

Distr.  
RESTRICTED

LC/R.1905  
30 April 1999

ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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ECLAC  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

United Nations inter-agency coordination meeting  
for the Latin American and Caribbean region

Santiago, Chile, 6 May 1999

**PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION AMONG  
UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES, FUNDS AND SPECIALIZED  
AGENCIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**Note by the secretariat**



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development -or- World Bank
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILANUD	United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
OAS	Organization of American States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization [WHO]
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFIP	United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This note has been prepared as a contribution to the coordination meeting for United Nations bodies operating in Latin America and the Caribbean. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, this meeting is to be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and will be held on 6 May 1999 at ECLAC headquarters.

In preparing this note, account has been taken of the priorities set forth in the reports submitted by the various United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies operating in the region with a view to identifying relevant areas for inter-agency cooperation in the region and, on that basis, to developing a possible common approach on a number of shared priorities.

A summary of these contributions is presented in the order customarily employed in United Nations documents. Accordingly, the activities of ECLAC, as an integral part of the United Nations Secretariat, are outlined first, followed by the inputs submitted by United Nations programmes and funds, listed in alphabetical order according to their acronyms in Spanish, and by the specialized agencies, in chronological order by date of establishment.





## **II. OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES IN REGIONAL PROGRAMMES**

### **United Nations Secretariat**

#### **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

The general framework for the priority work agenda of ECLAC is based on an active search for areas of complementarity between growth and social equity, between competitiveness and social cohesion, between the foregoing processes and democratic development, and between economic development and environmental sustainability. Although, admittedly, these objectives are often divergent and thus give rise to numerous policy trade-offs, the Commission is convinced that in the long run they will prove to be essentially complementary; hence the need to seek a creative approach for achieving them simultaneously.

On the basis of the foregoing, six priority areas may be identified:

Consolidation of the advances made by the region towards reform, especially in terms of a positive appraisal of three essential elements: a sound macroeconomic context, the opportunities arising from an open economy and globalization, and a more efficient State. With respect to the first two points, it should be emphasized that additional reforms are necessary at the national and international levels in order to consolidate these efforts and increase the region's capacity to respond to external crises. As regards international trade, ECLAC should play a role in the development of a "positive agenda" for international trade negotiations and especially, in the immediate future, with respect to the "millennium round"; it should also continue to work towards hemispheric integration and to support the definition of shared agendas for Latin America and the Caribbean with Europe, with Asia and the Pacific and, in the not-too-distant future, with other regions of the world.

The challenge of harmonizing growth and social equity, far from being diminished by liberalization and globalization, has, on the contrary, become more acute. Given the crucial nature of this issue, ECLAC has chosen social equity as the theme for its next session, thereby projecting it as the pivotal development issue of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Five key areas are identified below, although the list is by no means an exhaustive one:

- (a) The first area relates to policies designed to augment human capital and improve its distribution. Since the scope of such policies extends far beyond narrowly defined educational issues, an integrated policy is needed which also encompasses employment, wealth and demographic issues that have an impact in terms of inequality.
- (b) The second area relates to the poor population's opportunities for finding productive employment, which are influenced by their access to land, capital, technology, appropriate marketing networks and the information needed for sound decision-making. It

is important to stress that this issue, like education, poses problems that go far beyond the issue of income distribution, and problems that concern the distribution of assets, in particular. How can mechanisms for the redistribution of assets be generated in this area, without distorting the smooth functioning of the market economy?

- (c) The third area concerns policies designed to overcome “hard-core” poverty, with special emphasis on complementary dimensions, including ethnic aspects, along with regional and sectoral issues.
- (d) A fourth dimension deals with the balance that needs to be struck between the occupational flexibility that the globalization process clearly demands and the social safety nets required by a population subject to increased insecurity on the job front.
- (e) The fifth element of this agenda of equity-related issues is the Commission’s commitment to gender equity, an important goal in its own right and in terms of the other four dimensions identified above.

Among the other issues requiring the attention of ECLAC that are somewhat less directly linked to the question of social equity are those relating to the lack of social cohesion in Latin American and Caribbean societies. The ECLAC tradition of inter-disciplinary work is, undoubtedly, an asset when exploring these sorts of issues.

ECLAC will continue to focus on meso-economic issues, especially as regards the close link between the operation of markets and the formal and informal institutions which serve as their framework. Particular attention will be paid to the specific types of problems confronting financial systems, including their regulation and supervision, the lack of adequate long-term funding and the need to provide credit facilities to small-scale producers; to the promotion of innovation systems, especially in the area of technological development; and to the management of infrastructure services—an increasingly strategic area of the meso-economy—and particularly those that have been privatized.

In order to contribute to the definitive integration of environmental sustainability in the regional development agenda, ECLAC will play a much more active role in creating new institutions, regulations and instruments for sustainable development in the region. The Commission will focus its efforts on the design of appropriate economic instruments for sustainable development, the analysis of the sustainability of productive development, especially with respect to energy and other natural resources, and the full integration of the environmental dimension in statistical information systems.

The Commission will continue to fulfil its mandate of providing assistance to Governments of the region in the formulation of public policies aimed at the construction of these different forms of social capital. This term encompasses a range of different concepts that have evolved in recent years. One of its connotations is that of the “intellectual capital” built into the population’s educational level, its technological know-how and the development of an

appropriate infrastructure for expanding its knowledge. Another is physical infrastructure. Yet another is our natural heritage. Lastly, in the sociological sense of the term, there is the population's development of forms of social cohesion, mutual trust and organizational skills, that is, civic and institutional capital.

