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**REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE
OF THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Aguascalientes, Mexico, 14-16 November 2017

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The ninth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 14 to 16 November 2017.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Spain and Uruguay.

3. The following associate members of the Commission were also represented: Aruba and Curaçao.

4. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by the Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

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

6. The following specialized agencies of the United Nations were also represented: International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Bank and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

7. The Chair of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean also attended the meeting.

8. Also in attendance were representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Andean Community (CAN), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Inter-American Statistical Institute and International Youth Organization for Ibero-America (OIJ).

9. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, other civil society entities, the private sector and the academic world also attended.

¹ See the list of participants in annex 2.

B. AGENDA

10. The Chair submitted the provisional agenda for consideration and it was adopted without amendment.²
 1. Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Presentation and discussion of the substantive issue “Towards the integration of statistical and geospatial information”.
 3. Activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in relation to follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals.
 4. Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2016-2017, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.
 5. Review and adoption of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2018-2019, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.
 - (a) Proposals for the work of the working groups of the Conference for the 2018-2019 biennium.
 - (b) Information on subregional cooperation activities.
 - (c) Information on international cooperation activities.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Consideration and adoption of resolutions.
 8. Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the 2018-2019 biennium.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

11. At the opening session, statements were made by Julio Santaella, President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico; Mario Palma, Vice-President of INEGI of Mexico, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

12. The President of INEGI of Mexico first welcomed the participants and then spoke of the numerous challenges facing official statistics, including competition from the information industry, which required a new approach to statistical work and which demanded, more than ever, coordination among the region’s statistical agencies to ensure the public were provided with the statistical information they needed. He wished the participants a fruitful meeting, saying that the event would help achieve the goal of “leaving no one behind” set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

² LC/CEA.9/1/Rev.1.

13. The Vice-President of INEGI of Mexico, in his capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference, highlighted the commitment of ECLAC towards statistical work and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region. After offering an historical overview of the meetings of the Statistical Conference that had preceded this one, he listed some of the global, regional and subregional challenges facing statistical work, such as ensuring adequate resources, upholding the relevance of statistical offices and the information they produced for public policies, ensuring statistics services are equipped with appropriate technologies and keeping them from being replaced by other actors, and maintaining adequate quality standards through the implementation of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which were supported by all the countries represented in the United Nations General Assembly. This meeting of the Conference, he said, would help the countries and international organizations to jointly identify solutions to those challenges.

14. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC welcomed the participants and thanked INEGI and the people and the Government of Mexico for hosting the meeting. Seventeen years after its creation, she said, the Statistical Conference of the Americas was playing a fundamental role in the region's statistical development by representing the countries in the global mechanisms of the SDG process; through the thematic scope of its working groups; by addressing the newest challenges; in its willingness to innovate in measurement and analysis tools; through its methodologies for and dissemination of the results of statistical work to meet the demands of the information society and public policies; in its capacity-building; and by addressing the challenge of building a system with multiple actors from the public and private sectors and civil society, with system of governance that was in keeping with the times and respectful of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The goal of moving forward with the development of a regional framework of indicators for monitoring the SDGs was a major task, involving the construction and calculation of indicators to reflect the different national, regional and global paths taken towards achieving them. The progress made through the Regional Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean was crucial in strengthening the professional independence of national statistical offices, improving the quality of official statistics and bolstering user confidence. The strengthening of official statistics in the region's countries was not the responsibility of national statistical offices alone, but of society as a whole and, in particular, of the State. She stressed, in particular, the role of gender statistics, where the region was a pioneer in measuring time use, as well as the value of incorporating other sources of information—such as geospatial information and Earth observation—into measuring and monitoring sustainable development. This meeting of the Conference would forge new and better tools for building roads towards a fair and dignified development that would help overcome inequalities both old and new in the region.

15. The meeting then paid homage to Dirk Jaspers-Faijjer, a former Chief of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, who had played a central role in building the region's capacity for conducting population censuses and had attended all the meetings of the Statistical Conference of the Americas over 34 years of service with the United Nations.

Presentation and discussion of the substantive issue “Towards the integration of statistical and geospatial information” (agenda item 2)

16. A discussion was then held on the topic “Towards the integration of statistical and geospatial information”. Moderated by Floribel Méndez, Manager of the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) of Costa Rica, it was intended to explore the challenges of managing and integrating geospatial information and statistics at the national, regional and global levels, and of developing a geostatistical framework as a global standard for integrating statistical and geospatial information.

Statistical and geospatial information and Earth observation data: essential inputs for sustainable development and public policies

17. This topic was presented by Rolando Ocampo Alcántar, Co-Chair of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, and Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

18. The Co-Chair of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information spoke of the relationship between statistics and geospatial information. After reminding the participants of the background to the creation of the Expert Group, he said that its objectives included exploring the challenges of managing and integrating geospatial and statistical information at the national, regional and global levels and of developing a comprehensive framework for their integration. The United Nations Statistical Commission had identified five guiding principles for a global statistical and geospatial framework: the use of fundamental geospatial infrastructure and geocoding; geocoded data recorded in a data management environment; definition of common geographies for the dissemination of statistics; use of technical rules for interoperable data and metadata standards; and the production of accessible and usable geospatially enabled statistics. He also spoke of the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which had agreed on the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas initiative.

19. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said the world was witnessing a change of era, as global economic and social trends were deepening an unsustainable model of development, with geopolitical and demographic changes (such as migrations) and climate change (the world's biggest market failure). Humankind, she said, needed tools such as big data to transform its models for development, production and consumption, particularly in the natural-disaster-prone countries of the Caribbean and Central America. Countries that had the capacity to understand their territories for risk management and early warning could focus their actions on those areas where the principal problems arose. Natural disasters were compounded by marginalization, hunger and inequality. Averages, she said, concealed great territorial asymmetries and it was therefore necessary to evolve towards a digital ecosystem and to improve regional, subregional and local connectivity. National statistics institutes could enable the strategic convergence of technical and analytical disciplines such as statistics and geography. The seminar taking place would reflect on how modern technologies contributed to an understanding of biodiversity and to the integration of traditional sources of statistical data in order to build greater resilience in the region and its communities, as well as to address such issues as land use change, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and the quality of the world's seas and of the region's cities. Decisions and public policies had to be better informed, patterns of distribution and inequality had to be identified and the solutions adopted for a common problem had to be adjusted to different geographical contexts. Not knowing where things were taking place led to such phenomena as tax evasion and the culture of privilege. She asked the statistical community to provide guidance to entities such as ECLAC, which was constructing a strategy with the global statistical geospatial framework as its reference point. With this, concrete progress could be presented to the next meeting of the Conference, such as a gender atlas, a water use atlas or an atlas of biodiversity. She offered the facilities of ECLAC to support the organizational design, the use of open platforms to provide the institutions with geospatial data streams, the facilitation of interoperability with national and regional agencies and the preparations for the 2020 census round in the region. In concluding, she said that greater integration could be placed at the service of communities, cities, development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Regional perspectives for the integration of statistical and geospatial information

20. Álvaro Monett Hernández, Regional Expert on Geospatial Information Management at the ECLAC Statistics Division, Rodrigo Barriga Vargas, Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), and Angélica Gutiérrez-Magness, International Hydrology Lead of the Office of Water Prediction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States and Chair of the AmeriGEOSS Initiative (speaking by videoconference), presented the regional perspectives for the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

