



# Summit of the Americas 1994-2009

## *Selected Indicators*

Fifth Summit of the Americas  
Port of Spain, 17-19 April 2009



UNITED NATIONS



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## FOREWORD

The present document was prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for consideration by the Heads of State and Government at the fifth Summit of the Americas. It provides an overview, in figures, of the most important development trends, issues and challenges facing the countries that are part of the Summit process. The differences between countries are so marked in practically every area that the Americas do not, by any means, constitute a single homogeneous reality and, clearly, it would be futile and ill-advised to attempt to treat them as such.

This Summit is being held at a crucial time in our history. On the one hand, the worst financial and economic crisis in the past 70 years has just broken out, and its impact is being felt in varying degrees in every country of the world. On the other, new calls for freedom, cooperation and solidarity with the most vulnerable are echoing through the countries taking part in this Summit. This is an opportunity to lay the foundations for a new era in which all of us by working together decisively and building on the experience we have acquired, can strive to secure a more balanced pattern of development in this hemisphere.

It was not by chance that the past 15 years were chosen as the time frame for the analysis; indeed, they cover the period since the first Summit of the Americas was held in 1994 in Miami (United States). Throughout this period, the Heads of State and Government have renewed their commitment to move forward to combat poverty, hunger and exclusion and foster equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth;<sup>1</sup> they have also reaffirmed their support for the principal international instruments for protecting and promoting basic economic, social, cultural, civil and environmental rights.<sup>2</sup>

This document, which comprises 11 sections, describes the demographic, economic and social trends observed in the member countries of the Summit of the Americas and illustrates graphically the scope, distribution and development of the main problems and challenges to development, the basic messages and key ideas for analysis and their possible implications for public policies, within the pursuit of an increasingly fruitful cooperation among countries. Statistical information, notwithstanding constraints in terms of availability, is an indispensable input for understanding reality and for monitoring and assessing the impact of public policies; hence the need to redouble our efforts to increase the production of timely, quality data and indicators.

Section I of the document examines the demographic situation in the hemisphere. Since the mid-1990s, the rate of population growth in the Americas has been similar to the global rate; now, although the regional rate has been diminishing, the population is still expected to increase significantly in many countries over the next few years. One of the characteristic features of the continent, however, is the intensity of migration flows, with the destination of choice for Latin American migrants being the United States, although a greater degree of diversification has been observed in recent years. As a result of migration, remittances have become immensely important; indeed, for some countries, they are one of the principal sources of foreign exchange.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Declaration of Mar del Plata, "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance", 2005 [online] <http://www.summit-americas.org/Eng-2004/previous-summits.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> These include the outcomes of the following meetings: the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); the Millennium Summit (New York, 2000); the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002); the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (New York, 2005).

As indicated in the section on production and international trade, the countries of the Americas account for one third of world GDP, although there are huge gaps between countries, since some are major economies with per capita GDP levels among the highest in the world, while the majority are situated in the mid-to-low range, and others still have very low per capita values. Between 1994 and 2007, the rate of GDP growth in the hemisphere matched that of the rest of the world, although with wide variations between subperiods. In the second half of the decade, however, the acceleration of this growth was brought to a halt by the international financial crisis that broke out in mid-2008. Moreover, the degree of trade openness in this continent is lower on average than in the rest of the world, and the volume of intraregional trade is very significant.

The section dealing with energy underscores the shift in the composition of the primary energy supply: the relative reduction in the use of oil, the setback during the present decade in advances with hydroelectricity and the fact that use of renewable energy remains limited. Little progress has been made in reducing energy intensity in the Americas, and much remains to be achieved in terms of improving efficiency in this area.

The section on poverty and income distribution discusses the reduction in poverty rates—one of the Millennium Development Goals—recorded especially in the present decade. Nevertheless, there are still significant segments of the population that are unable to meet their basic needs, and inequity in income distribution remains high, which places many countries of the Americas among the most inequitable in the world.

The section on employment highlights the challenges arising from high levels of informality, the lack of employment protection, wide gaps in wages and the levels of unemployment which characterize the labour markets of many countries in the Americas, despite the significant improvements generated in those areas by the economic growth which took place from the early 2000s until 2008.

The section on education focuses on progress towards universal primary education and progress in secondary-school and preschool attendance, although in these cases the shortfall is still considerable. The worst indicators in terms of attendance and performance are seen among children and young people from the least favoured social groups, including a number of indigenous groups. A similar situation prevails in relation to the quality of education.

Improvements in access to basic sanitation services and mother-and-child health care, and certain changes in the behaviour of the population, have led to reductions in child mortality. The section on health and nutrition contains data on this improvement but also draws attention to the persistence of unsatisfactory levels in some countries and areas. The nutrition situation has also improved in the Americas, but in some countries significant sectors of the population are still experiencing difficulties in that regard.

The indicators in the section on gender equity reflect persistent gender gaps in terms of labour-market access, the incidence of poverty and participation in decision-making. Nonetheless, the Americas have seen advances in the past 15 years in respect of some of the indicators analysed.

The information in the section on indigenous peoples shows that they make up a considerable proportion of the population in some countries in the Americas, exceeding 60% in some cases. It also underlines the profound disadvantages facing the indigenous population as revealed by the quality-of-life indicators.

The section on the knowledge economy notes that, on average, the countries under consideration spend a smaller proportion of GDP than the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on research and development, but this figure conceals wide gaps between the nations of the Americas; the figures for Canada and the United States are similar to those for other developed countries, but levels are much lower in the rest of the region. Expansion of fixed-line telephone services in the Americas slowed from 2004 onwards, while mobile-telephone use increased, but at varying rates depending on the country. Between 2000 and 2007, Internet penetration grew significantly, again at different rates in different countries, although the gaps have tended to narrow recently.