ECLAC will continue to seek a new type of balance between the State and the market, which is one of the major reforms still to be completed in Latin America and the Caribbean. This implies four different objectives, all of which have clearly been incorporated into the Commission's agenda. First, it requires an active process of creation and reinvention of public, private, support and community institutions. Second, it calls for the development of better schemes for organizing and evaluating public management, including those relating to social management. Third, these institution-building tasks encompass national as well as local and international spheres. Indeed, the weakening of the national dimension and, conversely, the revitalization of local action and the growing importance of international affairs are hallmarks of the era in which we live. Last, the fundamental issue underlying this endeavour is the construction of what ECLAC has recently referred to as the "fiscal covenant", i.e., the construction of explicit or implicit political agreements concerning the level and composition of public spending and the trend and financing of such expenditures.

### **United Nations programmes and funds**

#### **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

The regional priorities of UNFPA in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of reproductive health and, in particular, that of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, include the promotion of preventive health practices, the reduction of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and the prevention of STDs-HIV/AIDS.

Through its country and regional programmes, UNFPA fosters a favourable environment for the development and implementation of integrated information, education and communication (IEC) and service packages designed for adolescents that will enable young people of both sexes to make responsible, informed and voluntary decisions about their sexuality and reproductive behaviour. The strong relationship of UNFPA with all its governmental and non-governmental counterparts, its advocacy experience with sensitive topics and the wealth of lessons learned in the field of population provide it with an invaluable pool of resources for the development of adolescent reproductive health programmes.

With regard to the region's under-served populations, which are mainly located in rural and marginal urban areas, it should be noted that the rapid and extensive urbanization process that has been taking place in Latin America and the Caribbean during the last 50 years has resulted in an increasing demand for sexual and reproductive health services on the part of large segments of the population living in poor conditions in marginal urban areas. Unmet demands of

these segments are receiving priority attention while at the same time those of the rural poor are also being addressed.

The region's indigenous populations, especially in the Andean and Central American subregions, are groups that have a high level of unmet needs for reproductive health information and services.

UNFPA has introduced an innovative and effective methodology for promoting bilingual literacy, reproductive health and gender equality. This project, first tested in Peruvian Quechuan communities, is now being implemented on a much larger scale in Bolivia (with UNFIP funds). Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Paraguay have expressed interest in replicating and expanding this initiative and in adapting the methodology for use with other indigenous language groups. The methodology provides women and men in indigenous communities with the opportunity to learn writing and reading skills based on their native tongue, while learning and internalizing concepts about self-care, self-esteem, gender relations, and reproductive health and rights.

The promotion of male involvement and prevention of gender violence have become prominent as cross-cutting issues in all the above areas.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is recognized as a leader in fast tracking legislation and policies that publicly recognize the need to combat gender violence (experienced by an estimated 50% or more of all women). However, the crucial role of the health sector in detecting and providing access to resources for women who have suffered from such violence is only now beginning to be recognized. UNFPA is working with various United Nations bodies, NGOs and Governments to develop national plans and programmes for addressing the issue forcefully and effectively at all levels. UNFPA is working to integrate gender violence detection, counseling and referrals in the reproductive health packages it helps to develop as part of a holistic approach to quality care from a gender perspective; its efforts in this area are undertaken within an intersectoral framework that allows it to draw upon the experiences and expertise of key partners (women's groups, International Planned Parenthood Federation, PAHO).

The primary objectives of UNFPA in the field of advocacy at the regional level have been, on the one hand, the achievement of the goals established at the International Conference on Population and Development and at the Fourth World Conference on Women and, on the other, the attainment of a favourable environment for sexual and reproductive health, gender equity and equality, and women's empowerment. Information, education and communication activities are the core components of the strategy devised to reach these objectives. The commitment of NGOs and women's groups have also played a crucial role in meeting this challenge. Nonetheless, continuing efforts are needed in order to maintain the advances achieved up to now.

Priorities with regard to advocacy focus on addressing issues of national leadership with a view to securing increased government support of an explicit nature for efforts to achieve the goals defined at the International Conference on Population and Development, since this is

regarded to be a critical component of any social policy or poverty alleviation strategy. Steps should be taken to promote the important contribution being made in this respect by NGOs through their work in the areas of advocacy, information, mobilization and provision of services.

Another important area for future action is the promotion of reproductive health education and services, including sex education, as a major item of public expenditure. In line with the health sector reforms currently under way, UNFPA has been disseminating information concerning the high returns afforded by such initiatives in terms of welfare, savings in current health services and the prevention of adolescent pregnancies.

Population and development efforts are centred on national capacity building. Data collection and situation analysis are vital in order to design effective strategies for promoting reproductive health and for dealing with other population issues. Country offices, working through the Country Support Team now located in Mexico, are currently providing technical assistance to countries for the preparation of the 2000 census round. The compilation of raw and baseline data has also been promoted through the development of data collection systems and statistical software. Efforts have also focused on mainstreaming the gender perspective in policy-making and programme formulation.

The links between population dynamics and socio-economic development, especially with respect to the interaction between fertility rates and poverty or —from a different vantage point— between the social status and the reproductive health of women in the region, have become a major issue. Every effort must therefore be made to ensure that initiatives in the areas of reproductive health and of population and development do not conflict with each other and that they instead converge on the same substantive problems and are based on complementary views and activities.

The interaction between population dynamics and environmental degradation in the region is a question of equal importance. Priority has therefore been placed on critical aspects of this issue, such as some of the prevalent migratory currents and their outcomes, which include urban concentration and land degradation in new settlements. The need for action in this area has come to the fore in the wake of the natural disasters that hit Central America and the Caribbean in 1998.