21. The Regional Expert on Geospatial Information Management at the ECLAC Statistics Division presented the preliminary findings of a study into the baseline situation of the region's countries regarding various institutional and technical aspects of managing statistical and geospatial data. Those results would indicate the technical support actions required by the region's countries for exchanging good practices and capacity-building. The regional consultation had been addressed to national statistical agencies and national geographical institutes to ascertain whether the countries had selected an institution or national structure or mechanism to begin the process of integrating statistical and geospatial information. The study's preliminary results revealed that the region's countries were at different stages in the geospatial and statistical information integration process; the integration of statistical and geospatial information was further advanced in those countries that had formally established a national infrastructure for geospatial data, and higher levels of integration were seen in those cases where national statistical offices placed greater importance on the management of geospatial information; not all countries were using geospatial inputs in the statistical production process and there were differences between different types of statistics (social and demographic statistics most the most frequently used). A similar situation could be seen with the dissemination of statistical data from georeferenced platforms, he said (social and demographic statistics received greater dissemination through geoportals); geospatial information related to land and plots was well advanced in the region, although there were gaps in coverage; greater challenges remained regarding geospatial information on postal addresses and, in some instances, there was a lack of inter-agency coordination to ensure interoperability in the production of basic data; detailed information was available concerning technical specifications for basic data in terms of disaggregation, update frequency and web access, and there was a preliminary set of documents to be shared among the countries. In concluding, he proposed completing the assessment of the region's baseline situation; devising a regional strategic plan for integrating statistical and geospatial information in pursuit of the SDGs and to conduct the 2020 census round; implementing the regional strategy at the national level; completing the implementation of the Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Americas (MEGA) project based on the guidelines and specifications published by the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas initiative; establishing a regional mechanism to document and publish good practices and national experiences; analysing geospatial support opportunities within the Statistical Conference's working groups; establishing partnerships with the global and regional Earth observation communities; and coordinating with regional bodies and initiatives involved with the management of geospatial information with a view to cooperation.

22. The Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) gave a presentation on the Institute's views regarding statistical and geospatial information integration. PAIGH was a specialized agency of the inter-American system, he said, with the basic purpose of promoting, coordinating and disseminating cartographical, geographical, historical and geophysical studies, conducting analyses, projects and training exercises in those fields and promoting cooperation among agencies working on those topics in the region and with related international organizations. The Institute had two main programmes: its publications programme, and its programme of technical assistance for projects conducted across the Americas. A pan-American agenda in line with the SDGs had been defined, and contributions

were being made in the Institute's areas of competence, such as Earth science and history, climate change adaptation, territorial management, natural disaster risk management and all matters related to historical heritage. The work plans of the Institute's commissions took into account the general principles for integrating statistical and geospatial information, as this was considered essential for the development and integration of data. A joint action plan with other entities had been drawn up in order to avoid duplications of efforts and create synergies. PAIGH had focused on developing an integrated pan-American map, building framework databases and standardizing geospatial data, as well as on interoperability and statistical and geospatial information integration, which was crucial for the attaining the SDGs.

23. The International Hydrology Lead of the Office of Water Prediction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States and Chair of the AmeriGEOSS Initiative said that for the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), the Conference represented an important opportunity because the SDGs were a priority in its work. GEO was an intergovernmental body comprising 105 countries, including 16 countries from Latin America, which promoted the open use of Earth observation data for resource management decision-making; those observations included both satellite observations and on-site information. The Group did not work exclusively on thematic initiatives, she said, but was also involved in regional projects, such as AmeriGEOSS. Among the challenges faced, she noted that the environmental monitoring networks had been set up without taking into account the importance of demographic, economic and social information for monitoring the SDGs, that there were statistical and technical challenges related to climatic variability and that environmental data did not always meet the assumed statistical parameters. The AmeriGEOSS initiative aimed to address national interests and improve inter-agency capacities. Its work was focused primarily in four socially beneficial areas: agriculture (effects of climatic variability, climate change, food security), water (resource management), disasters (early warning) and diversity (monitoring). Basic activities represented its fifth area of work. The aim was to gather social, economic and environmental data to inform decision-making, including determinations related to the SDGs. Finally, she stated that it was necessary to achieve a more organic style of coordination between statistical agencies and Earth observation organizations, to study methods for incorporating the data that already existed and to establish feedback between the two types of organizations.

Earth observation and open data for the production of statistics and monitoring of sustainable development indicators

24. This topic was presented by Miguel Ángel Cárdenas, Director of Geostatistics of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia, Aditya Agrawal, Director of Data Ecosystems Development of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), and Eduardo de la Torre, Director of Planning at the Office of the Vice-President for Economic Data of INEGI of Mexico.

25. The Director of Geostatistics of the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia gave a presentation on Earth observation and open data for producing statistics and monitoring the SDGs. He summarized the path taken by DANE with the integration of geographic and geospatial information and said that to achieve that integration, the institutional structure for geostatistics had to be strengthened. The upcoming census in Colombia would include information for calculating indicators on urban infrastructure and equipment through technological enhancements and the definition of roles within the census process. National statistics institutes supported the agencies charged with monitoring the SDGs, which provided an opportunity to generate knowledge and invest in innovation and research. As an example of this, he spoke of the work done by DANE in coordination with the private sector and the academic world on indicators 11.3.1 (ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate), 9.1.1 (share of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road), 11.7.1 (average share of the built-up area of cities

that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities), 15.1.1 (forest area as a proportion of total land area), 15.2.1 (progress towards sustainable forest management), 15.3.1 (proportion of land that is degraded over total land area), 15.4.2 (Mountain Green Cover Index) and 6.1.1 (proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services). In ending his presentation, he said it was necessary to make innovations in national statistical systems and to modernize them, to strengthen their infrastructure and human capital and to ensure that their data were collaborative and reliable, and that this was the conclusion reached at the Fourth International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics, which was held in Bogotá in November 2017.

26. The Director of Data Ecosystems Development of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) remarked that the huge data needs behind the SDGs coexisted with many pre-existing disaggregation, quality, usability and accessibility challenges. He referred to the Partnership's various lines of action for harnessing the data revolution for sustainable development, at whose core were data roadmaps for sustainable development supporting whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder strategies, with particular emphasis on the SDGs and local priorities. Through its country-led approach, GPSDD had learned institutional and technical lessons and identified key issues, such as the need for more private sector engagement, better mobilization of funding and resources, stronger data literacy and better alignment between open data and the SDGs. The speaker highlighted the Partnership's experiences with data collaboratives, including the development of inclusive data charters and piloting methods for increased data operability. He remarked that data were becoming more easily accessible through data cubes, since open data cubes allowed the stacking of 30 years' worth of data, which, among other advantages, helped visualize the effects and impact of policy decisions. In conclusion, he remarked that moving forward, more collaboration was needed between sectors, as well as the will to embrace innovation, work at multiple scales, increase data literacy and link initiatives having a common purpose.

27. The Director of Planning at the Office of the Vice-President for Economic Data of INEGI of Mexico spoke of the activities pursued by INEGI to produce and standardize data, which anyone interested could explore using the institution's platform, and he highlighted the institutional autonomy that the Institute enjoyed. As the coordinator of the statistical and geographical information system, INEGI was responsible for the technical coordination of the agencies of the State in the areas over which it had jurisdiction. The information needed for monitoring the SDGs had been integrated through coordination at the highest national level, with the assistance of civil society and the academic world, and with the required budgetary support. He provided examples of areas of work where improvements had been made to the methodology and the data, including the preparation of the national housing inventory in the digital map of Mexico, the monitoring of droughts and crops, and the gender atlas, which allowed the visualization of different layers of information that were useful both for georeferencing and for generating original information on employment, housing or agricultural activities, thereby allowing a broader vision of gender issues. Earth observation served as a direct source of data on water, deforestation, land use, the administration of justice and perceptions of public services. He said that the geospatial dimension had to be made cross-cutting in the social, economic, political and administrative spheres and that coordination with global actors and participation in global and regional forums such as the one he was addressing allowed the sharing of experiences, the channelling of resources, the planning of training activities, the creation of open data policies and the identification of common ground for monitoring multilateral agendas such as the SDGs.

