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**REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Santiago, 23 April 2019

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was held on 23 April 2019 in Santiago, and was convened jointly by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), pursuant to paragraph 23 of resolution 2(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development, held in Montevideo in 2017.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries in their capacity as Presiding Officers: Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of the following ECLAC member countries also attended: Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

4. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies also attended the meeting: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

5. The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) was also represented.

Chair

6. The Presiding Officers elected at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in 2017, were as follows:

Chair: Uruguay

Vice-Chairs: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico and Panama

B. AGENDA

7. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2017) and of the agreements of the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City, 2018).
3. Report on the progress made in formulating the regional agenda for inclusive social development and the proposal for working with civil society.

¹ See the full list of participants in annex 2.

4. Review of the proposed priority areas of the regional agenda for inclusive social development.
5. Review of the experiences of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in forging regional agendas and agreements.
6. Other matters.
7. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening session

8. At the opening session, statements were made by Marina Arismendi, Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, José Luis Balmaceda, Ministerial Cabinet Adviser and Head of the International Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile and Laís Abramo, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC.

9. The Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, welcomed the participants and said that the regional agenda for inclusive social development being formulated was a regional initiative that was fully aligned with the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and especially its social dimension. It was important to analyse the barriers and obstacles to inclusive social development in the region and to advance in the formulation of the regional agenda.

10. The Ministerial Cabinet Adviser and Head of the International Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile expressed thanks for the invitation to the meeting, on behalf of the Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs, Alfredo Moreno. The Government of Chile had spearheaded three public policy changes in the social sphere: creation of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs, whose work focused on childhood; introduction of a multidimensional concept of poverty; and a focus on protecting the middle class. The speaker highlighted the contributions that the regional agenda for inclusive social development would make, and affirmed the Government of Chile's commitment to play a part in effective implementation of the agenda, through South-South and triangular cooperation.

11. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC welcomed the participants and stressed that the central theme of the meeting was progress with the formulation of the regional agenda for inclusive social development, in the context of the commitment to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through collaboration among countries and South-South cooperation.

Progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2017) and of the agreements of the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City, 2018) (agenda item 2)

12. The Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development, reviewed progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America

and the Caribbean. Since 2005, ECLAC had been a strategic ally for conceptualizing and evaluating social policy in Uruguay. Social inclusion and equality would enable all people to progress in life, with full participation, removal of barriers to certain population groups, decent work, political deliberation and involvement in decision-making. The concept of universalism that is sensitive to differences, which was prominent in the regional agenda for inclusive social development, would facilitate discussions on targeted and universal measures. The process of adopting of the agenda involved various political and social forums, and civil society could take ownership of issues and participate.

Report on the progress made in formulating the regional agenda for inclusive social development and the proposal for working with civil society (agenda item 3)

13. The presentation was given by the Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC, who explained that the areas of the regional agenda for inclusive social development had been identified on the basis of various considerations: the extended social pillar for implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the critical obstacles to inclusive social development as impediments to sustainable development; the missions of the main bodies involved in social development; and the various social development commitments adopted in regional and subregional forums. The speaker outlined the goals and principles of the agenda, its proposed priority areas and the workplan for preparing and presenting the agenda at the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Mexico in October 2019. Lastly, the speaker presented the agenda for dialogue with civil society, as also announced at the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The calendar for the agenda included online presentations in May and a call for comments, which would be systematized and used as input for the third session of the Conference.

14. In a video message conveyed to the meeting, Paola Bustamante, Minister of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru commended the progress in formulating the agenda and expressed full agreement with the proposed goals and priority areas, and with the conduct of the process thus far. She remarked that Peru was making headway in measuring multidimensional poverty and that the remaining challenges regarding the situation of rural and urban areas had to be addressed from a territorial perspective rather than using regional averages. Gaps had to be closed in Peru by fostering productive and quality jobs, with vertical and intersectoral integration. The country's information system (REDinforma) and its National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) made information available to local governments that was crucial to decision-making.