### Specialized agencies of the United Nations

#### International Labour Office

The ILO agenda for the next decade in Latin America and the Caribbean includes four key items.

The first item on the agenda is to promote adherence to international labour standards and an appropriate approach to the labour dimensions of trade openness and economic integration.

ILO will continue to work for the ratification of basic labour standards in the region and will proceed, at the same time, to revise specific conventions to ensure that international labour standards have a greater impact on economic progress and social justice.

In this connection, special attention will be given to the manner in which basic standards are linked to economic efficiency, equity and sustainable growth. With regard to the harmonization of labour policies, there are three major aspects that require urgent attention. The first is related to production costs, particularly non-wage labour costs. The second is the greater flow of workers migrating from one country to another, which makes it necessary to adapt their social security systems so that workers will not be penalized. The third is the configuration of systems for certifying qualified professionals.

Another priority in this area is the elimination of child labour. Above all, care should be taken to ensure that children are not placed in dangerous situations or enslaved and that child labour does not become yet another factor in the perpetuation of poverty. Therefore, it is imperative to apply all the instruments that ILO has at its command. These include the Minimum Age Convention of 1973 (No. 138), which sets the minimum working age at 15, and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

The second priority item is the strengthening of social actors. ILO will support and implement specific programmes to foster social actors' efforts to overcome the main challenges confronting them. In this regard, it will continue to contribute to the consolidation of the restructuring process undertaken by various trade unions with a view to ensuring that they are able to respond to the needs of workers.

It will also collaborate in the development of a new corporate culture that fosters social accountability on the part of business enterprises and encourages employers' organizations to act as institutions of civil society and to interact with other social actors, rather than acting only as representative bodies in dealings with government authorities. In addition, ILO will assist labour bureaus and labour ministries in their modernization and adaptation to the new conditions created by economic and social change and by new forms of public management.

The third priority is to encourage social dialogue with a view to the formulation of labour policies that help boost competitiveness and improve the living conditions of workers.

Within a context in which labour systems in the region have progressively been incorporating mechanisms for tripartite consultation at the national level, collective bargaining at the enterprise level and participation by workers in resolving labour and social conflicts, ILO will intensify its efforts to promote an awareness of the need for tripartite consultation, as well as of the importance of freedom of association and the right to engage in collective bargaining.

ILO will also promote the design of sound policies which, while respecting the autonomy of the relevant actors and their emerging responsibilities, will establish common objectives and shared strategies as a means of achieving the highest possible degree of consensus, thereby enhancing these instruments' social legitimacy.

The fourth priority item is to generate more and better jobs and to extend social progress to include the poorest sectors. In preparing the agenda on this subject, four aspects were selected: the relationship between economic growth and employment, the quality of jobs and influencing factors, the development of human resources and the extension of social progress to the poorest segments of the population.

As part of its effort to encourage job creation, ILO will promote the integration of social and labour policies in order to foster continuity in the area of economic regulation and social legitimacy, which are fundamental for the stability needed to encourage investment and the creation of new jobs.

ILO will also promote the exchange of relevant information and will participate in an in-depth analysis and redesign of labour legislation in compliance with ILO standards in those countries that need to reform their labour laws in order to eliminate restrictions on labour mobility that discourage new productive investments and the creation of quality jobs. This task entails a review of experiences and of the results obtained in the other countries of the region in order to avoid the application of measures which undermine job stability and erode the protection of workers.

In relation to the improvement of job quality, ILO will collaborate with Member States in the design and deployment of labour policies that facilitate the adaptation of business enterprises in ways that will boost their competitiveness and that allow for economic growth to be accompanied by the creation of high-productivity and high-wage jobs.

ILO will promote and support the assessment of the impact of labour reforms already implemented in most countries of the region as a basis for the redesign of those measures that have not produced the desired results. Rather than leading to the enactment of rigid statutory regulations, the aim of these assessments is to promote a higher degree of protection for the wage-earning population without restricting the level of flexibility that firms need in order to be competitive.

ILO will also contribute to the enhancement of working conditions through training in occupational safety and health; the strengthening of social security and health institutions; technical assistance in the design of systems integrating occupational safety and environmental and product quality controls; comparative analyses of the ways in which working conditions in the countries are changing due to the impact of economic integration; and research on relationships between competitiveness, productivity, and occupational safety and health.

In order to help increase productivity and ensure the creation of employment opportunities, ILO will collaborate in the design of policies and strategies for the promotion of new vocational training systems geared to the requirements of technological innovation and to the needs of the job market. It will also promote the ongoing application of training policies to facilitate the continued absorption of workers into the labour market, particularly in the case of youth, women, invalids and entrepreneurs.

In order to extend social progress to the poorest members of society, ILO has prioritized the following activities:

- Providing its constituents and other selected organizations with training, advisory services and the necessary means to carry out specific activities oriented towards diversifying employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups;
- Providing assistance to its constituents in targeting training programmes for microenterprise workers and in creating incentives that will encourage them to invest in training in order to upgrade the educational and skill levels of workers, especially those in low-income groups; and
- Supporting the efforts of governments and social actors to formulate and implement an unemployment insurance system that does not hike labour costs and that does not represent an incentive for long-term unemployment.

#### United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

In follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and World Conference on Human Rights, UNDP will continue to promote the public and private empowerment of women and to develop its human rights initiatives at the national and regional levels in partnership with United Nations bodies.