28. In the ensuing discussion, the participants stressed the importance of regional reference points such as INEGI in Mexico, IBGE in Brazil and DANE in Colombia, whose activities allowed progress to be made with the topics at hand. The representative of the World Bank reaffirmed the importance of integrating geospatial data, along with other types of data, in order to move from information to action, and as an asset

that could be shared through open data platforms. The representative of UNDP spoke of national experiences with forecasts and simulations to analyse the impact of public policies, while the representative of UNFPA underscored the importance of linking geospatial data and administrative records to create indicator monitoring systems. The panellists stressed the need for a more organic style of coordination between the statistical, geospatial and Earth observation communities at the global and national levels in order to address national and subnational planning topics and identify the population's needs. Civil society was demanding to be kept informed, the private sector was willing, the political will existed and national statistics institutes had to be innovative and ready to process the large volumes of information that were being rapidly generated.

Activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in relation to follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals (agenda item 3)

Report on the activities of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

29. The representative of Mexico spoke about the accomplishments and future tasks of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. He made particular reference to the new classification of the global indicator framework (232 indicators) and said that the Group's fifth meeting had refined 11 indicators and updated another 5 from the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; had discussed the draft guidelines on data flows and on global SDG reporting to ensure greater transparency in the information furnished by countries and international agencies; had reviewed the work plans of the agencies responsible for the Tier III indicators; and had presented the disaggregation work programme that sought to standardize the indicator categories. The plans for the sixth meeting of the Group included reviewing the work plans for the Tier III indicators and following up with the agencies to avoid double reporting; revising the schedule for gathering data from international agencies; preparing the draft guidelines for data flows and global SDG reporting; discussing the implementation of the SDG reports at the national, regional, global and thematic levels; refining the indicators on an annual basis; continuing with the disaggregation of data; and beginning work on compiling the report to be presented at the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

30. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division presented the Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He spoke of various topics addressed at the meeting of the group held the previous week in Ramallah, Palestine, including the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, the preparation of the Second United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in October 2018, the proposed establishment of the post of Chief Statistician at the United Nations in order to better integrate statistical activities within the Organization and the preparation of the report to be presented at the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The meeting had concluded that increased high-level political representation in statistics agencies was needed, as were new formats for exchanging ideas.

Information on the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

31. A representative of the secretariat explained that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development focused on three main issues: examining the annual progress report to identify institutional mechanisms for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; statistical measurements in the region, which required the adoption of a set of regional

indicators; and a peer-to-peer learning session to discuss the individual countries' challenges and priorities. All three areas, he said, contributed to the dialogue on transformation into sustainable and resilient societies. Multiple actors participated in the Forum—including civil society, the private sector and representatives of academia—and it had the support of the agencies of the United Nations system. He also called for closer integration between the delegations and officials from the region's statistical system, and he said that the regional framework of indicators for monitoring the SDGs presented to the Statistical Conference of the Americas would serve as a guide for the region's implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Report on the activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean

32. A presentation on the activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean was given by a representative of the technical secretariat. First, he spoke of the inventory of national capacities for producing the indicators of the SDG global indicator framework that had been compiled from the information provided by the 27 countries that had completed the questionnaire; the information obtained had been presented at the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, held in Mexico City in April 2017. He invited those countries that had not submitted their information to do so in order to keep the inventory up to date. He also noted that the technical secretariat had prepared a proposal for a regional indicator framework for SDG monitoring, the development of which would continue using information from the countries and other contributions, for consideration by the Conference's member States. Likewise, he reported that progress had been made in the joint work with the ad hoc working group for preparing a regional indicator proposal for following up on the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and that the technical secretariats of both groups had worked on a joint proposal of indicators for the SDGs and the Montevideo Consensus, which had included 14 indicators from the Montevideo Consensus as complementary indicators for the proposed regional framework of indicators for SDG monitoring.

Proposal on a regional framework of indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

33. This presentation was given by the technical secretariat. The meeting was reminded that the Conference had proposed that a regional framework of indicators be developed to serve as a bridge between the global indicator framework and the needs of the region's countries in light of their sociodemographic, economic, environmental and territorial characteristics. The objective of the proposed regional framework of indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals was to help stimulate and sustain intergovernmental dialogue within the Statistical Conference and ensure contributions from the specialized agencies to reach consensus among the member countries regarding the regional framework of indicators for monitoring the SDGs. Rather than being binding, this framework would serve as a guide for the region's countries, be progressive and aspirational and allow the prioritization of measurement efforts. The technical secretariat's proposal had been sent, for review, to the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, to the statistical counterparts of the United Nations agencies in the region and to the Statistical Conference's member countries, prior to its presentation at this meeting of the Conference. The proposed regional framework covered all 17 SDGs, included important issues for the region and was in line with other regional commitments such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the Regional Gender Agenda.

34. In their comments, the participants spoke of the need for an extended consultation period on the regional framework of indicators and for a determination of the number of indicators that will be measured; in addition, they asked how consensus could be reached on multidimensional poverty indicators. They also requested information on the indicator framework's inclusion of indicators for other regional processes.

The representative of Jamaica said that ECLAC should address Caribbean topics separately because the subregion's situation was unique; the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was working on the SDGs in parallel with the United Nations and ECLAC.

35. A representative of the secretariat recalled the provisions of ECLAC resolution 700(XXXVI), which had created the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as the region's follow-up mechanism for the 2030 Agenda, and he noted that the second meeting of the Forum, to be held in 2018, was expected to hold a dedicated session on the particular challenges facing Caribbean countries in monitoring and implementing the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda spoke of a global level, a regional level and a national level, and the United Nations had determined that the regional level covered Latin America and the Caribbean and that efforts relating to it were under the authority of the Regional Commission. The Director of the ECLAC Statistics Division, representing the technical secretariat, reminded the meeting that the countries had requested a proposal for a regional indicator framework, and so it had been drawn up and submitted to the member countries of the Conference for their consideration. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division stated that national statistics institutes had evolved into information managers and that that information had to be organized and validated before reaching the relevant political decision-making venue: statisticians should ensure the quality of the information in accordance with the rules and create an architecture of disaggregated information, organize that information and ensure an efficient flow of data, which was an ongoing challenge. A representative of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean said that all the information received from the countries would be distributed. The representative of UN-Women spoke of the specificities of the CARICOM grouping, the subregion's statistical programme and the technical group of the CARICOM Secretariat that was working on the SDG indicators; in turn, the representative of Aruba said it was important that the Caribbean islands that were not members of CARICOM were not forgotten. The representative of Brazil said that national statistics institutes were facing an enormous challenge, with several initiatives that required coordination. Finally, the representative of Ecuador expressed his country's agreement with the merging of geographic and statistical information, even at the institutional level, and with the incorporation of administrative records and the Internet of things.

Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2016-2017, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 4)

36. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the results attained by the Conference's working groups. He recalled that the groups mechanism was established in 2005 at the third meeting of the Statistical Conference, as a cooperation tool to allow the countries to undertake joint activities for the implementation of the Conference's Strategic Plan. A total of 14 working groups had been operational over the biennium, including the Knowledge Transfer Network and the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Statistical Conference of the Americas had assessed the working groups' operations, and the 2015 Conference had adopted the revised operational guidelines for the working groups.³ The groups were set up at the meetings of the Conference at the request of a group of countries, subject to approval by the Statistical Conference's Executive Committee, and they presented activity progress reports every six months. The working groups were automatically wound down once their period of existence concluded at the end of the biennium. The working group coordinators had reported on the results attained during the biennium: 25 workshops, courses and seminars, 11 meetings, 25 working papers and publications, 13 questionnaires, assessments or survey modules and 7 translations of documents. A breakdown of those results may be seen on the working groups section of the Conference's new website. The speaker invited the groups to think of ways to disseminate these outputs, and he called on the groups' member countries to renew their commitments.

³ LC/L.4080(CEA.8/5).

Review and adoption of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2018-2019, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (agenda item 5)

37. Under this agenda item, the Chair shared some of the Executive Committee's thoughts regarding the 2018-2019 biennial programme. He said it was important for the working groups to undertake their activities with a clear focus on the results sought and with the active engagement of all group members. The representatives of the working group coordinating countries then presented their programmes of work and planned results for the 2016-2017 period.

Knowledge Transfer Network

38. The representative of the Knowledge Transfer Network presented its work programme for the biennium, the goals of which were to establish a collaborative working system; facilitate the exchange and distribution of training resources and activities among the countries; encourage knowledge transfer activities among the Network's members; promote the training of skilled human resources; and help strengthen the countries' capacity to generate, analyse and disseminate official statistics. The Network had to redefine its leadership and funding; generate knowledge through interactions between knowing and doing over the Network's web tool; enhance the statistical capacity of the Conference's member countries through exchanges of knowledge; create networks of knowledge by expanding those exchanges and using platforms for knowledge transfer; continue with the preparation of a directory of experts on statistical topics; and raise the profile of the Knowledge Transfer Network as a knowledge management network.

39. In the comments that followed the presentation, it was explained that the Network's documents were in Spanish, although their translation would be scheduled when the necessary resources were available. Mention was made of the desirability of feedback between the Network and the working groups on the topics where training was required; and the support of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations was offered, for example, for preparing a knowledge management repository. In addition, the meeting highlighted the need to link the specialized knowledge and experience generated in Caribbean countries with the Knowledge Transfer Network and the Working Group on Gender Statistics. It had been noted that some of the working groups handled their information using mechanisms other than the Network, which represented a duplication of efforts; it was therefore proposed that the Network appoint officers to guide its work and transform it into a tool to manage the knowledge of all the working groups, for which purpose the support of ECLAC was requested.

Working Group on Institution-building

40. The representative of the Working Group on Institution-building presented the group's work programme for the biennium, the objectives of which included consolidating the statistical systems of the region's countries in order to respond to the needs of statistics users and following up on the implementation of the Regional Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean; improving the quality of the statistics produced in the region through the implementation of the Regional Code of Good Practice and compliance with its principles; and fostering the working group's knowledge management and the exchange of experiences and good practices in national statistical systems. That required not losing sight of the differences between the countries, coordinating national agendas, taking into account the existing statistical institutions and making good use of new sources of information.

41. The comments that followed the presentation highlighted the fact that legislation for statistics varied widely across the region; for that reason, the meeting suggested a selective approach be used to analyse it, such as the specific provisions governing access to named administrative records, tools for the

administration of national statistical systems and the technical independence of national statistics institutes. Emphasis was also placed on the direct and indirect benefits of the Regional Code of Good Practice in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean and the need for a well-structured methodology at the peer review phase. The possibility of enforcing rules for other actors in national statistical systems—for instance, with regard to the production of administrative records—was another important element, the participants said. It was necessary to ensure the resources needed and to address the quality of statistical output, as well to maintain links with the agencies responsible for the 2030 Agenda indicators. The SDGs offered an opportunity for driving the development of national statistical systems as the only route towards successful monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, attention was drawn to issues of compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in countries with less developed statistical systems, an area where a collective approach to new legal arrangements could be very productive. The technical secretariat suggested that, given the resource constraints, the working group should focus on only one of the two major issues raised.

Working Group on International Classifications

42. The representative of the Working Group on International Classifications identified the group's objectives for the biennium: conducting the online survey on international classifications in Latin America as regards to the adoption or adaptation of international classifications; producing videos in Spanish to support training on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC); expanding the list of agricultural products that are known by different names in different national statistical offices; holding the face-to-face meetings of the working group and of the steering committee and drafting the corresponding reports; and preparing the working group's report for submission to the meeting of the United Nations Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications.

43. In the comments that followed, the participants emphasized the importance of the group's work and its objectives, since the classifications were cross-cutting and contributed to international comparability and public policy decision-making. Although it went beyond the scope of the group's work, it was suggested that the region did not make standardized use of the fiscal statistics classifiers, which did not use the same functional classifiers, thus affecting the comparability of social spending expenditures. The meeting also requested that the working group's survey on classifier use include the Time-use Classification for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL) so that the results could be used as an input for the Working Group on Gender Statistics.

Working Group on Censuses

44. The representative of the Working Group on Censuses said that over the coming biennium, the group would make progress with coordinating and monitoring the activities of its working subgroups; analyse and publish the results of the seminar "Experiences, good practices and challenges for the national statistical systems of the countries of Latin America in the 2020 population and housing census round", to be held in November 2017; assess and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the countries' technological infrastructure, as indicated by the results of the regional technology survey; exchange experiences among the countries based on observations from the pilot tests in the region; hold the workshop on population estimates and projections; discuss and standardize census content for the 2020 census round; perform mapping updates for the 2020 census round; and discuss the use of technology and the integration of censuses with other sources of information in the 2020 census round. Finally, during the biennium, a workshop would be held to exchange experiences on procedures for verifying, validating and imputing census data.

45. In the comments that followed, several participants referred to the importance of social networks in conducting censuses and to the need for the statistical community to support official statistics operations by keeping the technical issue separate from political and media concerns in each country. The use of technology did not yet necessarily mean lower costs for census processes in the region, and learning from negative experiences was critical to improving future censuses.

Working Group on National Accounts

46. The representative of the Working Group on National Accounts identified the group's objectives for the biennium: ascertain the implementation status of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; promote the regular publication of national account information; implement a database, including SDG indicators, in national accounts; promote horizontal cooperation activities to build national capacities for preparing national accounts and basic statistics; promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices related to national accounts and basic statistics; and ensure that countries had human resources who could guarantee the quality of basic information and national accounts.

47. In the comments that followed, the participants highlighted the heterogeneity that existed in Latin America with regard to the compilation of national accounts and they underscored the need to coordinate institutional aspects, such as joint work between central banks and national statistics services. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division requested the assistance of the regional commissions and the countries in translating technical documents. The representative of Canada offered to share information on its efforts to create a National Accounts Advisory Committee to ensure that all stakeholders were playing by the same rules. The representative of the World Bank spoke of her institution's new action plan to scale up support for national accounts matters.

Working Group on Administrative Records

48. The representative of the Working Group on Administrative Records said that the group's objectives for the biennium were to develop and standardize a number of methodologies; to optimize the statistical use of national office records in SDG monitoring; to strengthen regional collaboration in the statistical and geospatial areas of registries; and to share the results obtained with the other working groups. Subgroups had been created (environmental issues, security and justice, economic matters and vital statistics), which would be responsible for determining their own road maps with the participation of the countries.