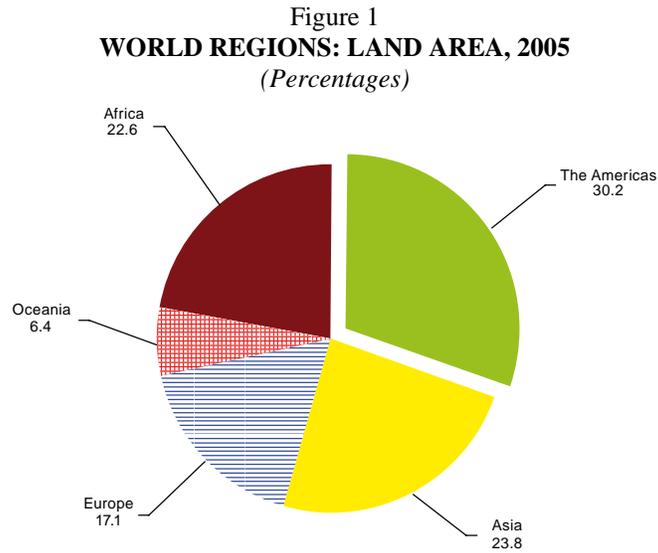
The section on the environment states that the main problems in North America are water and air pollution, the uncontrolled urban sprawl and high levels of consumption of energy from fossil fuels. It reports that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the loss of forests and of biodiversity is becoming increasingly evident, as is the over-exploitation of natural resources beyond their capacity to replenish themselves, which has caused land degradation and the depletion of fish stocks. It also points out that fast and disorganized urbanization and the persistence of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are intensifying problems such as the growing generation of waste and rising air pollution in cities. For the whole continent, the picture has been worsened by the effects of climate change and the rising frequency and intensity of hurricanes, floods and landslides.

ECLAC submits this document to the Summit of the Americas in the hope that it will provide an overview of the main trends and challenges regarding development in the countries of the Americas. We trust that this work, prepared with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank, will promote dialogue and cooperation between countries and serve to identify areas where cooperation is needed, thereby contributing to the design of improved public policies and the achievement of more balanced development.

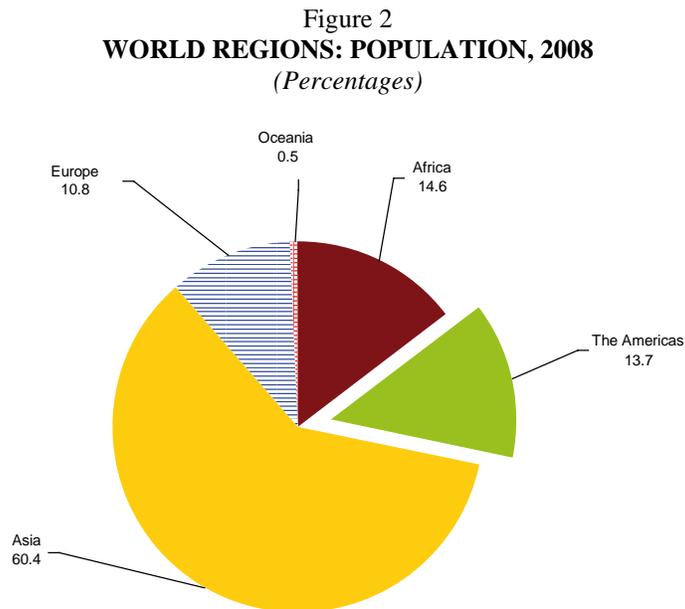
Alicia Bárcena  
Executive Secretary  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

## I. AREA AND POPULATION

Overall, the Americas make up 30% of the world's land area, and are home to 14% of its population.



**Source:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAO Statistical Databases (FAOSTAT) [online].



**Source:** Population Division of the United Nations and Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC.

The Americas comprise countries of different sizes, from the viewpoint of both geographical area and population. The following table shows that some countries in the Americas are among the world's largest in both area and population terms.

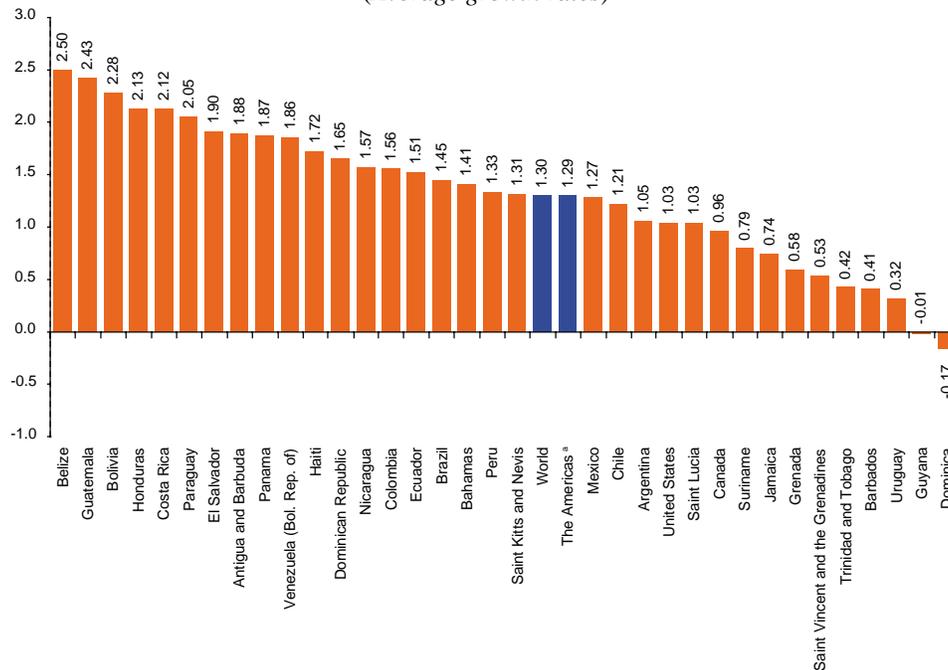
Table 1  
**THE AMERICAS: POPULATION, 2008, AND AREA, 2005**  
*(Thousands of inhabitants and square kilometres)*