Within the framework of the World Summit for Social Development and in relation, in particular, to issues of governance, UNDP will continue to establish partnerships with United Nations bodies to further its advocacy of institutional development initiatives and will provide technical assistance to national programmes in connection with specific issues, such as government structure, civil service reform, judicial reform, decentralization and human rights.

In the area of poverty and social reform, in partnership with United Nations bodies and other organizations UNDP will continue to analyse the relationships among macroeconomic policies, poverty and distribution and will carry forward its work in connection with household income surveys, the assessment and evaluation of national poverty reduction strategies and related projects. Efforts will also be made to build a consensus on equity and macroeconomic



policies, consolidate existing networks and provide continued support for education and health programmes.

In follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, UNDP collaborates with UNEP, ECLAC, the World Bank and IDB within the framework of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee. This regional vehicle for inter-agency cooperation has proven to be very successful and should be strengthened; consideration should also be given to promoting similar initiatives in areas other than the environment. UNDP is supporting the formulation of a project and the corresponding mobilization of resources to support the Committee's activities.

UNDP will continue to promote inter-agency cooperation in addressing the national priorities of the countries of the region and to facilitate the implementation of the regional environmental action plan defined at the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

UNDP will collaborate closely with the other executing agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which include UNEP and the World Bank, as well as IDB and ECLAC, to assist countries to propose and programme national or regional GEF activities in a coordinated manner aimed at maximizing resource efficiency as well as national and global benefits. While continuing to coordinate activities in the Meso-American Biological Corridor and the River Plate Basin, other potential areas of collaboration may include the Gran Chaco, the Andean highlands, the Caribbean, the South-east Pacific, and the western Amazon Basin.

The priority areas for the Caribbean identified in the review of activities undertaken in follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and conducted at the meeting of prospective donors convened jointly by UNDP, DESA and the Alliance of Small Island States in February 1999, included waste management, biodiversity and human resource development. In this context, UNDP will work with its natural partners in this field, such as UNEP, the Caribbean Community, IDB, the World Bank and ECLAC, and donors (the European Union, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States and the World Bank).

UNDP will continue its efforts to promote inter-agency cooperation at the national and regional levels in the field of disaster relief. For example, the relevant United Nations bodies have decided to present a common platform at the forthcoming meeting of the Consultative Group on Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, in May 1999. Each United Nations Resident Coordinator will represent the programmes of all United Nations bodies working in the Central American countries. Inter-agency cooperation has been secured to manage the tasks being undertaken in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in coordination with IDB and bilateral donors. The United Nations Office for Projects Services.

### United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The main regional priorities of UNEP are set forth in the plan of action adopted in 1998 by the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and concern the subject areas listed below:

- (a) Institutional framework, policies and instruments for environmental planning, and more specifically environmental management, civic participation, trade and the environment, and environmental training and education;
- (b) Integrated river basin management, in particular management of coastal areas and oceans and management of hydrographic basins;
- (c) Protection of biodiversity through the institutional development of national park services and of the agencies responsible for other types of protected areas, and through bioregional planning and management of crucial protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- (d) Monitoring of climate change through the organization of a preparatory meeting for the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the exchange of experiences among the countries of the region with a view to the drafting and presentation of national reports.

### United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The regional priorities of UNICEF in Latin America and the Caribbean offer a broad scope for collaboration with other bodies within the United Nations system.

Improving early childhood care in order to enhance child growth and development: The aim of UNICEF is to increase the coverage and quality of early childhood education (for children up to the age of six) and to complement it with family- and community-focused health and nutrition programmes with the collaboration, where appropriate, of UNESCO, PAHO, FAO, ILO and UNDP.

Basic social services and social policies: UNICEF recently posted an officer to Washington, D.C., whose principal function is to strengthen the organization's joint activities with other bodies headquartered there, and especially with the international financial institutions. This will also lend support to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the studies conducted in 10 different countries on the 20/20 initiative, which advocates investing 20% of national budgets and of international aid funds in education and basic health, water and sanitation, and nutrition and reproductive health.

**Prevention of childhood disabilities:** UNICEF has focused special attention on the fortification of food products with micronutrients to avoid deficiencies that currently lead to blindness, mental retardation or goitre in thousands of children in the region. This programme is an opportunity for cooperation with the World Bank and for strengthening collaboration with PAHO.

**Increasing access to a quality basic education:** In this area, the aim is to improve access, on a more equitable basis, to a better-quality basic education, to promote education for democracy and solidarity, to develop instructional programmes and materials which take gender issues into consideration and to ensure equal access for students of both sexes to instructional materials, school supplies and scholarships. The organizations collaborating with UNICEF in this area are UNESCO, UNIFEM, IDB and the World Bank.

**Prevention of gender-based discrimination and promotion of gender equality:** UNICEF will continue to promote the empowerment of women and their full participation on an equal basis in all spheres of society. This includes pursuing legislative reforms to amend both penal codes and laws relating to the family and children. The tasks of eradicating harmful customs and prejudices and providing support to local advocacy groups through the dissemination of information and educational material continue to be priority items on the organization's agenda. Other important tasks include initiatives for protecting girl children against sexual exploitation, violence and abuse and the empowerment of girls and women to participate actively and in a meaningful way in the economic, social and political affairs.

In order to make an effective contribution in this area, UNICEF will need to collaborate actively with UNIFEM, UNHCR, UNHCHR, ILO, IDB and the World Bank.