15. Michelle Muschett, Minister of Social Development and Technical Coordinator of the Social Cabinet of Panama, commended the work done, applauded the leadership of ECLAC and highlighted the substantial progress made, which reflected the discussions at the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Conference held in Panama City in 2018. The speaker requested continued support from ECLAC for capacity-building of officials in Panama. The proposals made by the private sector included social inclusion to reduce poverty, reflecting a commitment that went beyond governments. The agenda was a powerful tool for ensuring the sustainability of any action taken, as it was consensus-based and acknowledged previous work. With regard to the priority areas and lines of action, social institutions had to be strengthened through intersectoral collaboration, in a spirit of cooperation to combat the culture of privilege and build capacities. It was important to analyse poverty in multidimensional terms, to apply a territorial approach to service access and quality, to have accurate data and indicators, and to raise awareness of migrants' rights. It was also imperative to employ a systemic perspective that would inspire renewal of the social contract, bringing the social dimension together with the economic and environmental dimensions. This perspective had to be coupled with the principle of empowerment and autonomy —relinquishing welfarism— and with the notion of universalism sensitive to differences. Policymaking should also embed the notions of multiculturalism and interculturalism, in which regard the speaker remarked that the Plan for Comprehensive Development

of the Indigenous Peoples of Panama could serve as a contribution and that the inclusion of civil society in the discussion was essential. Lastly, she called for consideration of the challenges of implementing the agenda, so that they could be overcome in a timely manner.

16. Mario Varela, Minister of Social Development of Paraguay, welcomed the discussion of a social agenda and said that the Ministry of Social Development had recently been created in his country, enabling institutional emancipation and providing a staff of specialized public servants. There was a need to strengthen the role of the State as a duty bearer and a contributor to building more equal societies. In Paraguay, working groups were being created with participants from the academic sector, the private sector, the social sector and citizens' groups to produce social compacts on governance and governability, and to form linkages between national government and subnational governments. The normative-legal aspect, structural basis and functioning of States had to be bolstered, as well as their budgets and administration. Technical capacities in local governments also needed to be built up (town and city councils). The idea that social protection formed part of investment in overcoming the inefficiency of inequality should be widely disseminated in all spheres (business and academia). Paraguay had focused on early childhood and had implemented the *Vamos* social protection system, a public policy to expand access to health care and education, to improve the employability of the population, to boost productivity, to enhance opportunities for people to participate in economic growth and to promote social inclusion of those in vulnerable situations.

17. Rosa María Suárez, Technical Director of the Social Policy Coordination Cabinet of the Dominican Republic, commended the progress made in formulation of the agenda for inclusive social development and stated that the agenda had to be translated into specific action plans, pilot projects in countries and South-South cooperation initiatives. She requested that gender sensitivity be made explicit in the agenda—beyond having segregated statistics—and asked that the issue be combined with that of care. The speaker highlighted the explicit conceptualization of welfare and social protection and stressed certain issues, including determining what progress was being made in terms of productivity and improvement of sectors that generated less employment, the coordination of social policies, and intersectoral and cross-sectoral coordination in planning structures. It was important to have standardized definitions of multidimensional poverty, to ensure comparability. Regarding the issue of disasters, it was imperative to strengthen populations' resilience in the different territories. Continuity of social protection for migrant workers and the use of remittances were also key issues. It was crucial not to lose sight of the subnational, national and regional dimensions. In the Dominican Republic, the results of the Single System for the Identification of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN) would provide new information on poverty in the population.

18. In order to prevent emerging technology from becoming a new source of social exclusion, technology skills could be introduced into social protection programmes, identifying the skills that poor and vulnerable young people needed to join the production matrix. It would be important to ascertain the prioritization criteria for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy accelerators and how the different components of poverty reduction were being strengthened. Social interventions needed to be structured and potential impacts simulated at the local level, as well as evaluations and comparisons in order to continue moving forward. The speaker concurred with the content of the agenda on advancing towards effective coverage and quality of services and on generating human capital in the areas of health and education. Advancing application of the regional agenda of inclusive social development would be a challenge, and it was important to define methodologies and tools for its implementation.

19. Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, stressed that social development ran through the whole of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, social issues were not played out in the social sphere alone; resolving them also required explicit economic and environmental policies. Social protection had to be mainstreamed and labour inclusion furthered, in a context of high levels of informality. Policies were needed that had

equality and social inclusion at their core. Inequality was inefficient, and it was important to combat the culture of privilege. In that regard, the Observatory on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean of ECLAC was key to monitoring progress in changing the inequality matrix, taking into account territorial disparities, the life cycle approach and the ethnic-racial dimension. With regard to social expenditure, it was essential to identify governments' investment priorities and how they were linked to the 2030 Agenda. One of the objectives of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was to boost synergies and efforts among actors and step up South-South cooperation. In conclusion, the Executive Secretary said it was crucial for ECLAC to be apprised of how best to work with the countries and thanked Mexico for its offer to host the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in October 2019.