49. In the comments that followed, the participants highlighted the legal impossibility of sharing information on countries' tax bases, which hampered the updating of the countries' directories; thus, high-level political support was needed to overcome this problem. In addition, attention was drawn to the desirability of incorporating a geospatial vision into the work with administrative records and of extensive coordination with the institutions responsible for those records to ensure their quality.

Working Group on Household Surveys

50. The representative of the Working Group on Household Surveys identified the group's objectives for the biennium: position itself as a technical reference point for the region on topics related to household surveys, in order to address the challenges and specificities of the different social phenomena it seeks to measure; contribute to the sharing of experiences, promoting good methodological practices when designing the statistical production processes of household surveys, including topics such as sampling frames, sample designs, the calculation and calibration of expansion factors and indicators of the quality of

survey taking; and identify and promote regional and subregional cooperation activities, through the member countries of the Working Group and other related working groups of the Conference, thus strengthening national capacities to implement high-quality household surveys.

51. In the comments that followed, the representative of UN-Women spoke of the challenges of small island developing States in filling persistent data gaps and the need to align persistent shortfalls in gender statistics with the activities of this working group. Some participants highlighted the importance of income and expenditure surveys and said that efforts by the group in that area would be valuable.

Working Group on Labour Market Indicators

52. The representative of the Working Group on Labour Market Indicators said that the group's objectives for the biennium were to conduct an updated assessment of statistical harmonization gaps with respect to the standards proposed by ILO for measuring statistics related to work, employment and labour underutilization; to share the member countries' experiences of and progress made towards aligning their measurement instruments with or adopting current international recommendations; to establish and disseminate the regional position on updating the different international standards related to the measurement of work statistics; to move forward with incorporating informality indicators into the national statistics systems of Latin American and Caribbean countries by harmonizing methodologies and sharing experiences; to agree on the methodologies and questions that will enable the adoption of the global indicator framework for the SDGs in relation to decent work as an engine of inclusive growth; and to promote technical discussions on new issues related to constructing labour market indicators.

53. In their comments, the participants highlighted the desirability of linking the work of this group with that of the Working Group on Gender Statistics on unpaid work and of incorporating the topic of migrant labour in the region.

Working Group on Gender Statistics

54. The representative of the Working Group on Gender Statistics reminded the participants that gender equality stood at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. The group's objectives, in line with the ninth pillar of the Montevideo Strategy, were therefore to strengthen national statistical systems and build the capacity of national statistical offices and national machineries for the advancement of women; to further develop the work on methodologies and metadata for calculating gender indicators in the region; to strengthen links and partnerships among information producers and users; to raise awareness and promote the use of gender statistics in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies; and to foster regional collaboration for the development, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics through horizontal cooperation and technical assistance.

55. In the ensuing comments, the representative of UN-Women said that the Latin American countries were global leaders regarding data on time use and unpaid work, an area in which the SDG indicator framework suffered from huge gaps. In this regard, the architecture of the working group should be revisited to ensure a good interface with the other groups. There was also a need to raise the profile of gender statistics, including at the institutional level. A representative of the ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs reported that the most recent meeting of the Working Group had ordered the development of terms of reference to guide the work of the task force defined within the Working Group over the 2018-2019 period and that efforts towards dialogue had been made with the Working Group on Poverty Statistics, the Working Group on International Classifications and the Working Group on Labour Market Indicators. Mention was also made of ensuring that the cartographic variables on gender statistics to be used in the

national gender atlases that Chile and Colombia planned to produce were comparable between countries and that poverty measurements included a gender approach, as the surveys were made at the household level and the information had to be disaggregated to produce data on poverty and food security with a gender perspective.

Working Group on Poverty Statistics

56. The representative of the Working Group on Poverty Statistics identified the group's objectives for the biennium: strengthening the links that already existed by exchanging knowledge on poverty indicators; deepening the understanding of the missing dimensions in multidimensional poverty indicators; promoting technical cooperation and regional collaboration to develop, analyse and disseminate the missing dimensions; and deepening understanding of revenue allocation techniques in the monetary poverty indicators adopted in the region.

57. In the comments that followed, several participants emphasized the importance of linking this group's work with that of the Working Group on Administrative Records in order to measure adjusted disposable incomes and multidimensional poverty, given that they could not be identified through household surveys. The representative of Jamaica said that poverty measurement was an area of particular weakness and need in the Caribbean, especially with respect to the SDGs. The representative of the United Nations Statistics Division highlighted the complexity of the topic, given the heterogeneity of poverty measurements; the Statistical Commission was reopening the discussion of this topic, and so he called for collective reflection on the Statistical Commission's future role in that area. The representative of the World Bank said that, in that regard, it was important to hear from the countries regarding the kind of support they would like to see organized. Some participants said that the group's analyses could also cover environmental topics and disasters. A representative of the secretariat reminded the meeting that the construction of poverty lines entailed many issues, often beyond the scope of statistics, and so the group's work had focused on improving the sources of information.

Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence

58. The representative of the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence said that the group's objectives for the biennium were to strengthen technical and methodological capacities for the regular compilation of information on the SDG indicators related to children; to develop tools tailored to the region for measuring those indicators; to promote the effective dissemination of statistics on children and to improve the accessibility of those data; and to promote and support horizontal cooperation between institutions working in specific areas related to the gathering, analysis and dissemination of data on childhood and adolescence.

59. In the comments that followed, emphasis was placed on the importance of coordination among the groups, particularly with the Working Group on Administrative Records, and a proposal was made for establishing a task force on water, sanitation and hygiene statistics within the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence. The representative of UNICEF noted that his agency's work in relation to statistics would be focused on the issues of water and sanitation, measurements of multidimensional poverty in childhood and early-childhood development.

Working Group on Disability Measurement

60. The representative of the Working Group on Disability Measurement identified the group's objectives for the biennium: improving the technical capacity of the region's countries to compile and disseminate data on disability based on awareness of international recommendations; developing a methodological and conceptual proposal for the design and execution of statistical projects to generate disability information in the region's countries; providing technical assistance to the region's countries to strengthen the case for including the issue of disability in the census round, based on the international recommendations for the 2020 census round, in order to standardize information in the region; and building a support network, involving institutions, national and international organizations (including other working groups of the Conference, such as the Working Group on Censuses and the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence), experts, users and producers of information, to provide support to countries that may need it.

61. In the comments that followed, emphasis was placed on the need to harmonize concepts to further comparability and respond to demands for disaggregated disability measurement data.

Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies

62. The representative of the Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies stated that over the coming biennium, the group would work to equip the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with relevant statistics on ICT access, use and availability and regarding their impact on the economy and society at large, for decision-making and the formulation of public policy; assist in the formulation of recommendations and discussion papers for implementing and harmonizing ICT indicators; contribute to the measurement of ICT indicators for the SDG targets; and promote the closer integration of the non-Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean in the working group's activities by building closer ties with them.

63. In the comments that followed, the representative of Jamaica welcomed the emphasis of the group's work on the Caribbean subregion and said that CARICOM was developing specific indicators, which represented a good opportunity for producing a common set of indicators.

Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice

64. The representative of the Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice said that the group's objectives for the biennium were to support the development and strengthening of national statistical information systems in the areas of public security and justice, in accordance with international mandates, standards and good practices; contribute to technical capacity-building for the adoption of international and regional standards on the topics covered by the group's mandate; and strengthen the generation of statistical information on violence, security and justice to facilitate the monitoring of indicators associated with those issues within the framework of the SDGs.