**Protection against exploitation, violence and abuse:** An agreement signed recently with ILO provides an opportunity for effective collaboration in the development of reliable indicators on child labour through the inclusion of specifically designed modules in household surveys conducted by the countries of the region. In order to avoid the direct involvement of children in armed conflicts, UNICEF could collaborate with the United Nations Secretariat on the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 38), which forbids military recruitment of minors under 18 years of age.

In conjunction with UNHCR, there is scope for collaboration, initially in Guatemala and El Salvador, on the implementation of a joint strategy for trying to locate boys and girls who disappeared during the armed conflicts in those countries.

In the area of legislative reform relating to the criminal responsibility of juveniles, UNICEF will work with the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD), the Inter-American Children's Institute and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights to provide technical support regarding the legislative processing of reform bills and the enforcement of the relevant laws.

Protection for the health and development of adolescents: UNICEF seeks to provide information to adolescents on how to protect themselves against HIV, prevent teenage pregnancy and gain increased access to health services; in this regard, UNICEF will collaborate with UNFPA, UNAIDS, WHO, IDB, the World Bank and UNIFEM.

Reducing maternal morbidity and mortality: UNICEF will pursue joint activities with WHO/PAHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, the World Bank and UNIFEM in order to educate the community on safe motherhood, improve maternal health care, formulate quality standards and procedures for maternal and child health care services and establish effective systems for research on the causes of maternal mortality.

Improvement of the availability and use of data in essential areas: Many countries require ongoing support in the collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data as a basis for a better understanding of the nature and magnitude of the problems affecting women and children. There is an opportunity in this regard for joint work with PAHO in compiling information on achievements up to the year 2000 in respect of the goals established at the World Summit for Children (1990). In a similar vein, joint country reports can be produced in conjunction with UNESCO on achievements up to the year 2000 in meeting the objectives of the "Education for All" programme (1990). There is also potential for collaborating with the World Bank in collecting information on the status of children and women through surveys on the quality of life. UNICEF could also expand its cooperation in this area with ECLAC, UNDP and IDB.

Emergencies: The natural disasters that struck in 1998 underscore the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to provide assistance to Governments in the areas of disaster-preparedness and disaster relief. An opportunity for collaboration with PAHO, in particular, exists in this connection.

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

In compliance with the commitments embodied in the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, the activities of FAO in the region focus on four priority areas:

One of the priorities of FAO is to raise the levels of food security in low-income food-deficit countries within the region. To fulfil this objective, a special programme is currently operational in three countries of the region (Bolivia, Ecuador and Haiti) and preparations are proceeding for its implementation in five others (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua).

Since even in countries where the food supply is ample at the national level, there are areas in which serious food deficits exist and, since in all the countries—even those with relatively high incomes—there are groups of poor people who do not have a sufficient food supply, access to FAO plans to develop specific programmes to support more vulnerable groups as well as strategies for combating the structural causes of these problems. In this regard a great deal of importance is attached to development strategies which provide for the possibility of linking efforts to change rural living conditions with initiatives for strengthening medium-sized cities. In this way, in addition to increasing the availability of food, attention is being given to the priority issue of improving the capacity of poor people to secure food through the generation of higher income levels.

### Dynamic integration in worldwide agro-food trade

In view of the fundamental role played by international trade in achieving food security and the accelerated pace of economic, trade and financial liberalization processes, as well as the transformation of financial circuits and international markets and the advance of regional integration, FAO has placed priority on the following types of measures:

- (a) Organizing international negotiations with a view to securing more equitable conditions than those offered to the region by its trading partners, in particular industrialized countries. In this regard, the joint decision to continue to pursue agricultural-sector reform in 1999 is a clear priority;
- (b) Intensifying efforts geared to the follow-up of the agricultural aspects of integration processes and the *ex ante* evaluation of the effect of new economic and trade integration agreements on agriculture and rural development;
- (c) Compiling data on experiences with new information mechanisms and formulating specific projects to take advantage of production options associated with economic integration and complementarity and strengthening the integration process by arriving at more efficient, just and stable arrangements;

- (d) Supporting national initiatives for the improvement of the systemic competitiveness of the agricultural sector by mitigating non-agricultural factors that undermine this sector at the regional level;
- (e) Contributing to the success of agricultural policy —with the cooperation of all the agents involved— in overcoming existing bottlenecks in relation to credit, marketing, infrastructure, services, market information, technical assistance and the supply of inputs, thereby maximizing the positive effects of trade liberalization and economic integration and ensuring that higher prices actually benefit farmers and that farmers have an effective production response capacity.

Sustainable management of natural resources: Since food security and sustainable rural development are two sides of the same coin, increases in food production in the long term must be achieved through production practices that maintain and build up the natural capital of the region, guarantee food quality and safety, and allow a form of agricultural development that is compatible with a steady improvement in public health conditions.

In view of the above, FAO will seek to ensure that the region's relatively favourable position as regards its natural resource endowments is properly reflected in the major strategic aspects of the development model, that its natural resource potential is used in a sustainable manner and that its integration in international trade is maintained and strengthened. FAO will provide support for the design of national strategies which emphasize the incorporation of knowledge and technology into agricultural resources, while strengthening linkages with agro-industry, the para-agricultural industry and services and their capacity to meet quality assurance and reliability requirements on external markets.

In order to deal with apparent trade-offs between sustainability and production growth, FAO will contribute to the incorporation of environmentally-friendly technologies into the production process, while improving traditional technologies and developing the potential offered by genetic engineering and biotechnology for producing food based on the adaptation of local varieties. This implies a shift towards a form of agricultural modernization that favours, rather than bypasses, the use of indigenous materials.

