members of the legislative and judicial branches, local legislatures, state and municipal governments and political organizations (see [online] <https://www.gob.mx/sre/acciones-y-programas/direccion-general-de-coordinacion-politica>).

³⁴ As an alternative to traditional means of international cooperation between States, there are initiatives such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), a global network of cities and local, regional and metropolitan governments, whose partner associations are committed to representing, defending and boosting the voices of local and regional governments so that no one is left behind anywhere.

³⁵ The European Union provided 1.5 million euros in funding.

C. SOME COOPERATION STAKEHOLDERS

1. Multilateral development banks

In addition to local and regional governments, other stakeholders that should be highlighted as promoters of international cooperation are multilateral development banks,³⁶ which promote development of important economic sectors and offer combinations of grants and concessional loans to increase financing for the poorest countries and those that face difficulties in obtaining funding from private capital markets.³⁷ They also merge and consolidate capital contributions from governments and donors to raise more funding on capital markets. Development banks can offer lending on a significant scale with relatively low amounts of paid-in capital, and by co-financing projects with private banks, can achieve greater borrowing capacity at lower interest rates (Ocampo, 2015).³⁸

It is not only the public sector that benefits from development bank funding; the private sector has been gaining importance as well, accessing funding through direct loans for projects and directing funds to national financial institutions in developing countries (Ocampo, 2015; Curmally, Sohn and Wright, 2005).

2. The private sector

In the context of achieving the SDGs, the literature highlights the important role of the private sector, both through public-private partnerships (PPP) (Devlin and Moguillansky, 2010; ECLAC, 2017) and through business strategies, whether based on philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, financing or direct action taken by companies (Pérez-Pineda and Blanco-Rangel, 2021).

It has been highlighted (ECLAC/OECD, 2018) that one way of leveraging the potential of the private sector is to use development financing for additional resource mobilization, in particular business financing aimed at achieving sustainability in developing countries. With regard to the mobilization of private funding for development, a variety of instruments are being used to promote development, such as combined financing for example, whose approach is to attract private funding that would not be used for development objectives were it not for the use of public funding (Sanahuja, 2020). The emergence of new stakeholders in multilateral cooperation is gradually promoting establishment of PPPs or implementation of corporate social responsibility policies, which essentially mandate companies to participate in voluntary initiatives to improve social or environmental parameters in their area (Ocampo, 2015). Companies are also increasingly participating in financing or direct action as an alternative to more traditional paths, such as philanthropy, which has a direct impact on some SDGs, such as those linked to decent work and economic growth or responsible production and consumption (Pérez-Pineda and Blanco-Rangel, 2021).

³⁶ It is very important for States to have the financial and technical support of multilateral development banks. They provide countercyclical financing and support productive development by working closely with their in-country peers.

³⁷ Most multilateral development banks have a concessional lending window for relatively low-income countries and a non-concessional lending window for middle-income countries. The latter also facilitates access for countries that have difficulties in accessing private capital markets, with a consequent reduction in financial costs.

³⁸ As noted by Ocampo (2015), multilateral development banks offer combinations of grants and concessional loans, which allow for scaling up financing for the poorest countries, as well as leveraging government contributions made to their capital to raise funds on capital markets, generating a significant scale of lending with relatively low capital disbursements. By co-financing projects with private banks, they can also increase leverage.

Sanahuja (2020) has remarked that the growing importance of private development funding flows poses both opportunities and challenges with respect to the SDGs. He argues that there are two main problems: the procyclicality of most investments; and investors' interest in specific sectors such as infrastructure and banking, to the detriment of other sectors that are more strategic for countries. In terms of development, the situation is more challenging for countries facing greater limitations on domestic resource mobilization, for which external financing is therefore critical.

In addition to the private sector, non-State actors, including from civil society, NGOs, and even the academic sector or international organizations, play a notable and active role as agents of social change. These stakeholders have experience in carrying out activities, projects and programmes in a range of socioeconomic circumstances and are able to tailor resources and objectives to the situation.

3. Civil society

The international development cooperation system is considering other new stakeholders (non-State stakeholders as well as the business sector) as cooperation providers, such as civil society, foundations, the academic sector, cooperatives and social economy organizations, not just because of their experience but also because they are a source of knowledge, resources, capacities and technology (SEGIB, 2021).

According to Huitrón-Morales (2020), in traditional North-South cooperation, civil society has historically had a utilitarian rather than a leading role. Civil society stakeholders have participated in implementing development projects rather than in designing or evaluating cooperation initiatives. However, the situation has been slowly evolving and civil society has been given an increasingly active role in cooperation. In this regard, Sanahuja (2020) underscores that the importance now accorded to civil society corresponds to a recognition of the role it plays in incentivizing, stimulating and fostering change and in acknowledging it as part of the social contract and re-establishing its position in the weakened democracies of the region.