<b>Population 2008</b>	<b>Thousands of inhabitants</b>	<b>Area 2005</b>	<b>Square kilometres</b>
Antigua and Barbuda	86	Antigua and Barbuda	440
Argentina	39 746	Argentina	2 780 400
Bahamas	335	Bahamas	13 880
Barbados	295	Barbados	430
Belize	294	Belize	22 970
Bolivia	10 028	Bolivia	1 098 580
Brazil	195 138	Brazil	8 514 880
Canada	33 259	Canada	9 984 670
Chile	16 770	Chile	756 630
Colombia	46 702	Colombia	1 141 750
Costa Rica	4 550	Costa Rica	51 100
Dominica	67	Dominica	750
Ecuador	13 801	Ecuador	283 560
El Salvador	7 224	El Salvador	21 040
United States	311 666	United States	9 632 030
Grenada	106	Grenada	340
Guatemala	13 677	Guatemala	108 890
Guyana	736	Guyana	214 970
Haiti	9 762	Haiti	27 750
Honduras	7 322	Honduras	112 090
Jamaica	2 728	Jamaica	10 990
Mexico	107 677	Mexico	1 964 380
Nicaragua	5 677	Nicaragua	130 000
Panama	3 391	Panama	75 520
Paraguay	6 230	Paraguay	406 750
Peru	28 214	Peru	1 285 220
Dominican Republic	9 890	Dominican Republic	48 730
Saint Kitts and Nevis	51	Saint Kitts and Nevis	260
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	121	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	390
Saint Lucia	167	Saint Lucia	620
Suriname	461	Suriname	163 270
Trinidad and Tobago	1 338	Trinidad and Tobago	5 130
Uruguay	3 342	Uruguay	176 220
Venezuela (Bol. Rep. of)	27 912	Venezuela (Bol. Rep. of)	912 050
<b>The Americas</b>	<b>908 763.0</b>	<b>The Americas</b>	<b>39 946 680</b>

**Source:** Population: Latin American countries: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC; Caribbean and North American countries: Population Division of the United Nations; land area: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAO Statistical Databases (FAOSTAT) [online].

Since the first Summit of the Americas, which was held in the mid-1990s, the rate of the region's population growth has matched the world growth rate; but once again, there are differences among subregions and countries.

Figure 3  
**THE AMERICAS: POPULATION, 1994-2008**  
(Average growth rates)



**Source:** Latin America: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC; Canada, the United States and the rest of the world: Population Division of the United Nations.

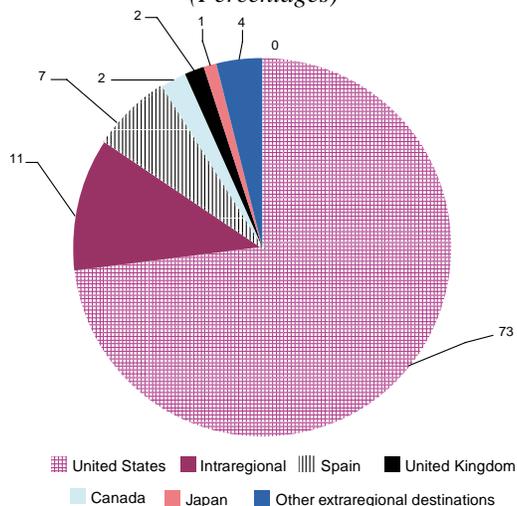
<sup>a</sup> 34 countries.

The downward trend in population growth has continued recently, particularly in those countries which have relatively high growth rates; in many of them, however, significant population growth can be expected in the coming years.

## A. MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES

A distinctive feature of the region's demographic patterns is the intensity of migratory flows. Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean alone make up over 13% of the world's total international migrants, which is well above the ratio of the region's population to the world population (8%). The United States ranks first as a destination for emigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, but in recent years the flows of migrants have been increasingly diversified.

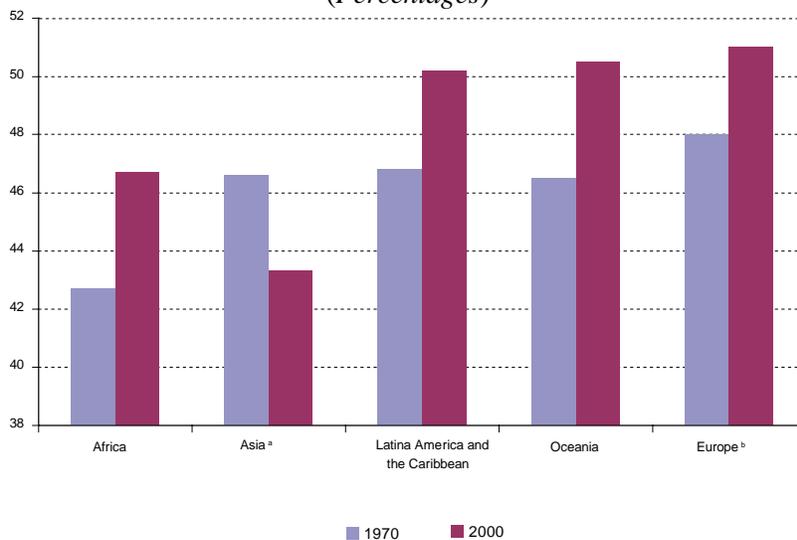
Figure 4  
**MAIN DESTINATIONS OF MIGRANTS FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, AROUND 2000**  
*(Percentages)*



Source: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC.

In 2000, women outnumbered men among intraregional migrants moving to the United States (except for Mexican migrants) and Spain. The idea that women migrants are statistically invisible is not as sustainable as it once was, although they remain vulnerable, particularly in the case of undocumented women migrants and trafficked migrants.