20. Luis Felipe López-Calva, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), expressed concern about the slowdown in economic growth and poverty reduction seen in the region. The 2030 Agenda proposed a three-track road forward: greater productivity, greater inclusion and greater resilience; a road that could only be built through effective governance. That required democratic governance, whereby citizens regained trust and belief in governments. Income and opportunities had to be distributed, but so did productive capacity, so that those at the bottom of the distribution could contribute more to growth. He referred to five assets in the region: (i) human capital: health and education; (ii) physical capital: housing; (iii) financial capital and financial inclusion; (iv) environmental and natural capital for the benefit of communities, and; (v) social capital: social cohesion with a more favourable environment for a sustainable reduction in poverty.

21. In the comments that followed, Zavia Mayne, State Minister in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica, expressed his country's commitment to inclusive social development, the regional agenda for inclusive social development and the 2030 Agenda. The proposed agenda would serve as a guide for work in Jamaica. The core issues included intergenerational poverty, persons with disabilities and their inclusion in formal work, inclusive social protection—which was key to the transition from informal to formal employment—access to health care and finance for housing. In Jamaica, food was provided for boys and girls in school through the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), as part of government policy.

22. Humberto Adán Peña, Counsel Coordinator at the Social Welfare Secretariat of Mexico, expressed satisfaction that the thinking behind the proposed agenda was consonant with that of documents related to his country's transition process. The Social Welfare Secretariat proposed a virtuous circle with a focus on well-being, human and social rights, the life cycle, social and community participation, transparency and honesty. In relation to conditional transfer programmes, in Mexico there were plans to move from a criterion of "beneficiaries" to one of "rights-holders", with an approach that combined participation, comprehensiveness and territoriality, in a framework of transparency and accountability. The aim was to reorganize spending and readjust budget formulation, increasing flexibility and reallocating resources to priority programmes based on redistribution and solidarity, without necessarily increasing taxes. Groups that required priority attention included the indigenous population, migrants, agricultural day labourers, persons with disabilities, children, young people and women. The speaker highlighted the reference to the rights-based approach in the regional agenda for inclusive social development as the most apt normative conceptualization, together with the concept of universalism sensitive to difference and the principle of progressive universality, albeit subject to certain functions according to the financial sustainability pact, which sought a broader approach to inclusion. The effort to tackle violence had led the Social Welfare Secretariat and local governments to concentrate on social policies in certain territories, which to some degree ran counter to the aim of building more cohesive societies.

23. The regional agenda for inclusive social development should afford more in-depth consideration to matters such as various types of violence to be included in the axes and action lines, the role of the ministries of social development, the role of transfers and financial inclusion, development and migration, rural poverty and programmes centred on sustainable communities, the social and solidarity economy as a means of overcoming the shortfall in decent work, capacity-building and the link with the local development approach, the enforceability, justiciability and legalization of acquired rights in relation to a welfare law that leaves no one behind, and the prioritization of certain populations in target territories (indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and women).

24. Next, statements were made by the representatives of the delegations in attendance.

25. The representative of Brazil noted that the agenda for inclusive social development had contributions to make for all countries. In Brazil, a large social protection network and single register of information for social programmes (*Cadastro Único*) had existed since 1988, which enabled the government to better understand the socioeconomic reality of the population. It was important to make fiscal efforts and create sustainable conditions to respond to problems, as well as developing partnerships for productive development and local development.

26. The representative of Argentina stressed that the agenda should emphasize the issue of rural life and development, form links with the social economy, increase active participation through new channels, strengthen private sector engagement and incorporate the issue of the digital divide. The 2030 Agenda was an opportunity with a long-term perspective that transcended the terms in office of elected governments.

27. The representative of Chile said that it was important to evaluate the cost of implementing the agenda, in order to determine the proportion that should be borne by the private sector.