In the area of cooperation, the contributions of civil society are acknowledged in: (i) processes of citizen empowerment that give voice to the most marginalized sectors, in terms of policy decision-making, and make policy processes and agendas more inclusive; (ii) strengthening political culture, public oversight and citizen-led transparency and accountability, supporting the reestablishment of trust in the institutional system; (iii) strengthening international solidarity networks and advocacy strategies in situations of rights violations where democratic spaces are closed; and (iv) renewing social and political leadership and providing alternative narratives in a context in which the values linked to cosmopolitanism and the rights agenda are facing strong pushback (Sanahuja, 2020).

4. Non-governmental organizations

As non-profit institutions that are independent of the State and promote some collective interest in the public sphere, NGOs are another group of relevant cooperation stakeholders. They differ in terms of their areas of action (community, citizen, national or international), their approach (charity, participation, studies, services or peacebuilding) and their form (corporations, associations, foundations or federations). NGOs have participated in different ways in the countries of the region in different historic periods, supporting State social transformation processes or even opposing them.

Balbis Pérez (2013) highlights the guaranteed autonomy of NGOs with respect to the State or the current government.³⁹ As regards cooperation, apart from the extent of their operational funding (public, private and international solidarity contributions),⁴⁰ some of their strength stems from their historic participation in defining and implementing development cooperation activities and projects, and even the public policy programmes of their respective governments.

5. Social economy organizations

Social economy organizations, like NGOs, are becoming increasingly important. The social and solidarity economy aspires to be a market exchange model for people-centred organizations. The innovative aspect of this economy brings it closer to the concept of South-South cooperation because it achieves results in different national contexts by expanding through establishment of regional and interregional knowledge and experience-sharing networks, while in South-South cooperation, countries interact horizontally, promoting solutions that also flow from an exchange of skills, resources and know-how, while at the same time fostering solidarity (ILO, 2022).

Social and solidarity economy organizations, such as cooperative enterprises, exist in a space between personal interests and the common good and between the public and the private good (Correa, 2022). Furthermore, the social and solidarity economy contributes to a rethinking of the development model, as it advocates for a sustainable and inclusive alternative, which has implications for local and territorial development, while relying on principles and knowledge that include cooperation, self-management, solidarity, participation of local stakeholders and the sustainable use of resources (Pereira Morais, 2014).

The emergence of a variety of stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean who are joining forces in development cooperation processes, as well as new forms of cooperation, make it crucial for States to be aware of their operating practices in order to create mutually agreed working methods that are realistic and pursue shared objectives (Ojeda Medina, 2020).

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³⁹ However, the autonomy of NGOs is not always seen as positive and they are often criticized for their significant involvement in politics and public policies, in opposition to governments.

⁴⁰ International solidarity contributions have long been the main source of funding for NGOs in the region.

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VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMPREHENSIVE RISK AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A. DISASTERS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Disaster management is another area in which there are many opportunities for international cooperation, and specifically for South-South and triangular cooperation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the main collaborative efforts that came to fruition were driven by the need to address the consequences of disasters that affected several countries. Owing to the cross-cutting nature of the impacts of disasters, cooperation has involved not only countries but also international and civil society organizations.

This chapter describes the main disasters that affected Latin America and the Caribbean between 1970 and March 2023 and then presents some cooperation initiatives between countries of the region in disaster risk management, along with regional solutions devised with the participation of international organizations. Finally, it highlights the potential of South-South cooperation on this issue of great importance to the region.

Disasters are recurrent events all over the world. According to the EM-DAT International Disaster Database of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) at the Catholic University of Louvain in Brussels, which has the most extensive record of disasters worldwide, in the period between 1970 and March 2023, the continent most affected was Asia, followed by the Americas, while Africa was the continent with the most epidemics.