As regards the links between rural poverty and the environment, FAO will foster rural development policies that reflect the multi-functional nature of small-scale farming and the ways it makes use of the agro-ecosystem, since these practices are closely linked to the need to reduce risk.

Reform of agrarian institutions: FAO will help to create the most favourable political, social and economic environments as possible for the achievement of sustainable food security and will promote the reorganization of government agencies and farmer's associations with a view to revitalizing the rural economy and society, boost investment and employment, and bring about political, economic and administrative decentralization.

The challenges now facing the region are straining the established sectoral institutional system, thereby bringing the need to reform agrarian institutions to the forefront. Strengthening the management capacity of local authorities through decentralization emerges as the most promising option for increasing the effectiveness of development policy. Technical support for decentralized bodies aimed at reinforcing the move towards a system characterized by close links with producers and other agents of civil society thus emerges as a key aspect of rural institution-building.

FAO will also help to develop suitable systems to guarantee clearly-defined and secure ownership rights, which are indispensable for the development of any economic activity, for political stability and for coexistence in a democratic society. Of particular relevance are the various land reform programmes being pursued by countries of the region, which are essentially institutional reforms since they are geared not only towards redistribution but also towards providing legal security, in many cases for informal arrangements already existing between land-holders.

FAO will also give priority attention to the issue of partnerships and alliances among various agents of civil society, the market and public entities, which play a highly important role in this context. The reason for this is obvious: the existence of different sorts of market failures—due above all to asymmetry in information flows, the distortions of public action caused primarily by attempts to increase institutional revenues and the limitations of mechanisms for promoting cooperation—make it necessary to seek out synergies among these different actors. Such partnerships and alliances should be viewed as institutional arrangements for tackling the problems arising from isolated action by the market, the State and other entities.

#### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean has set two priority objectives for 1999:

The evaluation of the “Education for All” programme (EFA) on the occasion of its tenth year of implementation is a priority task on which the Regional Office hopes to collaborate with ECLAC, IDB, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. This will be a policy-oriented evaluation intended to aid the countries in the continued development of their educational policies and programmes. This will require the participation of Governments and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The evaluation to be undertaken of the Major Project Field of Education at the request of the Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean will fulfil a historical, technical and political purpose by facilitating the review and a common understanding of the region’s experiences in the field of basic education over the last 20 years and the outlook for the future. This exercise will make it possible to determine the level of commitment of the countries to the

objectives defined in the project, the effectiveness of the strategies adopted and the role of UNESCO in this endeavour, and will, at the same time, provide valuable information for identifying the issues and priority concerns of the countries as they look towards the coming millennium. The Regional Office has formed a multidisciplinary task force, made up of experts on issues relating to innovation in education, quality assessment, and statistics and indicators. This is another area in which the Regional Office considers it feasible to envisage some form of inter-agency cooperation.

In addition to the activities already listed, the Regional Office will continue to work in such areas as HIV/AIDS, education statistics and the follow-up to the Summit of the Americas and hopes to continue to cooperate with other agencies in these fields.

### World Health Organization (WHO)/ Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

Five strategic lines of action will serve as the framework for the activities of the Pan American Health Organization during the period 1999-2002. These activities will seek to focus on issues of concern to the region: health in human development, health promotion and protection, environmental protection and development, development of health-care systems and services, and disease prevention and control.

**Health in human development:** It is necessary to develop and strengthen national and regional capabilities for analysing and monitoring the health situation and the reciprocal relationship among health, economic growth and equity in the context of globalization. This will mean that, as a result of a dialogue among the authorities of the social, health and economic sectors, it should be possible to establish a connection between economic growth and health and human development, thereby diminishing the adverse effects of macroeconomic policies on the population's living conditions and health.

Technical cooperation will be provided in order to produce, disseminate and make use of public health knowledge and practices to promote health advocacy, care and recovery in order to contribute to sustainable human development and increase the participation of the main social and political actors in the health sector and other sectors of the State and of civil society in appraising the approach taken to health issues in local, subnational and regional political agendas and in defining health policies.

**Health promotion and protection:** Given the conditions that persist in the region, activities for promoting health and health care can form the basis for a powerful strategy for strengthening public health concepts and practices and are pivotal to a new paradigm for producing a strong impact in terms of such key factors as living conditions, the degree of satisfaction of basic needs, the quality of the human environment, the culture to which people belong and the population's knowledge, attitudes and practices with respect to health.



Technical cooperation will focus on working in conjunction with the countries to create a new culture based on the promotion and protection of health as a social value, which implies teaching individuals, communities and public, non-governmental and private entities to assume and exercise, both individually and collectively, the responsibility to work to maintain and improve their health and well-being on an ongoing basis.

**Environmental protection and development:** The priority aim of technical cooperation in this area will be to follow up on the objectives and goals established in Agenda 21, the plans of action agreed upon at the Summits of the Americas and the guidelines established in the Plan of Action of the Pan American Conference on Health and the Environment in Sustainable Human Development.

Technical cooperation will be provided to countries in connection with water supply and sanitation programmes, with emphasis on the expansion of the coverage of services, the improvement of the bacteriological content of drinking water and the intensification of measures for improving the water supply and sanitary sewage disposal in rural areas and zones inhabited by indigenous peoples.

In view of the accelerated pace of decentralization and privatization, PAHO will give priority to technical cooperation for improving solid municipal waste management.