65. In the comments that followed, the representative of Peru described the integrated system of criminality, security and justice, a web repository in that country that sought to combine all sources of information for data on criminal, judicial and prosecutorial matters; this was, he said, an exercise in adapting the international crime classification for statistical purposes, which could also be of use to other countries. Some participants highlighted the difficulties in obtaining data on security and crime issues, for which it would be useful to build synergies between the working groups and national statistical authorities.

Working Group on Environmental Statistics

66. The representative of the Working Group on Environmental Statistics said the group's objectives for the biennium included producing environmental indicators for SDG monitoring, climate change indicators and urban environmental indicators of relevance to the region, with the participation of communities and through the strengthening of statistical capacities. There was also a need to monitor environmental accounts (the central system and specific accounts such as those for water, forests and others), and to strengthen ties with the geospatial community.

67. In the comments that followed, a representative of UNEP offered the group the Programme's support and highlighted the difficulties inherent in working on environmental indicators, where extensive inter-agency coordination was required. A representative of the secretariat stressed the importance of urban environmental indicators, given that nearly 80% of the region's population lived in urban areas, and she underscored the desirability of establishing a working subgroup for that topic. In concluding, she said that the activities carried out in conjunction with UNEP contributed to the development of those indicators, as did the countries' cooperation with the group's work plan.

Working Group on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Statistics

68. The representative of the Working Group on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Statistics proposed that the group be transformed into a task group of the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence, in consideration of the relationship that existed between activities in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene and the indicators relating to childhood and adolescence, such as malnutrition. Water quality indicators were a cause for concern in the region, as were sanitation and hygiene indicators. The 2030 Agenda demanded different ways of measuring indicators for SDG 6. The objectives of the proposed task group included analysing the water and sanitation data compiled by the countries, assessing capacities to produce improved indicators, prioritizing actions, working for the formulation of common strategies and conducting evaluations.

Working Group on Measuring and Recording Indicators Related to Disaster Risk Reduction

69. The representative of the Working Group on Measuring and Recording Indicators Related to Disaster Risk Reduction said that the group's objectives for the biennium were to establish links with specialized statistical initiatives for disaster risk reduction (DRR); to assess gaps and needs; and to prepare a report with recommendations on measuring DRR indicators in official statistics and reports of existing official statistics (at the national and regional levels) in the DRR area. Reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of populations through disaster risk prevention and effect mitigation was the group's main objective, in accordance with the provisions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

70. In the comments that followed, the representative of Chile conveyed her country's interest in the group, given that the topic was fundamental to her country, which used mapping combined with population data as an input to enable the continuous updating of information in the event of disasters. The participants agreed that those countries that had tools that could contribute to the group's work should give notice of that fact. In connection with disasters, statistics were of use at three junctures: prevention and preparedness, early support and remediation, and evaluation and quantification. The countries could participate in the creation of regional public goods to be shared, and the region could also benefit from the work of European statistical institutions.

Working Group on Agricultural Statistics

71. The representative of the Working Group on Agricultural Statistics said the group was engaged on projects for regional public goods and that funds were needed for it to continue, over the coming biennium, with its work on institution-building, institutional human resource training, technical assistance and the development of methodologies.

72. In the comments that followed, the representative of FAO expressed her appreciation for those countries that had contributed to regional public goods project by organizing events and translating documents. New funds were needed to continue the work in the area of agricultural statistics, which offered the region new possibilities for collecting data.

73. At the end of the working groups' presentations, a representative of the secretariat said that there would be a deadline of three weeks for each working group to submit the final version of its work programme and that countries wishing to join a working group should inform the relevant group's coordinating country.

Information regarding subregional and international cooperation activities

74. To bring the activity reports to a conclusion, the representatives of ILO, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, the Central American Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System (CENTROESTAD), the Andean Community, the Statistics Division of the United Nations, ALADI, IDB, FAO, UNEP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), UNODC and UN-Women made statements and shared their reports on the international cooperation activities undertaken over the previous biennium in various areas related to regional statistics.

Other matters (agenda item 6)

Subregional grouping criteria for the composition of the Executive Committee

75. Under this agenda item, the meeting examined the need to review the subregional grouping criteria for selecting the Executive Committee as of the 2020-2021 biennium. The representative of Uruguay, speaking as a member of the Statistical Conference's Executive Committee, said that as an example, the suspension of a member of an established political or economic grouping posed an obstacle to the statistical dialogue process; it would therefore be advisable, she said, to review the subregional grouping criteria.

International Comparison Programme

76. A representative of the secretariat reported on the activities of the International Comparison Programme (ICP). Work was underway to adopt an ongoing survey process, which entailed taking measurements in 2017 and 2020, and taking measurements by price interpolation in order to produce results for each year. The Statistical Commission had established that it was to be a permanent element in the global statistical programme and would be included in the regular statistical work programmes at the regional and national levels, which had been accepted by all the countries in the Statistical Commission of the United Nations. The ICP was coordinated by the World Bank globally and by ECLAC at the regional level. This topic had been presented to the countries of the Caribbean at the eighteenth meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, held in Port of Spain in May 2017, and none of them had opposed its implementation. Cuba had announced that it would not participate in this ICP round, while the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had not responded to the

invitation to participate in the new process. The World Bank provided supporting funding, and there were plans to include more countries in the memorandum of understanding with that institution. He stated that a letter endorsing the statistical confidentiality of basic information had been signed, with specific reference to consumer prices. The basic pillars of the ICP were national accounts and consumer prices, together with government prices (remunerations) and capital formation (machinery and equipment prices). To participate in ICP, countries needed travel funding for the two rounds, two professionals working on national accounts and on consumer prices and a number of survey-takers; countries should take action, because in 2020 the region was to begin implementing continuous surveys. He stressed that the region had to strengthen its national statistical capacities by adopting international classifications, make progress in linking national price indices and the ICP, strengthen the adoption of the 2008 SNA, identify new sources of price information, and overcome the heterogeneity of the region's countries, in particular the Caribbean countries, in order to achieve the goal of leaving no one behind.

Sixteenth Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS)

77. The Chair of the Conference then spoke about the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS). He described its history and activities and stressed the importance of increased engagement with it by the countries of Latin America. The next meeting was to be held in Paris from 19 to 21 September 2018, and he invited the region's countries—and, most particularly, those considered developing countries—to attend. The topics to be addressed included sustainability, well-being, the future of official statistics, the dissemination of statistics and measuring the impact of digitization and globalization.

Presentation of the LA-KLEMS project

78. A presentation was then given on the LA-KLEMS project, an IDB initiative in the field of regional public goods, the activities and outputs of which could be of interest to the organizations represented at the Statistical Conference. Its objectives included helping national agencies to further develop their national accounts systems so as to build a platform for processing detailed information on variables related to economic growth, productive factors (employment, capital formation) and productivity; creating a statistics-based tool to analyse growth problems through the assessment and evaluation of economic policies; and standardizing national databases to be internationally comparable in order to facilitate research in the economic field. In the future, emphasis would be placed on analytical assessments and evaluations of policies, once the KLEMS-compliant national and regional databases were available.

Appointment of technical counterparts in national statistical offices to engage with the MEGA project

79. A representative of the secretariat noted that the activities the working groups had presented to the Conference were closely related to territorial considerations, which offered an excellent opportunity to use geospatial data on a wide range of topics to produce statistics and disseminate statistics geographically. Overlaying statistics over territory required geospatial information on disaggregated territorial units and statistical data from those units, gathered through censuses, surveys and administrative records. He asked the countries to inform the secretariat of their technical counterparts for advancing the Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Americas (MEGA) project and future initiatives in the same area.