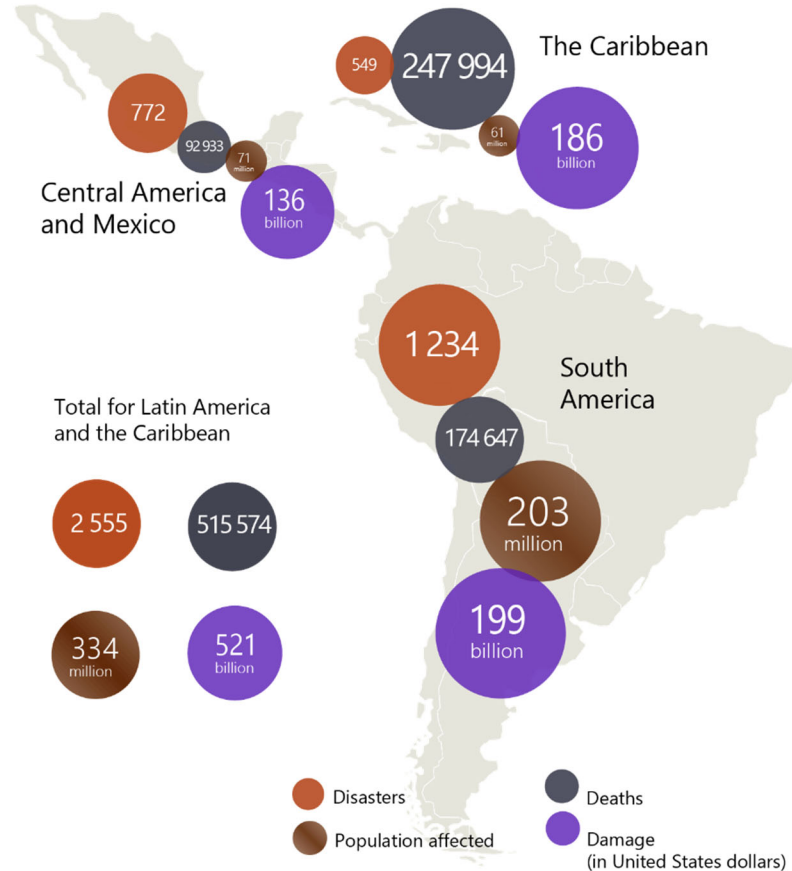
EM-DAT figures show that Latin America and the Caribbean suffered 2,555 disasters.⁴¹ These events affected 334 million people, causing 515,574 deaths and an estimated US\$ 521 billion in damage in dollars at 2022 prices (see map VI.1).

The Caribbean is the subregion that has been most severely affected by disasters, with 21% of the disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean occurring there, but the damage caused by disasters accounts for 36% of the total damage recorded. The subregion also has the highest rate of damage per unit of GDP. According to Bello (2017), over the period 1970–2010, disaster-related damage as a share of GDP in the Caribbean was the highest in the entire region, surpassing 8% on seven separate occasions. In Central America, this happened twice, while in South America, comparable figures have never been recorded.

Because a disaster in the Caribbean islands can affect an entire country, extreme cases such as those that occurred in the British Virgin Islands and Saint Martin during the 2017 hurricane season can be observed. That year, the total cost of the damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and María exceeded 100% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of those territories.

⁴¹ This database defines a disaster as an event that meets at least one of the following criteria: (i) 10 or more deaths are reported; (ii) 100 or more people are reported to have been affected; (iii) a state of emergency is declared; or (iv) international assistance is requested.

Map VI.1
**Latin America and the Caribbean: number of disasters and damage caused,
 by subregion, 1970–March 2023**



Source: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), EM-DAT International Disaster Database [online] <https://www.emdat.be/>.

The highest percentage of disaster-related deaths in the region (48%) is also found in the Caribbean, mainly from the earthquake in Port-au-Prince on 12 January 2010, in which 222,570 people perished.

From 1970 to March 2023, the most frequent disasters in the Caribbean were meteorological (56%), followed by those of hydrological origin (29%) (see table VI.1). In September 1998, Hurricane Georges affected several countries (Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis), killing 550 people and causing damage amounting to US\$ 6.4 billion, in dollars at 2022 prices. In the subregion, 58% of the damage in the period under consideration took place in the 2017 hurricane season, owing to Hurricanes Irma and María, which affected several countries and island territories.

In Central America and Mexico, there were 722 disasters, of which 37% were hydrological, 33% meteorological and 15% geophysical. The highest number of geophysical events in the three subregions was recorded in Central America and Mexico. Among meteorological disasters, Hurricane Mitch stands out: in 1998, it affected El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, causing 18,791 deaths and

damage of US\$ 10.6 billion, in dollars at 2022 prices. The hardest-hit country was Honduras, where 14,600 people died and damage amounted to US\$6.8 billion in dollars at 2022 prices. Since this event affected several countries, it was the trigger that boosted cooperation among the countries of the region.

Table VI.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: number of disasters and damage caused,
by subregion and type of disaster, 1970–March 2023