Figure 5  
**WOMEN AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL MIGRANTS, BY REGION, 1970 AND 2000**  
*(Percentages)*



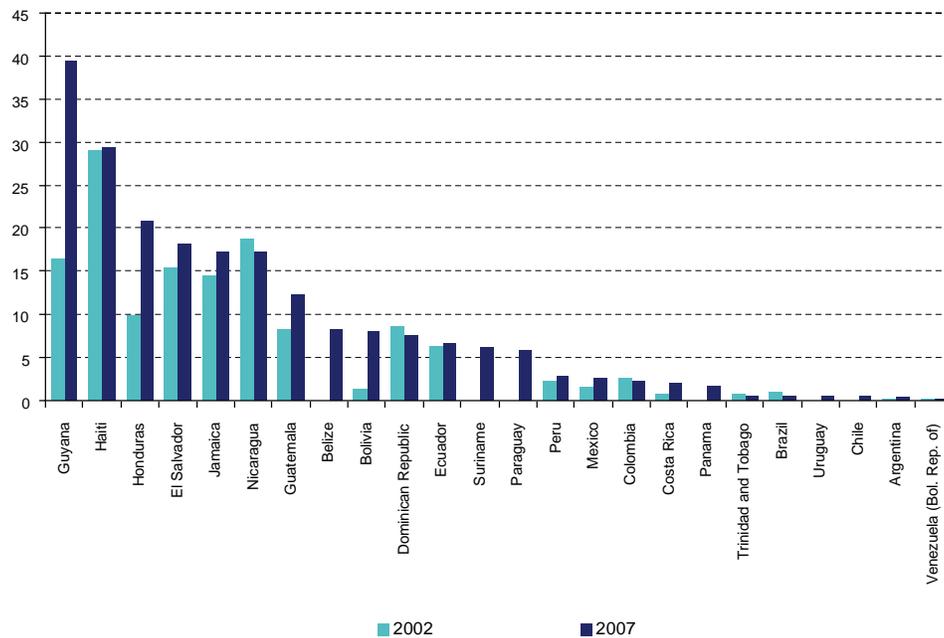
Source: United Nations, *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: 2003 Revision*, New York, 2003.

<sup>a</sup> Not including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>b</sup> Not including Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Given the strong migratory flows from certain Latin American and Caribbean countries, the remittances sent by migrants to their countries of origin are of great significance. In some countries, remittances are among the largest sources of foreign exchange.

Figure 6  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (24 COUNTRIES): INFLOWS OF REMITTANCES, 2002 AND 2007  
(Percentage of GDP)



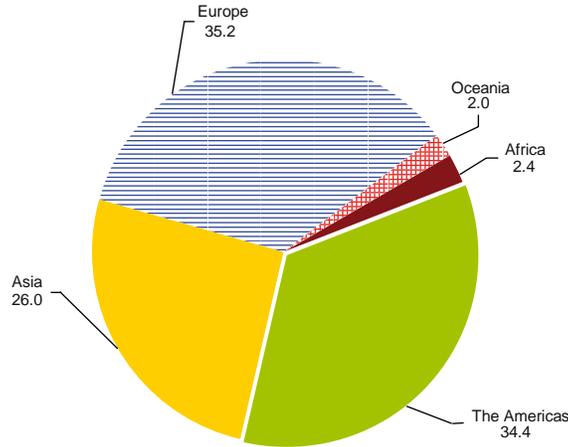
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

## II. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Americas generate a third of the world's GDP, which means that the region has a higher rate of economic activity per capita than other regions.

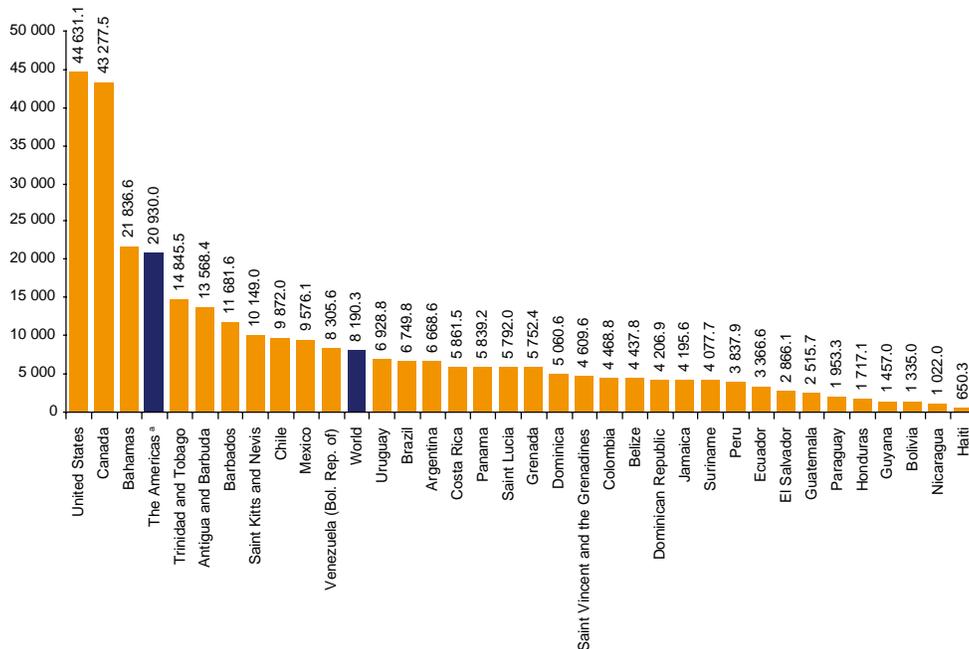
There are considerable gaps in this respect between the different countries of the Americas. A number of them can boast advanced levels of development and have per capita GDP figures that rank among the highest in the world (around US\$ 45,000). But per capita GDP is in the mid to low range in most of the countries and extremely low by international standards in some.

Figure 7  
**WORLD REGIONS: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT**  
*(Percentages)*



Source: Statistics Division of the United Nations, on the basis of figures expressed in millions of dollars at current prices.