28. The representative of Uruguay stressed the importance of hearing other countries' experiences, in order to gauge the cost of implementing (or not implementing) the agenda, in order to further development without repeating prior mistakes. The speaker offered to make Uruguay's care system experience available to those present.

29. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC thanked the participants for their comments and highlighted the importance of determining costs and financing so that the programme could move beyond the proposal stage, identifying what the States would invest, what gaps remained, and what other mechanisms could be used to fill them.

30. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC stated that, with access to information and data, the cost of solutions could be calculated, citing the example of the study of the cost of hunger in Central America² prepared by ECLAC.

Review of the experiences of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in forging regional agendas and agreements (agenda item 5)

31. Under this agenda item, an analysis was made of the ECLAC experience in preparing the following regional agreements: the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within

² See R. Martínez and A. Fernández, "The cost of hunger: Social and economic impact of child undernutrition in Central America and the Dominican Republic", *Project Documents* (LC/W.144/Rev.1), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2007.

the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

32. The analysis of preparation of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 was presented by Iliana Vaca Trigo, Associate Social Affairs Officer in the Division for Gender Affairs of ECLAC. The Strategy was a political and technical instrument that committed the entire State and recognized the participation of the feminist and women's movement in the region. It had been adopted by consensus at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo in 2016, following a participatory drafting process lasting a year and a half. The Strategy was based on 10 implementation pillars and 74 interrelated measures. Under its follow-up mechanism, countries reported on their progress and on any outstanding challenges. In three years' time, there would be a regional review of the implementation of the Montevideo Strategy, at which the countries would decide how to move forward with implementation, with a view to avoiding setbacks.

33. Paulo Saad, Chief of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, then described the process of formulating the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and highlighted the Operational guide for implementation and follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development,³ a voluntary technical instrument to assist countries in applying the priority measures of the Montevideo Consensus. The working group on indicators for regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development had arrived at a set of indicators aligned with the 2030 Agenda, which would be submitted to the countries for consideration and adoption at the fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in October 2019.

34. With regard to the Escazú Agreement, Carlos de Miguel, Chief of the Policies for Sustainable Development Unit of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC, said that in addition to being the first regional environmental treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the first in the world to contain specific provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters, it was also the first treaty concluded under the auspices of ECLAC. Climate decision-making had to have an underlying social basis. As a process, the Escazú Agreement had been open and inclusive, participatory at all levels, and internationally recognized and valued. As the negotiations progressed, the process had also gradually strengthened capacities and cooperation by including governments, academia and the private sector. It formed a virtuous circle between access rights, human rights and a healthy environment, and was fundamental to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 7)

35. The representatives adopted the agreements contained in annex 1 of this report.

³ LC/L.4061(CRPD.2/3)/Rev.1.

Annex 1

AGREEMENTS

At their third meeting, held in Santiago on 23 April 2019, on the occasion of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to:

1. *Thank* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in its capacity as secretariat of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, for the progress made in formulating the regional agenda for inclusive social development, under the leadership of the Chair of the Conference, the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay;
2. *Draw attention* to the importance of putting people at the centre of development, safeguarding the progress made in social development in the region and avoiding setbacks in a less favourable economic situation with numerous emerging challenges;
3. *Reiterate* their conviction that multilateralism and cooperation are essential to making headway in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, including its social dimension, and that the regional agenda for inclusive social development can contribute to this process;
4. *Welcome* the initial proposal of objectives, principles, axes and action lines that make up the regional agenda for inclusive social development and its commitment to eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and addressing the gaps in access to well-being;
5. *Endorse*, in general terms, the initial proposal of the regional agenda for inclusive social development as presented and request the secretariat to prepare a summary of the comments received on this proposal for the countries to review;
6. *Also endorse* the work plan proposed by the Chair of the Conference for preparing the final version of the regional agenda for inclusive social development, for consideration and approval at the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;
7. *Further endorse* the agenda for dialogue with civil society proposed by the Chair of the Conference and request the secretariat to coordinate the planned activities to collect comments and inputs for the preparation of the final version of the regional agenda for inclusive social development, prior to the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;
8. *Reiterate* their thanks to the Government of Mexico for offering to host the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in the second half of 2019, and request the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to organize the meeting on the dates agreed with the host country.

Annex 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
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PERÚ/PERU

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**C. Organismos especializados
Specialized agencies**

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

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**D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales
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