Number of disasters		Type of disaster					
Subregion	Biological	Climatological	Geophysical	Hydrological	Meteorological	Total	
The Caribbean	26	29	24	161	309	549	
Central America	48	61	118	288	257	772	
South America	82	107	153	757	135	1 234	
Total	156	197	295	1 206	701	2 555	
Deaths		Type of disaster					
Subregion	Biological	Climatological	Geophysical	Hydrological	Meteorological	Total	
The Caribbean	8 104		225 208	5 362	9 320	247 994	
Central America	1 639	91	47 167	9 243	34 793	92 933	
South America	15 487	200	99 516	55 377	4 067	174 647	
Total	25 230	291	371 891	69 982	48 180	515 574	
Total affected		Type of disaster					
Subregion	Biological	Climatological	Geophysical	Hydrological	Meteorological	Total	
The Caribbean	769 450	7 781 545	4 580 310	7 642 117	39 842 166	60 615 588	
Central America	522 256	14 626 455	16 455 020	13 395 471	26 168 826	71 168 028	
South America	2 977 398	100 263 424	18 112 948	73 476 271	7 715 222	202 545 263	
Total	4 269 104	122 671 424	39 148 278	94 513 859	73 726 214	334 328 879	
Damage (thousands of United States dollars at 2022 prices)		Type of disaster					
Subregion	Biological	Climatological	Geophysical	Hydrological	Meteorological	Total	
The Caribbean		447 069	13 972 019	1 971 338	169 285 940	185 676 366	
Central America		4 579 831	43 977 259	13 254 453	74 456 818	136 268 361	
South America	199 734	46 540 928	68 681 670	76 558 838	7 327 324	199 308 494	
Total	199 734	51 567 828	126 630 948	91 784 629	251 070 082	521 253 221	

Source: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), EM-DAT International Disaster Database [online] <https://www.emdat.be/>.

The most significant geological disasters include the Los Amates (Guatemala) earthquake of 4 February 1976, which killed 23,000 people and caused US\$ 5.1 billion in damage; the Managua earthquake of 23 December 1972, which killed 10,000 people and caused US\$ 5.9 billion in damage, and the Mexico City earthquake of 19 September 1985, which killed 9,500 people and caused an estimated US\$ 11.1 billion in damage, all in dollars at 2022 prices.

In South America, flooding was the most frequent type of disaster (48%) over the period. The deadliest flood was in the State of Vargas (now known as La Guaira) in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in December 1999, with a death toll of 30,000 and damage amounting to US\$ 55.1 billion in dollars at 2022 prices. Earthquakes were the second most frequent type of disaster, representing 9% of the total. The earthquake in the province of Áncash (Peru) of 31 May 1970, with a death toll of more than 66,794, was the deadliest disaster recorded in the subregion, and caused damage of US\$ 4 billion in dollars at 2022 prices.

In the 1980s, the two disasters that caused the highest number of deaths were the eruption of the Nevado de Ruiz Volcano on 13 November 1985 in Columbia and the ensuing landslide, which killed 21,800 and caused damage amounting to US\$ 2.7 billion in dollars at 2022 prices, and the earthquake on 5 March 1987 in Ecuador, which killed 5000 people and caused an estimated US\$ 3.9 billion in damage in dollars at 2022 prices.

In 1991, a cholera epidemic in Peru claimed 9,726 lives. In the 2010s, the most fatal events were the Muisne and Pedernales earthquake in Ecuador, which occurred on 16 April 2016 and caused 673 deaths, and the earthquake of 27 February 2010 in central Chile, which caused 562 deaths. Damage from the latter earthquake accounted for 49% of the disaster-related damage in that decade in the region.

B. DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND COOPERATION AMONG LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Disaster risk management is a relatively new concept. Until the 1990s, public policies for disasters were focused on response and preparedness. However, towards the end of that decade, after Hurricanes Mitch and Georges (1998) affected several Central American and Caribbean countries, a broad consensus emerged that disaster risk reduction at the national level should be considered as an investment and a strategy that was part and parcel of development processes and instruments. This fostered the adoption of a new perspective on disasters and how they could affect development, especially in the poorest countries.

Disasters such as those triggered by Hurricanes Mitch and Georges, or Hurricane Iván (2004), with devastating consequences in several countries, were important events for driving cooperation between countries in that regard. The public policy approach shifted towards the more holistic concept of disaster risk management, with a greater focus on reducing community vulnerability and building disaster response capacity.⁴² Disaster risk management is a complex public policy issue because it involves multiple actors from different sectors (social, productive and infrastructure sectors), working in different spheres (public and private) and at different geographical levels (national, departmental or local).

According to United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2009, pps. 10–11), disaster risk management is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events. This definition has four key aspects. First, it is a continuous and dynamic process that requires ongoing attention. Second, it refers to both the reduction of existing risks and the prevention of new risks through the identification of hazards and vulnerabilities. Third, it must be a holistic effort that incorporates the principles of stakeholders from different sectors and disciplines. Fourth, it is a comprehensive process rather than a set of isolated measures. As such, better results are obtained in disaster risk reduction when it is part of a systematic programme.

⁴² The results of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) studies on the socioeconomic and environmental effects and impacts of disasters were instrumental in this policy shift.