Figure 8  
**THE AMERICAS: PER CAPITA GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, 2007**  
*(Dollars at constant prices)*

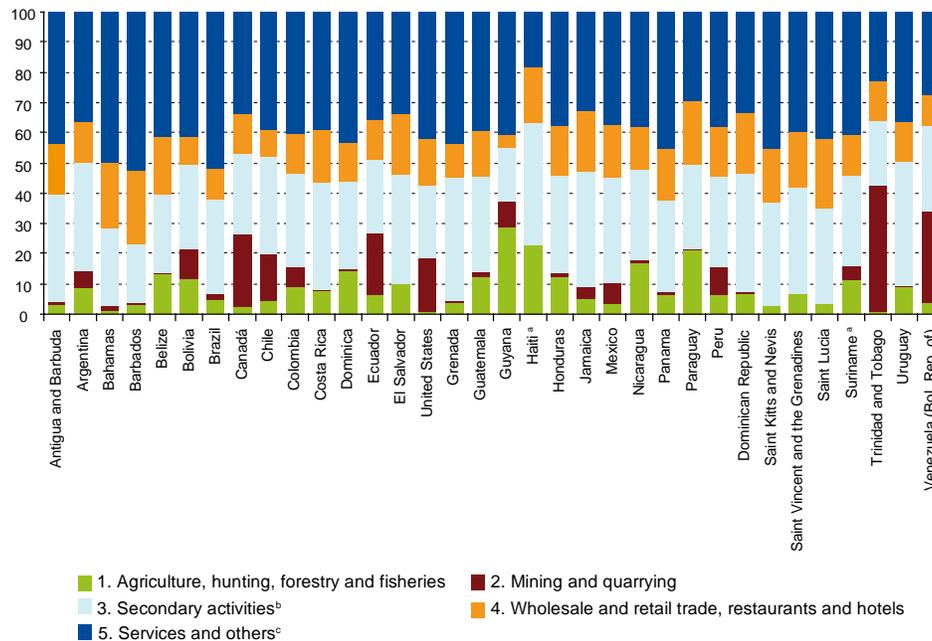


Source: GDP: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Statistics Division of the United Nations. Population: Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC and Population Division of the United Nations.

<sup>a</sup> 34 countries.

The structure of GDP by sector shows how important services are in the region. This sector is very prominent in most of the countries of the Americas, accounting for between 35% and 45% of total GDP. The secondary sector (manufacturing and construction) is the category that follows in most cases, but in some countries the situation is different, with agriculture or mining surpassing manufacturing.

Figure 9  
**THE AMERICAS: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT BY BRANCH OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**  
*(Percentages at current prices)*



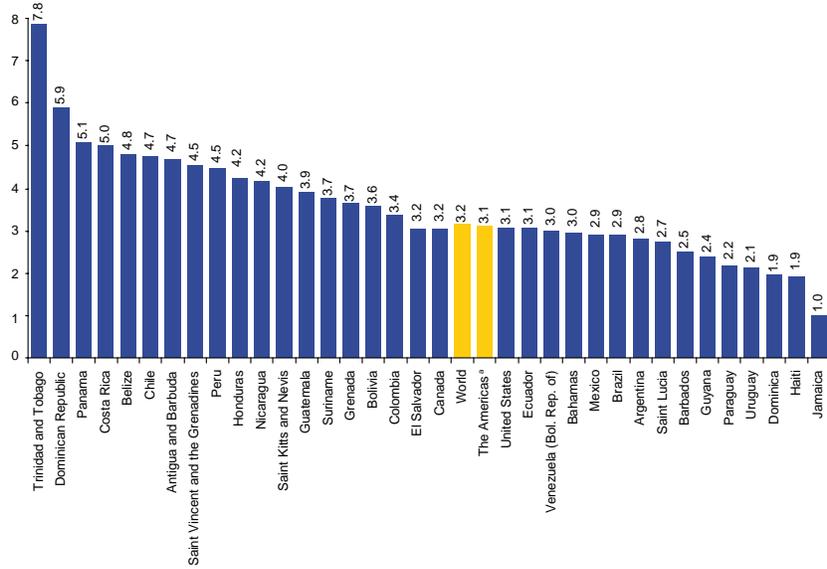
**Source:** Latin America and the Caribbean: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Canada and the United States: Statistics Division of the United Nations.

- <sup>a</sup> Figures obtained by using the percentage structure of the latest available year: Haiti, 2000 and Suriname, 2004.  
<sup>b</sup> Includes manufacturing; electric power, gas and water; construction and transport; and storage and communications.  
<sup>c</sup> Includes financial institutions, insurance, real estate and business services; community, social and personal services; indirectly measured financial intermediation services; and value added tax.

Since the Summits of the Americas have been held (from 1994 up to 2007), the region's GDP has risen at the same rate as that of the rest of the world, that is, at slightly more than 3% per year. Here, the figures not only differ between one country and another, but also show wide shorter-term variations within the period. The crises of the mid- and late 1990s and the early 2000s had impacts of differing severity on many of the countries of the region and acted as a brake on growth. The second half of the 2000s was characterized by faster, widespread growth. The international financial crisis unleashed in mid-2008 blighted this positive performance, however, and there are already signs of a heavy slowdown in growth, if not an outright fall in economic activity levels.

The countries of the Americas have a much smaller share in global trade flows than they do in world GDP: 20% as against 34%. This suggests that, on average, the region is less open to trade than the rest of the world (see figure 11).

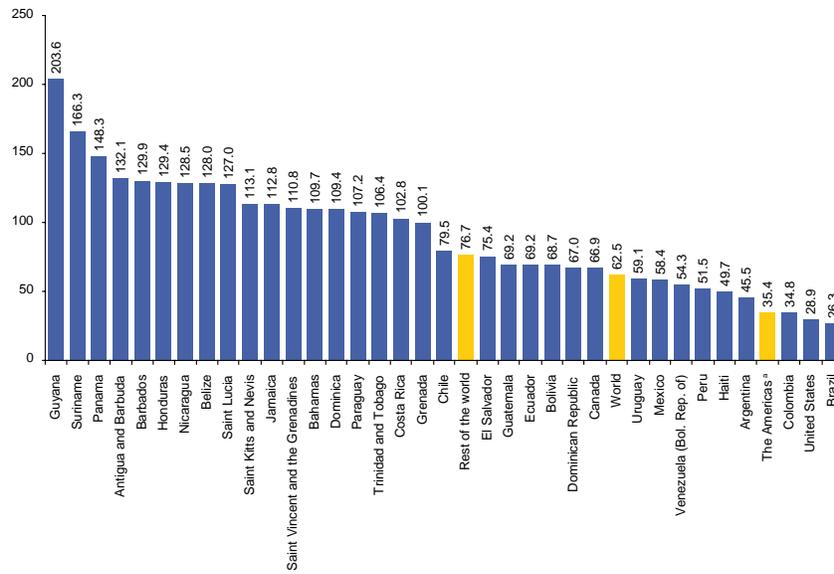
Figure 10  
**THE AMERICAS: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT, 1994-2007**  
*(Average annual growth rates)*



Source: Latin America and the Caribbean: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Canada and the United States: Statistics Division of the United Nations.