**Development of health systems and services:** PAHO will continue to provide technical cooperation for reforms being undertaken in health services in the region. This will be geared above all towards strengthening the administrative capacity, organization of systems and services, and financing in the health sector. The fundamental strategies adopted to this end will involve periodic, systematic exchanges of national experiences, the development and dissemination of methodologies and instruments designed to strengthen institutional capacities for analysis, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation of sectoral reform programmes and the introduction of a regional system to monitor the dynamics, content and implications of the reforms undertaken.

**Disease prevention and control:** Disease prevention and health promotion will be included as essential components of health service programmes in order to confront regional challenges and curb the spread of disease. Efforts will be made to promote community participation and change individuals' behaviour. These changes will have to be based on sound, scientifically validated policies and procedures, and technical cooperation will therefore also be focused on support in the area of vaccine-preventable diseases.

PAHO will also focus its technical cooperation activities on strengthening the capacity of countries to control, reduce or eradicate specific diseases. In this regard, the priority objective is to rally political support for national vaccination programmes for the control and eradication of vaccine-preventable diseases and for the introduction of additional vaccines into routine vaccination programmes.

Technical cooperation provided by PAHO will also be directed towards non-transmissible diseases, since tremendous progress can be made in this area if a commitment is made, if scientifically validated policies and programmes are put in place and if these initiatives are adopted by communities, individuals and physicians. It is therefore crucial for PAHO to ensure that health organizations allocate the necessary human and financial resources to make the most of these opportunities.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Before presenting the conclusions that may be drawn from the priorities identified in the various reports, some comments are called for regarding the nature of inter-agency cooperation in the region.

The note presented by the secretariat to the Inter-Agency Meeting of Members of the Committee on Coordination (ACC) in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Santiago, Chile, on 25 and 26 May 1995 seeks to identify the activities that are by nature regional in scope. Broadly speaking, these are of four types. First, there are the actions that help the Governments of Member States to promote and support initiatives for intraregional integration and cooperation; second, those that give support for concerted outward-oriented activities with a view to improving the region's integration in global markets; third, those that seek to solve problems shared by many countries through individual and comparative analyses of national experiences; and, lastly, those that support attempts to use a common working methodology to solve shared national problems thereby achieving economies of scale through the application of a region-wide approach.

In order to further cooperation within the United Nations system in the region, consideration should be given to two forms of inter-agency coordination, i.e., "vertical" and "horizontal" coordination. Vertical coordination implies that the global, regional and national activities of each body within the system are mutually reinforcing, thus avoiding duplication of efforts or a waste of resources; in short, it is a matter of developing programme coherence. "Horizontal coordination", on the other hand, means that, through a systematic effort, the secretariat's regional or subregional activities and those of United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies are mutually supportive. Moreover, it should be stressed that both forms of cooperation intersect in various areas.

Generally speaking, although their areas of emphasis may differ, the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the system share the four generic functions in which we can categorize the United Nations' work, namely, consensus-building in the Organization's numerous forums, and organizing and convening meetings that bring together a wide range of national actors; the collection, processing, interpretation and dissemination of information; carrying out the analytical work which forms the basis for action; and providing technical advice to developing countries both in the form of direct assistance and through the provision of various services in specific areas (training, health care, support for agricultural productivity and institution-building, among others). Hence, an appropriate distribution of these tasks can contribute to a deeper level of horizontal cooperation.

In this regard, much is to be gained if all the tasks could be shared in such a way as to increase the relevance and intensity of the system's joint work in the region, thereby heightening the efficiency of its operational activities by ensuring that they are guided by certain conceptual coordinates, while at the same time using them to enrich the Organization's analytical agenda.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that each of the organizations in the system has its own intergovernmental structure which gives it certain mandates and to which it is accountable; hence the different emphases in terms of the priorities of each institution and the different strategic visions that each espouses.

In view of the above considerations, and based on an analysis of the different reports submitted by the programmes, funds and specialized agencies, an initial classification of the priority activities of the United Nations system in the region can be outlined which include three major areas. The first, which does not necessarily arise in the region but which involves the United Nations system as a whole, refers to regional activities in follow-up to United Nations world conferences and other global initiatives. Another area, in this case of regional origin, encompasses those activities that the United Nations system carries out in order to respond to development challenges in the region. The third area comprises regional and subregional initiatives that originate outside the United Nations system.

**A. Regional activities of the United Nations system in follow-up to United Nations world conferences and other global initiatives**

Follow-up to the United Nations world conferences

Valuable opportunities for cooperation and coordination of inter-agency activities at the regional level arise in connection with the follow-up of world conferences of the Organization, such as the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the second session of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the World Food Summit.

In particular, attention should be paid to the preparations for the second Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development (Mexico, 2000), and the activities in follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Another priority is to strengthen the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, ECLAC, IDB) for the follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Also, at the subregional level, the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States offers further scope for inter-agency cooperation, in particular on high-priority issues such as climate change and the rise in the sea level, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity, transport and communications, and science and technology.

## Latin America's contribution to the construction of a new international financial architecture

Recent international financial crises have had serious repercussions in the region and have pointed up the fundamental problem which has been created in the global economy by the enormous discrepancy that exists between an increasingly sophisticated and dynamic international financial world with rapidly globalizing financial portfolios, on the one hand, and, on the other, the lack of a proper institutional framework to regulate it. Accordingly, another inter-agency priority should be to deepen the analysis of the issues raised in the document entitled "Towards a new international financial architecture", published in January 1999 by the Task Force of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, in which ECLAC participated actively with the aim of contributing a regional perspective on the construction of a new international financial architecture.