The devastating effects of the aforementioned hurricanes also brought to light the need for international cooperation to be part of these processes, in particular cooperation between countries with the same vulnerabilities. Disaster risk management among Latin American and Caribbean countries has been institutionalized at the subregional level for several decades, with the establishment of specialized regional bodies, such as the Coordination Centre for Disaster Prevention in Central America and the Dominican Republic (CEPREDENAC), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), and the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE). Each of these falls under a specific regional integration agreement: CEPREDENAC is the specialized institution of the Central American Integration System (SICA), CDEMA that of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and CAPRADE that of the Andean Community. This institutional framework facilitates cooperation between and within subregions, in areas such as the exchange of information and experiences, through the establishment of international networks and platforms for sharing good practices in risk and disaster management. At the subregional level, these organizations have also promoted capacity-strengthening for disaster prevention, preparedness and response and for post-disaster recovery. These institutions support the development of risk and disaster management solutions adapted to the characteristics of the region and the specific needs of their member countries.

An important step forward has been the adoption of intraregional policies, mainly aimed at harmonizing and integrating sectoral and territory-based approaches to enhance coordination and promotion activities and for decision-making on critical issues not covered under previous strategies. In that regard, it is important to study the experience of Central America. The impacts of Hurricane Mitch have led Central American countries to recognize the economic, social and environmental causes of the risks that create a predisposition for these types of disasters. Under the coordination of CEPREDENAC and with support from SICA, this has translated into a series of political decisions, the adoption of international and regional instruments and mechanisms, and the strengthening of national institutions responsible for furthering and coordinating disaster risk reduction.

The twentieth Ordinary Meeting of the Presidents of Central America, the Dominican Republic and Belize, held in Guatemala in October 1999, marked the most important milestone in the establishment of political and institutional guidelines to address the relationship between risk, disasters and development. At that meeting, there was a recognition of the need for “a comprehensive and intersectoral Central American commitment, [involving the] public and private [sectors], as well as the community in general”, and an ambitious, systemic vision was adopted, through the Strategic Framework for Reducing Vulnerabilities and Mitigating the Impact of Disasters in Central America, pursuant to which several sectoral and regional policy and management initiatives were developed in the areas of water, environment, agriculture, health, education, housing, public works and food security, among others.

The Strategic Framework began to be implemented in 2006, through the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan 2006–2015, which, for the first time, explicitly assigned responsibilities to national and local governments and civil society in the development of strategies and the adoption of measures to reduce disaster risk. Another important contribution of this initiative was that it prompted Central American countries to update their legal frameworks to include disaster risk management. In 2010, the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Risk Management (PCGIR) was signed, establishing a general framework for disaster risk management and linking it with economic, social and environmental management, through a comprehensive approach.

All these efforts have been aligned with those of the international community, which has taken on the task of mainstreaming disaster risk management in a series of international agreements, such as the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015 and its successor, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

C. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SPECIFIC REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

On the disaster front, the joint work of international organizations and countries has enabled specific solutions to concrete regional problems, which have subsequently been replicated on other continents. In that regard, the experience of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC) is worth mentioning. It was developed under the technical leadership of the World Bank with a grant from the Government of Japan. It was capitalized through contributions to a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF) from the Government of Canada, the European Union, the World Bank, the Governments of the United Kingdom and France, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Governments of Ireland and Bermuda, as well as through membership fees paid by participating governments.

The establishment of CCRIF SPC can be tied to Hurricane Iván, which hit Barbados, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago in September 2004. The hurricane caused 68 deaths and damage of US\$ 3 billion, in dollars at 2022 prices, and was the worst disaster ever to hit Grenada. Yet another disaster striking several Caribbean nations and territories drove the international community to begin considering specific solutions for the subregion. This led to the foundation in 2007 of CCRIF SPC, a parametric insurance instrument, which, unlike indemnity insurance, makes payouts based on predefined levels of intensity for different events and on the impact that they can cause.

It was originally designed to deal with disasters in the Caribbean related to hurricanes and earthquakes so that governments could obtain short-term liquidity to respond to the emergency and reduce budget volatility. Central American countries became eligible to join in 2014. CCRIF SPC payments are made within 14 days of an event and 58 payouts totalling US\$ 260 million have been made since it was established. Currently, the institution serves 19 Caribbean governments,⁴³ 3 Central American governments⁴⁴ and two electricity companies.⁴⁵ CCRIF SPC has broadened the range of insurance products it offers to include coverage for tropical cyclones, excess rainfall, earthquakes, the fisheries sector and electric utility companies.

This successful initiative has been replicated on other continents, according to their specific features. In 2014, the African Risk Capacity Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd) was founded, a hybrid mutual insurer that is a subsidiary of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group of the African Union. ARC Ltd provides parametric insurance services to member States of the African Union and to farmer organizations. The insurance was initially intended to mitigate the impact of droughts. Its members are African governments that have taken out a policy in a particular year, as well as capital contributors, such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom and KfW Development Bank of Germany, through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany.