<sup>a</sup> 34 countries.

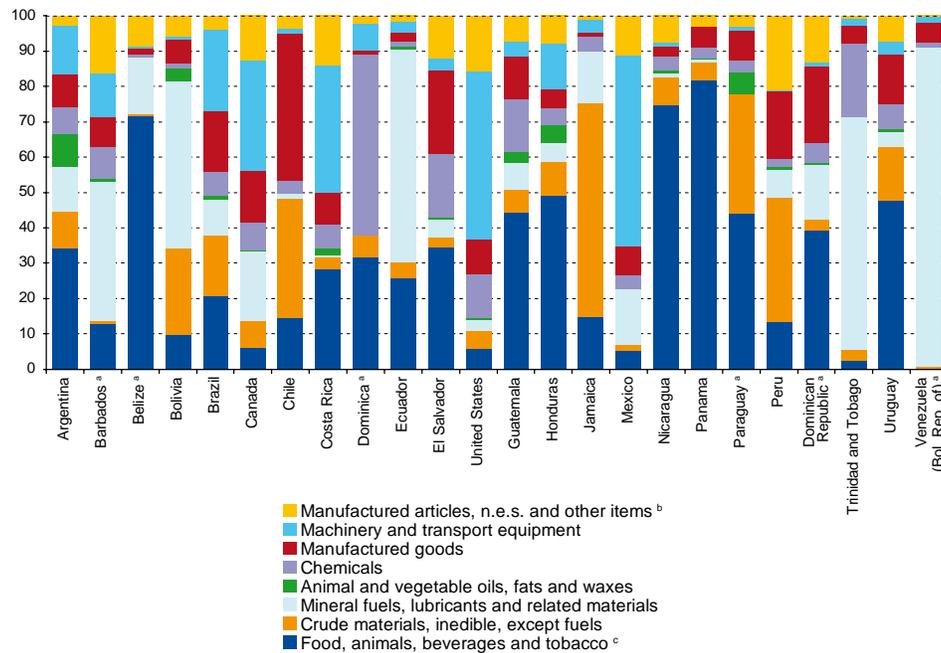
Figure 11  
**THE AMERICAS: TRADE OPENNESS, 2007**  
*(Percentages)*



Source: Latin America and the Caribbean: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Canada and the United States: International Monetary Fund.

The composition of exports varies considerably from one country to another. In Latin America and the Caribbean, however, the structure is dominated by either agricultural or mining commodities. Manufactures are more significant in the United States and Canada, as well as in some Central American countries and Mexico, owing to the significance of maquila activities.

Figure 12  
**THE AMERICAS: EXPORTS, 2007**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on the basis of exports (f.o.b.) in millions of dollars.

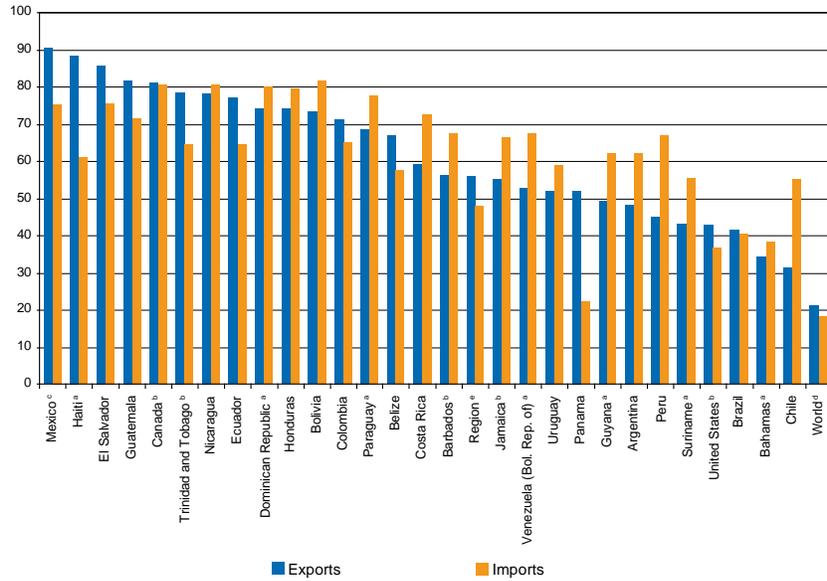
<sup>a</sup> The figures correspond to a year other than 2007 in the following countries: Barbados (2006), Belize (2006), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2006), Dominica (2005), the Dominican Republic (2001) and Paraguay (2006).

<sup>b</sup> Refers to sections 8 (Miscellaneous manufactured articles) and 9 (Commodities and transactions not classified elsewhere) and the section Other items of SITC rev 3.

<sup>c</sup> Includes sections 0 (Food and live animals) and 1 (Beverages and tobacco) of SITC rev. 3.

Intraregional trade is very significant. Most (55%) of the goods exported by the Americas remain within the region. This proportion has not changed since 1994. China, Japan and some European countries are the largest export markets outside the Americas. The significance of the region as a destination for its countries' own exports varies from one economy to another, with the largest intraregional proportion in Central and North America (except the United States). Most imports into the Americas also originate in other countries of the region, with the variations among countries similar to those observed for exports. More specifically, bilateral trade is particularly intensive between certain countries which, to some extent, reflects the existence of trade agreements (see figure 13).