### **B. Regional activities of the United Nations system relating to development challenges in the region**

#### Development with social equity

Inter-agency coordination and cooperation at the regional level may also be a useful approach for addressing certain key areas relating to the harmonization of growth and social equity. These areas include regional studies on social spending for basic social services undertaken between 1980 and 1997 (ECLAC, UNDP), the preparation of social indicators of external efficiency (ECLAC, UNESCO), studies on the social dimensions of Mercosur at the subregional level, and technical assistance, training and evaluation of social programmes (ECLAC, ILO, UNDP).

Other areas for inter-agency cooperation may include the elimination of child labour in the region, the formulation of social policies for achieving greater occupational flexibility in conjunction with the provision of social safety nets for a population subject to an increasingly insecure job market and the preparation of studies on issues such as employment, wages and the labour market in the context of globalization and its implications for human development.

Inter-agency cooperation can also be effective in improving the coverage, quality and degree of equity of basic education services, the evaluation of the achievements of the "Education for All" programme implemented over the past 10 years (ECLAC, IDB, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF), and the development and strengthening of regional and national capacities for analysing and following up on the health situation and the interconnections among health, economic growth and social equity.

Opportunities for inter-agency collaboration in rural areas also exist. ECLAC and FAO have agreed to undertake joint activities involving the identification of successful experiences in combating rural poverty, the analysis of the dynamics of social movements in rural environments, the design of proposals concerning the use of an area-based approach to rural development, an

examination of the impact of structural reforms on agriculture and the formulation of proposals for new types of agricultural policy tools.

### Environmental sustainability

The priorities under this heading include the development of an institutional framework which integrates environmental management policies and instruments in the areas of environmental management *per se*, civic participation, trade and the environment, education and environmental training; the design of appropriate economic instruments for sustainable development, the analysis of the sustainability of productive development with special reference to energy and other natural resources, and the incorporation of environmental dimensions in statistical information systems. Other priority areas that call for inter-agency cooperation at the regional and subregional levels include analysis of the proposal for establishing a logistical centre for river basin management designed to prevent or mitigate natural disasters and the organization of a preparatory meeting for the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Another priority area for inter-agency cooperation (World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, ECLAC, IDB) is the implementation of Global Environment Facility activities to assist countries with the formulation of proposals and the scheduling of tasks on a coordinated basis.

### Population and development

Cooperation can also be undertaken in areas of population and development that go beyond the follow-up to the world conference on this subject, especially in terms of interactions that exist between population dynamics and socio-economic development, on the one hand, and environmental degradation, on the other. Another priority in this area concerns the 2000 round of censuses, both in terms of the census-taking itself and data-processing tasks, and in relation to this information's use for government policy purposes. Similarly, international migration, community education on safe motherhood, the strengthening of maternal and child health care services so as to reduce maternal mortality, and activities scheduled for 1999 relating to senior citizens are other areas for inter-agency cooperation.

### Emergencies and humanitarian assistance

Inter-agency cooperation can be envisaged in the work involved in building up the region's capacity to respond promptly in case of emergencies created by natural disasters in the region, such as those recently caused by El Niño, Hurricanes Georges and Mitch, and the earthquake in Armenia, Colombia. Activities could be centred on disaster-preparedness, assessment of the economic and social costs, and proposals for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

### Multilateral negotiations

The task force composed of regional bodies and research organizations which was appointed by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD for the follow-up to WTO multilateral negotiations has been very productive. In view of this dynamism and the multilateral and subregional negotiations involving countries of the region now taking place and planned for the future, the area of trade and integration also merits the priority attention of the various components of the United Nations system. Consideration should therefore be given to reactivating collaboration on the part of ECLAC, UNCTAD and UNDP in this field.

### Statistics

Statistical work constitutes another priority area for collaboration. The Meeting of Directors of Statistics of the Americas is the principal, although not the only, source of initiatives in this area. The most recent work programme approved by the Directors includes joint activities by ECLAC, the World Bank, IMF, IDB and other organizations inside and outside the United Nations system. ECLAC and FAO have agreed to set up a joint information system which will include standard and short-term indicators for global and sectoral variables.

### Gender equity

Gender-related activities have been important areas of mutual cooperation since 1993 and include a series of informal, regional United Nations meetings where the opportunities for joint activities are analysed within the framework of regional and world plans. Inter-agency cooperation efforts should be centred on strengthening national offices, preparing and disseminating indicators for monitoring and evaluating the status of women and the implementation of agreements adopted at the international level, and strengthening gender mainstreaming as one of the issues that cuts across the entire system.

## **C. Regional initiatives originating outside the United Nations system**

A series of high-level intergovernmental forums and meetings are held annually in the region which originate outside the United Nations system but nonetheless place numerous demands on the Organization. The Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Rio Group and the Summits of the Americas are a few examples of such meetings.

Thus, the implementation of the Plan of Action of the second Summit of the Americas opens up further opportunities for inter-agency cooperation. In this regard it should be recalled that at the first Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in December 1994, OAS was mandated to play a leading role in following up on the different decisions of the Summit, while IDB was assigned the task of providing support for the activities set forth in the Plan of Action, and ECLAC and other agencies of the United Nations system were asked to provide assistance in the implementation of the Plan.

Hence, the fulfilment of these mandates, which were ratified at the second Summit, held in Santiago, Chile, is another area for cooperation on the part of the United Nations system as a whole at the regional level. UNESCO and ECLAC are already working together, for example, on the implementation of the educational dimension of the Plan of Action approved at the second Summit.

ECLAC and FAO also plan to work together on an analysis of how the FTAA integration process has affected agriculture.