With the participation of civil society and international agencies, the ARC Replica supplemental insurance programme was launched in 2016, which allowed for increased disaster coverage. The functioning of the mechanism is illustrated in the following example. In July 2019, the Government of Senegal purchased a drought policy according to which an insurance payout would be triggered if rainfall levels dropped below a predefined threshold. Start Network, a non-governmental organization, bought the same policy in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations, meaning that it replicated the policy. Once rainfall levels slipped below the agreed threshold, payouts were made for both policies.

⁴³ Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Turks and Caicos Islands.

⁴⁴ Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama.

⁴⁵ ANGLEC (Anguilla) and LUCELEC (Santa Lucia).

In 2017, the World Bank strengthened the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI), an insurance risk pool for five Pacific island countries. The project is based on similar experiences in disaster risk management in Africa and the Caribbean.

**D. FUND FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE
TO NATURAL DISASTERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN
AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC).**

The Political Declaration of Mexico City, adopted on 18 September 2021 at the sixth Summit of Heads of State and Government of CELAC,⁴⁶ supported the establishment of the Fund for Climate Adaptation and Comprehensive Response to Natural Disasters (FACRID). At the seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of CELAC, held in 2023, countries reaffirmed the importance of the Fund and their commitment to it,⁴⁷ and Argentina, the Pro Tempore Chair, presented the Agreement for the establishment of the Fund to the countries. The Agreement reflects the interest in mobilizing financial resources through voluntary contributions from CELAC member States, their extraregional partners and other public stakeholders to support the Fund's projects. ECLAC agreed to administer FACRID on behalf of the donor countries. Accordingly, a voluntary contribution agreement was annexed to the Agreement to be signed by donor States parties and ECLAC, for the administration of the Fund in compliance with United Nations rules and regulations.

FACRID aims to prevent, mitigate against and improve and response preparedness for of climate-related or hydrometeorological emergencies and disasters —such as droughts, forest fires, flooding, heavy rainfall and storms— and to drive climate change adaptation measures, by financing projects that contribute to: (i) emergency response preparation and predictability (for example, through the pre-positioning of humanitarian supplies or training volunteers of for humanitarian assistance missions); (ii) the strengthening of prevention for adaptation, recovery and disaster assessment (strengthening of early warning systems, risk mapping or assessment of local capacities); and (iii) the establishment or reform of regulations and procedures for land use, development of resilient infrastructure, rehabilitation and reconstruction, among others.

The Agreement will enter into force when at least two countries have signed it and fulfilled the domestic requirements for its ratification. The entry into force is therefore pending until at least two countries have ratified and deposited the instruments of ratification with its depositary, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic, after which States parties will be able to make voluntary contributions to the Fund.

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⁴⁶ See the Political Declaration of Mexico City [online] <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/documentos/declaracion-de-la-ciudad-de-mexico-celac-2021>.

⁴⁷ See the Buenos Aires Declaration [online] <https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/es/actualidad/noticias/cumbre-celac-declaracion-de-buenos-aires>.

VII. THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE NEW GLOBAL CONTEXT

A. FROM A GLOBALIZED WORLD TO ONE OF OPEN REGIONALISM OR CLOSED AND FRAGMENTED REGIONALISM

In today's world, regional and global challenges are borderless and common to many countries and territories. Geopolitical, health, climate and economic crises and even national political contexts are increasingly likely to lead to significant global repercussions. However, the world is moving towards a regionalism characterized and driven by a wave of protectionism. Global value chains are being reorganized for geopolitical reasons, which are also driving industrial policies that include friend-shoring. In a similar fashion, the conflict in Ukraine has accelerated a return to the goals of self-sufficiency and security in energy, food and manufacturing, among others (ECLAC, 2023).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defined universal development challenges that affect all countries, irrespective of their income, and it therefore requires the promotion of international cooperation strategies on a regional and global scale. The 2030 Agenda is the product of a globalized, interconnected and interdependent world, advancing multilateral, multidimensional and multi-stakeholder strategies to address persistent social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean face profound challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. The international context is unfavourable, marked as it is by major uncertainties amid cascading crises that stem from factors such as the negative economic and social effects of the COVID-19, the conflict in Ukraine—which has also had negative global repercussions—, low growth, high inflation, reduced availability of essential supplies, energy insecurity, human migration, environmental disasters, climate change and the effects of digitalization on the labour market.⁴⁸ To this must be added a lack of clarity on the path to be taken by the world in the coming years, and the shift from a globalized world to one of open or closed and fragmented regionalism, which could trigger major changes in international development cooperation.