Website of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and its working groups

80. A representative of the secretariat reported on the new website of the Statistical Conference of the Americas. He told the participants that it contained information on the Conference's working groups (description, member countries, access to products) and on the meetings held under the aegis of the Conference (papers, presentations, activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in

Latin America and the Caribbean and statistical activities in Latin America and the Caribbean). In addition, a single open source platform was to be created for communications between the working groups.

Comments on the dissemination and monitoring of the SDG platform

81. The representative of Mexico described the progress made with the development of the SDG platform, currently in beta version, as a tool for visualizing SDG indicators on graphs and maps. This platform will provide user-friendly geographical disaggregations, increase the transparency of data flows between ministries and statistical offices and facilitate communication with users.

Remarks about the Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

82. A representative of the ECLAC Gender Affairs Division reminded the participants that at the fifty-sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Havana in October 2017, the region's ministers for gender affairs said that there was a need to coordinate the work on SDG indicators being undertaken by the ECLAC intergovernmental forums, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Statistical Conference of the Americas and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in October 2016, had adopted the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, following up on which would require communications and coordination with the working groups and international organizations.

Consideration and adoption of resolutions (agenda item 7)

83. The Conference adopted the resolution included as annex 1 to this report.

Election of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the 2018-2019 biennium (agenda item 8)

84. In keeping with the provisions of resolution 2000/7 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the Conference elected the following Executive Committee for the 2018-2019 biennium:

Chair: Chile
Members: Canada
 Chile
 Costa Rica
 Italy
 Jamaica
 Mexico
 Peru

Closing session

85. At the closing session, the Chair of the Conference thanked ECLAC and its members for the fruitful work carried out and congratulated INEGI on hosting a successful event.

Annex 1

RESOLUTION 10(IX) ADOPTED BY THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AT ITS NINTH MEETING

The Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, at its ninth meeting, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 14 to 16 November 2017,

Bearing in mind Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 of 25 July 2000, in which the Council approved the proposal on the establishment of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as one of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission,

Bearing in mind also that the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/7 provides that the Executive Committee of the Conference shall have the following duties: carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Conference; draw up, every two years, a biennial programme of activities of regional and international cooperation on statistical matters, to be submitted at the regular meeting of the Conference; follow up the implementation of the agreements reached at the Conference and the tasks entrusted to it by the Conference, particularly the biennial programme of activities; and decide on the documentation required for its meetings,

Taking into account resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, which sets out the commitment of the United Nations Member States to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals,

Having reviewed the *Report on the implementation of the 2016-2017 biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*¹ and the *Draft biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2018-2019, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*,²

Taking into account the growing importance of and need for reliable, high-quality and timely public statistics for the exercise of transparency, for the accountability of public authorities and for the assessment of public policy advances, as key elements of institution-building in the region,

Taking into consideration the resolutions adopted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-sixth session, held in Mexico City from 23 to 27 May 2016,

Taking into consideration also General Assembly resolution 71/313 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/7, adopting the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prepared by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators that was agreed upon at the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission, held in New York from 7 to 10 March 2017,

¹ LC/CEA.9/5.

² LC/CEA.9/6.

Recalling that in the conclusions and recommendations agreed upon by the Governments attending the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, the countries recommended that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, make progress with producing indicators of relevance to the region in the framework proposed by the Sustainable Development Goals and support the strengthening of national statistical capacities,

Taking into consideration the views expressed and the contributions put forward by the Governments of the member States of the Conference and by the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and the international organizations represented at the meeting,

Integration of statistical and geospatial information

1. *Recognizes* the progress made through the interactions between the regional statistical information community, represented in the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and the geospatial information community, represented in the Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas;

2. *Thanks* the organizers, panellists and participants in the seminar “Towards the integration of statistical and geospatial information” for their valuable contributions to the regional debate on this subject;

3. *Takes note* of the assessment of national capacities for carrying out the integration of statistical and geospatial information in the region’s countries and of the proposed road map for that integration prepared by the technical secretariat;

4. *Calls upon* the States members of the Conference to take concrete steps at the national level to establish coordination mechanisms and technical procedures concerning the integrated management of statistical and geospatial information, within the framework of the operation of national geospatial data infrastructures, to make it possible to meet the territorial disaggregation requirements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as those of future population and housing censuses and other statistical operations;

5. *Also calls upon* the regional statistical information community, represented in the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and the geospatial information community, represented in the Regional Committee of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, to develop joint strategies for advancing the integration of statistical and geospatial information and earth observation data, in collaboration with other regional and global agencies specializing in those areas;

6. *Invites* the member States to participate actively in the Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Americas (MEGA) project and asks them to advise the secretariat as to the technical and institutional counterpart responsible for channelling national information and contributions relating to this initiative, in particular, as well as any other information and contributions associated with the integration of statistical and geospatial information;

Activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in relation to follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals

7. *Conveys its thanks* for the work carried out by the member countries of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and urges them to continue to represent the region in the process of defining and applying the global monitoring framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data;

8. *Endorses the Report on the activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean in the biennium 2016-2017,*³ and conveys its gratitude for the actions undertaken to coordinate the preparation and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and to develop capacities for that purpose;

9. *Acknowledges* the work done by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean in assessing national statistical capacities for producing the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and asks that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development be notified of the relevant updates through the secretariat of the Commission;

10. *Highlights* the importance of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as the appropriate intergovernmental body to create the regional framework of indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean and to channel cooperation activities for strengthening the statistical capacities of the region's countries for the statistical monitoring of the 2030 Agenda in the region;

11. *Notes with interest* the document *Proposal on a regional framework of indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean*⁴ presented by the secretariat, and requests that the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda, with the support of the secretariat, review the document in depth and propose, at the seventeenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Conference, a framework of indicators for regional monitoring of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account the situations, emphases and shared challenges of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, in keeping with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 71/313;

12. *Urges* the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda to continue coordinating its activities with the ad hoc working group for the preparation of a proposal on the indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development that was established by the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean at its second session;

13. *Encourages* collaboration between the regional and subregional statistical agencies and the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda and its technical secretariat in the collective preparation of the regional indicator framework for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, through the mechanisms defined by this Conference;

14. *Takes note* of the offer by Mexico to make its platform for online dissemination of Sustainable Development Goal indicators available to interested countries, in open code to facilitate its adaptation to national characteristics;

Review of progress in the implementation of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2016-2017, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC

15. *Endorses the Report on the implementation of the 2016–2017 biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;*

³ LC/CEA.9/3/Rev.1.

⁴ LC/CEA.9/4.