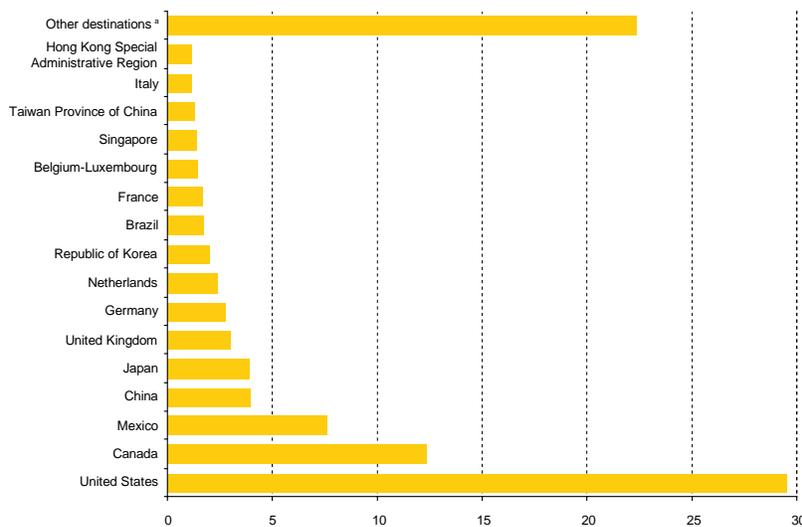
Figure 13  
**THE AMERICAS: INTRAREGIONAL TRADE IN GOODS**  
*(Percentages accounted for by the region in each country's imports and exports of goods)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of exports (f.o.b.) in millions of dollars.

- <sup>a</sup> Includes processed goods.
- <sup>b</sup> Preliminary figures.
- <sup>c</sup> Includes re-exports.
- <sup>d</sup> Includes 28 countries of the Americas.
- <sup>e</sup> Estimates.

Figure 14  
**THE AMERICAS: EXPORT DESTINATIONS, 2006**  
*(Percentages)*

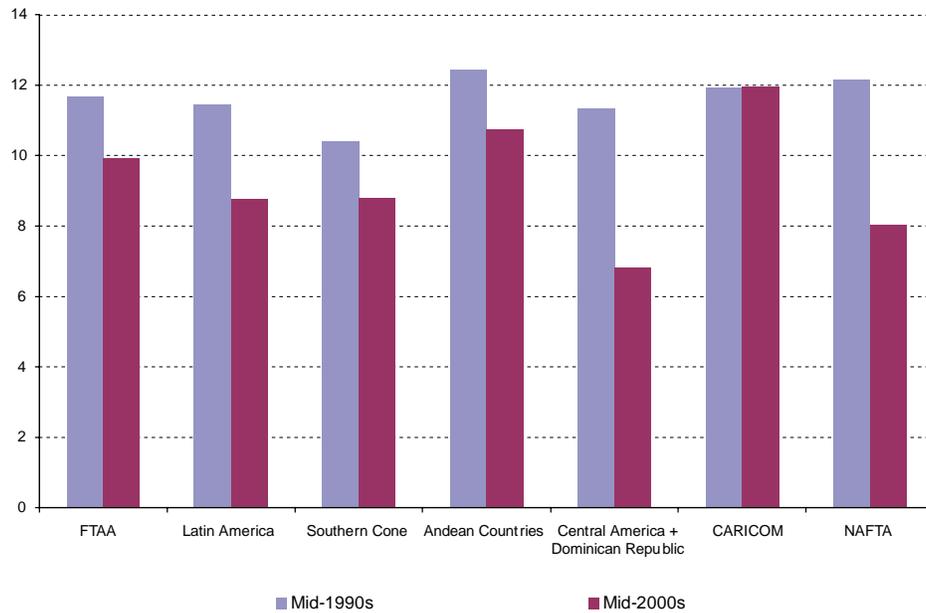


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official data.

- <sup>a</sup> Corresponds to 219 countries and territories with a share of less than 1% in the total.

Tariffs came down considerably between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s, as the figure below shows. Most of the countries of the region made strenuous efforts to lower tariffs, except for a few Caribbean economies.

Figure 15  
AVERAGE TARIFFS, BY COUNTRY GROUP, MID-1990s AND MID-2000s  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), on the basis of the UNCTAD Trade Analysis and Information System (TRAINS) and World Trade Organization (WTO), *Trade Policy Review*, various issues.