1. An agenda for action

Latin America and the Caribbean should take decisive steps to return to a path of integration and strengthening of a regional voice on international cooperation issues. Coordination between the different cooperation initiatives is needed, in line with the strengthening of the mandates of regional bodies. At the same time, the region should establish platforms to connect political agendas with technical agendas through dialogues on more integration between public policy in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and with other regions of the world, within a multidimensional development framework.

Strengthening of the region's institutional framework for South-South and triangular cooperation is also needed, as is rethinking of its conceptual, practical, normative and institutional foundations in a way that fosters dialogue and boosts the sharing of experiences, good practices and capacity-building in sectors with the greatest impact in the countries of the region (SEGIB, 2021).

⁴⁸ In Latin America and the Caribbean, health was already recognized as a priority for cooperation before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (Ubierna, 2022).

Progress must also be made in the adoption of a regional strategy that includes a pragmatic agenda for action (with shared language, thematic frameworks and partnerships) and fosters convergence between the concerns and positions regarding the development and climate agendas.

The cooperation agenda could include priority issues that have already been thoroughly addressed at regional meetings, such as productive development, technology transfer, the creation of regional and global public goods, vaccine access and production, the digital agenda, the creative or orange economy and the mainstreaming of gender and inequality, among other topics.

The agenda should also include specific niches for triangular cooperation, so as to incorporate and coordinate stakeholders and donor groups, actively and systematically include the private sector, and identify both good practices and failures from which lessons can be learned.

Regarding linkages with other regions of the world, there is a need to produce, jointly with the European Union, a road map for the region—bearing in mind that Spain assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023—that incorporates green, productive and digital partnerships, along with indicators, short- and long-term targets and budget provisions. The region should discuss with the European Union how to seek common positions in the face of new challenges and how to shape their new biregional partnership. The dialogue should address the importance of traditional financial aid, but also the significance of investments for Latin America and the Caribbean, considering the diversity and challenges of the countries of the region; the need to move forward with a series of cooperation and financial support formats to strengthen the development path of Latin American countries; and innovative instruments for knowledge-sharing, triangular cooperation, multilateral policy dialogue, capacity-building, technology transfer, blended financing and resource mobilization.

Latin America and the Caribbean should also broaden agreements with other regions of the world, such as Asia and Africa, which could improve governance in the implementation of the SDGs and address global structural challenges through new partnerships, metrics and sustainable development financing modalities to drive a transformative recovery.

Cooperation is an important, living, and in the current context, foundational instrument for reviving multilateralism and for joint action by countries on peace and development.

2. Regional methodologies for evaluating South-South and triangular cooperation

Latin America and the Caribbean has significant experience in the evaluation of South-South cooperation in qualitative, quantitative and monetary terms, which could now pave the way for gradual and planned progress towards standardized regional systems based on similar or equivalent parameters. This is well documented in the evaluation exercises conducted involving the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), ECLAC and the broader United Nations system, among others, and in regional publications such as Oviedo (2021), which describes the cases of Barbados, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Paraguay and Uruguay, countries that use different evaluation methodologies.

Advancing towards the establishment of regional methodologies for evaluating South-South and triangular cooperation presupposes groundwork at the country level aimed at strengthening national systems for assessing and evaluating cooperation. Among other things, this would include capacity-building to systematize and evaluate technical cooperation activities and the design of appropriate methodologies to

capture quantitative and qualitative information on cooperation initiatives, bridge information gaps, and generate data for knowledge-building and decision-making. Identifying countries' good practices, ideally subject to evaluations of their direct and indirect results or impacts, is a prior or complementary step to quantitative monetary and non-monetary measurements of what cooperation contributes (Oviedo, 2021).

Assessment and evaluation of South-South cooperation should go beyond performance and aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the relevant public policies of States. It is also a means of raising awareness among citizens of the merits of contributing to the development of other countries in a spirit of solidarity, horizontality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs.

Latin America and the Caribbean should continue to reflect on the regional standardization of South-South cooperation evaluation and support the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices on South-South and triangular cooperation. Likewise, the countries of the region should actively participate in qualitative, quantitative and monetary assessment processes aimed at refining measurement methodologies.

Agreement and collaboration on the methodologies for evaluating South-South cooperation are essential for improving integration and providing needs-based support to all countries on the road to development. This process will generate knowledge for national decision-makers, non-governmental organizations, researchers, international agencies and other significant cooperation actors as well as for all kinds of comparative analyses on development at the national, regional or global scale.

3. Strengthening a comprehensive vision and coordinated multi-stakeholder work

The challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean is to arrive at a comprehensive, coherent vision to enable cooperation and development offices, agencies and organizations to work together to build new capacities, coordinate the work of public, private and civil society stakeholders, and promote medium- and long-term public policies. There is a need to transform common language and the regional narrative into a road map and workplan containing proposals for alternatives to strengthen partnerships for development with all cooperation stakeholders on a global scale. It is also essential to have tools that consolidate development agendas, boost resource mobilization and make investment more attractive.