16. *Thanks* the member countries of the Conference that have served as working group coordinators for their valuable efforts in pursuit of the statistical development of the Latin American and Caribbean countries through the cooperation of the international and regional statistical community;

17. *Also thanks* the international organizations for their support and collaboration in assisting with the activities of the working groups, by serving as technical secretariats or by providing financing for planned activities;

Review and adoption of the biennial programme of regional and international cooperation activities, 2018-2019, of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

18. *Urges* the working groups to seek cooperation modalities and synergies in order to optimize the use of resources and achieve common goals;

19. *Requests* the working groups to formulate the final version of their programme of work in accordance with the suggestions made during the discussions held at this meeting, which will be included in the meeting report, and asks the countries to confirm their participation in the respective working groups and to designate focal points in each case;

20. *Calls upon* the working groups to take into account the particular features of the Caribbean countries in statistical matters and to promote their participation in the activities conducted;

21. *Asks* the working groups to share their documents and the outcomes of their work through the website of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and to make an effort to provide these in both Spanish and English;

Knowledge Transfer Network

22. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Knowledge Transfer Network, which includes the redefinition of its governance and financing and of the activities that will enable it to become an effective statistical knowledge management network for the region, together with the strengthening of the Network's directory of experts; and asks the secretariat to facilitate the coordination of activities between the Network and the working groups of the Conference;

Institution-building

23. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Institution-building, which includes analysing the current situation of the statistics laws of the region's countries, together with monitoring and evaluating compliance with the Code of Good Practice in Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean;

24. *Reiterates its call* to the governments of the region to bolster their commitment to sustaining and strengthening national statistical systems, establishing legal frameworks to ensure the professional independence of national statistical offices, consolidate the leading role of official statistics and guarantee the necessary human, technological and financial resources;⁵

⁵ Mitad del Mundo Declaration of the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

International classifications

25. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on International Classifications, which includes continuing with the activities undertaken in the previous biennium for the adaptation of international classifications, for the dissemination of audiovisual guides to support training on selected statistical classifiers and for the standardization of agricultural product names;

26. *Encourages* the Working Group to continue expanding the thematic areas of classifications it addresses, including the Classification of Time-Use Activities for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAUTAL);

27. *Calls upon* the member countries of the Conference to use international classifications and standards with a view to contributing to international statistical comparability;

Censuses

28. *Notes* that the coordinating country of the Working Group on Censuses for the 2018-2019 biennium is to change from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to Chile;

29. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Censuses, which includes the assessment and analysis of key issues for preparing the 2020 census round, such as technological infrastructure, cartographic updates, harmonization of census contents, integration of data sources and communicational aspects, among other topics;

National accounts

30. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on National Accounts, which includes collecting data on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators in national accounts, analysing the supply of and demand for horizontal cooperation in preparing national accounts, assessing the status of quarterly account estimates, collecting documentation on specialized methodologies and developing exchange forums;

Administrative records

31. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Administrative Records, which includes producing a manual for making full use of administrative records, creating mechanisms for intercountry collaboration in making use of records, and collaborating with other working groups that use administrative records as inputs;

Household surveys

32. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Household Surveys, which includes assessing methodological practices and institutional strategies for measuring the impact of a change in the sampling frame on estimators derived from household surveys, as well as the methodological practices associated with income and expenditure surveys in the region's countries;

Labour market indicators

33. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Labour Market Indicators, which includes monitoring the adoption and adaptation of labour force surveys to the recommendations of the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, consolidating a regional position on updates to the International Classification of Status in Employment, exchanging experiences on labour force surveys and analysing Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to labour statistics;

Gender statistics

34. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Gender Statistics, which includes developing methodological documents on the implementation of time-use surveys, the economic valuation of unpaid work and the preparation of the corresponding satellite account, strengthening statistics on violence against women and femicide/feminicide, supporting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in global, regional and national frameworks for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and undertaking activities to strengthen capacities for the construction of gender statistics and indicators;

Poverty statistics

35. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Poverty Statistics, which includes developing methodological tools for identifying missing dimensions in multidimensional poverty indicators, together with compiling and systematizing countries' experiences in the measurement of income and the use of imputation techniques;

Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence

36. *Notes* that the coordinating countries of the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence for the 2018-2019 biennium are to change from Mexico and Panama to Mexico and Costa Rica;

37. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Statistics on Childhood and Adolescence, which includes analysing the inventory of statistical availability and capabilities prepared by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean on priority Sustainable Development Goal indicators for children, disseminating methodologies and tools for collecting data on children through household surveys, promoting the use of census information for the collection of data on the situation of children and its subsequent analysis, disseminating standardized methodologies for collecting information on various Sustainable Development Goal indicators and promoting horizontal cooperation on those topics among statistics offices;

38. *Endorses* the proposal that this Working Group include a task force on water, sanitation and hygiene statistics, which will prepare a capacity assessment and implement tools for measuring the Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to water, sanitation and hygiene;

Disability measurement

39. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Disability Measurement, which includes expanding the use and application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, applying the international recommendations for collecting and measuring disability-related data, exchanging experiences on measuring disability and preparing directories of officials and international organizations involved in the production of disability-related data in the region;

Measurement of information and communications technologies

40. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Measurement of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), which includes various online activities on ICT measurement, training in good practices for measuring ICTs in the English-speaking Caribbean countries and Haiti, designing a cooperation agenda for the regular production of ICT data and statistics, producing a list of ICT indicators with a gender perspective and promoting the integration of digital technologies as tools for the measurement of sustainable development;

Statistics on public security and justice

41. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Statistics on Public Security and Justice, which includes supporting the strengthening of national systems of statistical information on security and justice, the adoption of the data collection instrument and methodology for victimization surveys developed as part of the Latin America and the Caribbean Crime Victimization Survey Initiative, creating and sharing knowledge within the crime victimization laboratory, adopting the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and improving information for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to violence, security and justice topics;

Environmental statistics

42. *Notes* that the coordinating country of the Working Group on Environmental Statistics for the 2018-2019 biennium is to change from Mexico to Brazil;

43. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Environment Statistics and requests the Group to present its specific activities for consideration and adoption by the Executive Committee of the Conference;

Agricultural statistics

44. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Agricultural Statistics, which includes organizing training courses, preparing methodological documents on data-collection with a gender perspective, integrating statistical and geographical information and identifying financial resources for the pursuit of new activities;

Indicators related to disaster risk reduction

45. *Adopts* the programme of work of the Working Group on Measuring and Recording Indicators related to Disaster Risk Reduction, which includes forging links among each country's disaster risk reduction specialists and preparing assessment reports on information gaps and needs and on the indicators that could be produced in the region;

Subregional and international cooperation

46. *Notes with satisfaction* the productive subregional cooperation activities carried out by the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians of the Caribbean Community, the Central American Statistical Commission of the Central American Integration System, the Andean Statistical Committee of the Andean Community and the Specialized Statistical Meeting of the Southern Common Market;

47. *Urges* the international community to channel resources towards strengthening national statistical systems on the basis of cooperation, technical assistance and financial support;

Other matters

48. *Takes note* of the information provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as regional coordinator of the International Comparison Programme, on progress made in the implementation of the Programme in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean;

49. *Also takes note* of the reports presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, on the statistics-related activities carried out by these subsidiary bodies of the Commission;

50. *Welcomes* the information provided on the Sixteenth Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics and urges the countries of the region to participate in it;

51. *Appreciates* the presentation on the LA-KLEMS project, the results of which may constitute a useful regional public good for all the countries;

52. *Requests* the Executive Committee to review the subregional grouping criteria for the composition of the Committee starting in the biennium 2020-2021 and to prepare a proposal in this regard for consideration and adoption at the seventeenth meeting of the Committee;

53. *Appreciates and conveys thanks* for the work of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico in its capacity as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Conference during the biennium 2016-2017;

54. *Thanks* the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico for the excellent organization of the ninth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, and for the hospitality extended to the participants.

Annex 2

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
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United Nations Secretariat**

Departamento de Asuntos Económicos y Sociales/Department of Economic and Social Affairs

- Stefan Schweinfest, Director, División de Estadística de las Naciones Unidas/United Nations Statistics Division, email: schweinfest@un.org

**D. Organismos de las Naciones Unidas
United Nations bodies**

Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU-Mujeres)/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

- Teresa Guerra, Asociada de Programas, México, email: teresa.guerra@unwomen.org
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Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

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

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Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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

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Specialized agencies**

Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO)

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**Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)/
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Banco Mundial/World Bank

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Chairs of subsidiary bodies of ECLAC**

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Organismo Internacional de Juventud para Iberoamérica (OIJ)/International Youth Organization for Ibero-America

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