The cascading crises that Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced have revealed structural deficiencies and widened the social, economic and environmental gaps in the countries of the region. Solutions requiring joint action by the public, private and academic sectors, as well as development banks abound. Among these are solutions for the cross-cutting issues of education, training, technology, gender and migration.

Cooperation and development agencies can facilitate the collective development of new capacities in the countries of the region, coordination of public, private and civil society action, and the promotion of medium- and long-term public policies. They can also lend their own technical capabilities to improve country coordination, for example by promoting secure, traceable and comparable data systems, digitalization, effective management and the strengthening of institutional capacities to mobilize investment and resources.

Resource mobilization is vital for a sustainable and inclusive recovery to effectively respond to the development challenges faced by the countries of the region and for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Traditional financial assistance is important for the countries of the region; so too is investment to overcome the structural gaps in the development transition.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a proving ground for innovation in resource mobilization, as a region with less developed and more developed economies, high institutional capacity and dynamic financial markets that create opportunities for significant resource mobilization, both domestically and internationally. The region offers opportunities for donors and private investors to diversify their portfolios and channel resources to specific countries.

International cooperation should play an important role in supporting the search for regional agreement and consensus on issues such as new financial instruments and technology partnerships and the green and digital transitions. In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, "...development cooperation and investment in the Sustainable Development Goals must scale up immediately to boost sources of international development cooperation. Demands on international development cooperation are higher than ever...official development assistance (ODA) providers need to meet their commitments and all sources of development cooperation must be scaled up." (United Nations, 2023, para. 6). ECLAC (2021) drew attention to the fact that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation initiatives and the responses of multilateral financial institutions were not commensurate with the financing needs of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and underscored the increasing importance of developing cooperation and financing modalities that allow development resources to be aligned with national needs. Furthermore, measures implemented using cooperation funds to mitigate, cushion or lessen a crisis should not be merely reactive or palliative.

On the financing side, this requires, among other things, coordination among financial stakeholders, improved financial system governance and resource allocation capacity, mobilization of private equity capital and thematic bonds, establishment of intraregional consensus-based partnerships, and agreement on a flexible programme approach with combined budget support to obtain additional resources.

With regard to multi-stakeholder action, the priority topics are including the private sector and civil society in cooperation initiatives, strengthening States' capacities at central government and territorial level for project execution and proper use of the allocated funds, including the provision of guarantees, the establishment of multilateral rating agencies, and the need for the region to speak with one voice when interacting with key actors in multilateral contexts.

4. Risk management: a matter for South-South and triangular cooperation in the region

Lessons in disaster risk management can be learned from countries with similar natural hazards and vulnerabilities.

As noted by António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "Climate- and debt-vulnerable countries require more concessional resources. Humanitarian aid and development assistance is needed to curb growing food crises. Climate finance is not keeping pace with the increasing impact of climate change" (United Nations, 2023, para. 6).

Cooperation between countries on the same continent has been very smooth. However, there is great potential for cooperation between countries on different continents. For example, some African countries have been suffering droughts since the 1970s. Climate change has increased the frequency of drought in South and Central America, and the African experience can provide input on mitigating its effects. Similarly, the experience of countries in Southeast Asia in dealing with tsunamis can be shared with the countries of the region. An example of the benefits of cooperation is the experience with parametric insurance, with a practice that was successful in the Caribbean being adopted by Central America and applied and enhanced in Africa.

In the specific case of small island developing States, which are also suffering the impacts of climate change and will incur even higher costs if the projected scenarios of sea level rise become a reality, cooperation between countries on different continents would be beneficial. In fact, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway recognizes the importance of disaster risk management, but tangible action is needed for progress to be achieved in that regard.

It is also important to step up the preparation of detailed studies on international cooperation identifying potential areas for collaboration between continents in the global South.

5. Foresight studies for cooperation on transformative initiatives

In order to confront regional and global challenges, Latin America and the Caribbean must employ forward-looking governance, grounded in analyses and futures studies based on foresight methods (ECLAC, 2023).

Recognizing that South-South and triangular cooperation should be conducted on the basis of the principles of solidarity, horizontality and respect for sovereignty, among others, ECLAC, considering the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, suggests that cooperation in areas of work defined by countries should lead to transformative initiatives with a forward-looking vision and synergistic capacity, that are grounded in data and can transform the status quo and bring together multiple stakeholders.

International development cooperation, in particular South-South and triangular cooperation, are key for achieving sustainable development and for improving the quality of life of the world's population through the transfer, receipt and sharing of information, knowledge, technology, experiences and resources. With leadership from States, cooperation can be strengthened by uniting the efforts of multiple stakeholders, such as international organizations, development banks, civil society, academia and the private sector.

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