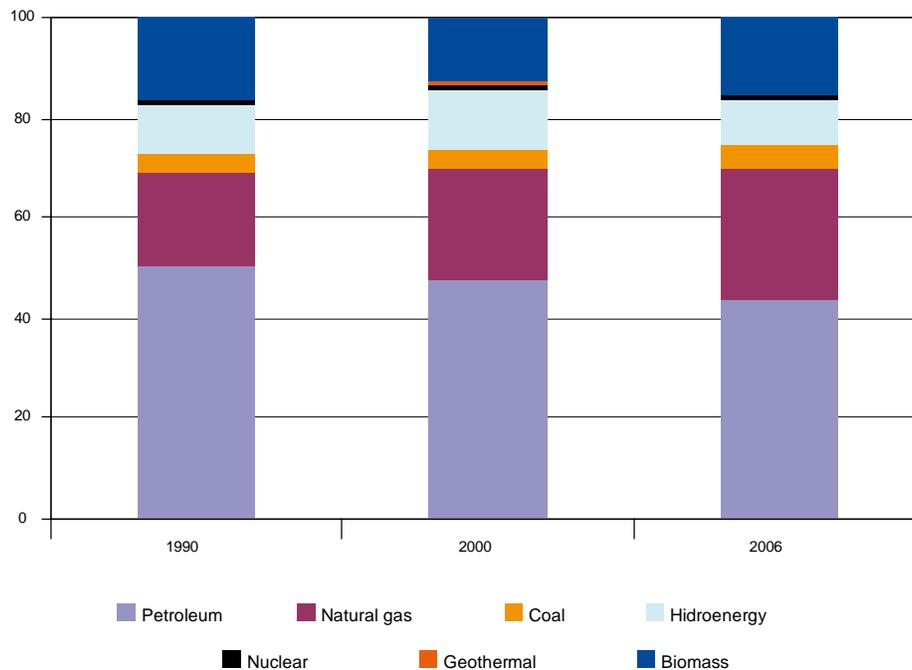
### III. ENERGY

#### A. PRIMARY ENERGY PRODUCTION

Given the policies pursued by the different countries and the natural energy resources found in the region, primary energy production in Latin America and the Caribbean has been mainly based on petroleum. The predominance of petroleum as an energy source declined steadily, however, from 62% of total energy production in the 1970s to 43% in 2006, as natural gas and hydroenergy sources increased their share in total energy production from 11% to over 25% and from 4% to 9%, respectively, over the same period. Natural gas may begin to account for more energy production in the coming years thanks to the increased reserves found in Brazil and the integration of gas infrastructure in MERCOSUR and Bolivia and in Central America. Hydroenergy production was increasing, but has shrunk since 2000 owing to the introduction of reforms and less capital-intensive power stations (such as thermal power stations) to replace hydroelectric ones. Geothermal and nuclear energy production is still minimal in the region (0.2% and 1% of total energy production, respectively). Wood energy production has fallen steadily from 17%

to 8% in the last 35 years, which signals an improvement in the quality of the energy consumed by the poor and represents benefits for rural areas and the environment, especially in terms of reducing deforestation. In some countries, however, such as the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Haiti, the use of fuelwood is still having a negative impact.

Figure 16  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: STRUCTURE OF PRIMARY ENERGY PRODUCTION**  
 (Percentages)

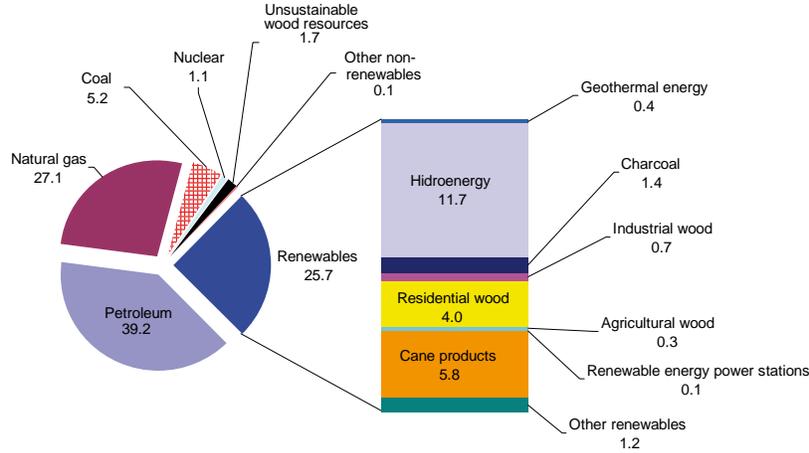


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “América Latina y el Caribe frente a la coyuntura energética internacional: oportunidades para una nueva agenda de políticas”, Project Documents series, No. 220 (LC/W.220), Santiago, Chile, December 2008.

## B. RENEWABLE ENERGIES

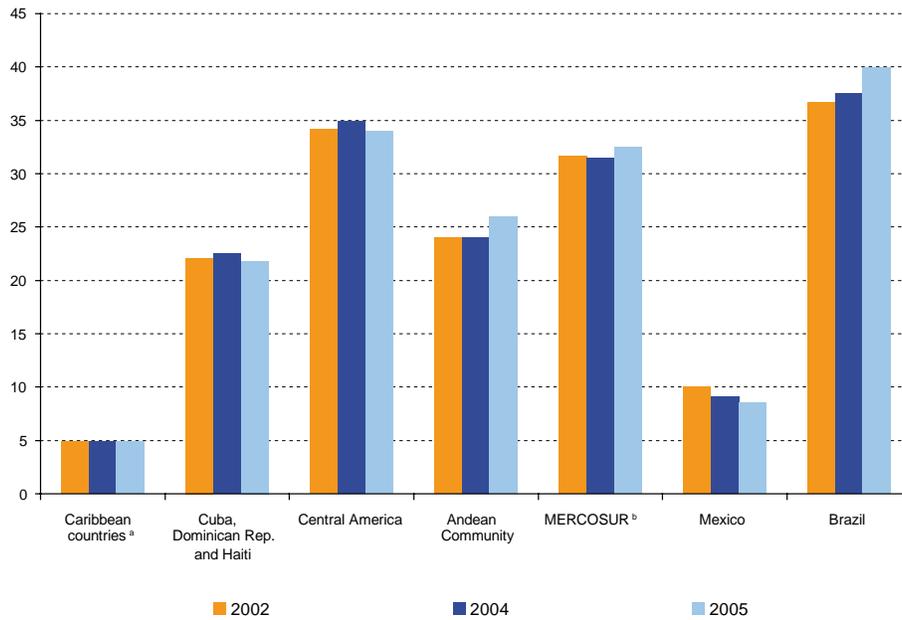
Since 2002, some progress has been made regarding the development of the regulatory framework and projects to promote the use of renewable energies use in the region. No significant changes have been recorded, however, in the share of renewables in total energy supply: between 2002 and 2005, the proportion has remained at about 26%. The situation varies considerably across the region, with some subregions and countries hovering slightly above or below this figure and others exceeding it by a considerable amount. In Brazil, for instance, the use of renewable energies has soared thanks to subsidy schemes and the Incentive Programme for Alternative Energy Sources (PROINFA), in particular.

Figure 17  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ENERGY SUPPLY, 2002**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Renewable energy sources in Latin America and the Caribbean: two years after the Bonn Conference”, Project Documents series, No. 100 (LC/W.100), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

Figure 18  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: SHARE OF SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGIES**  
**IN TOTAL ENERGY SUPPLY, 2005**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Renewable energy sources in Latin America and the Caribbean: two years after the Bonn Conference”, Project Documents series, No. 100 (LC/W.100), Santiago, Chile, 2007.

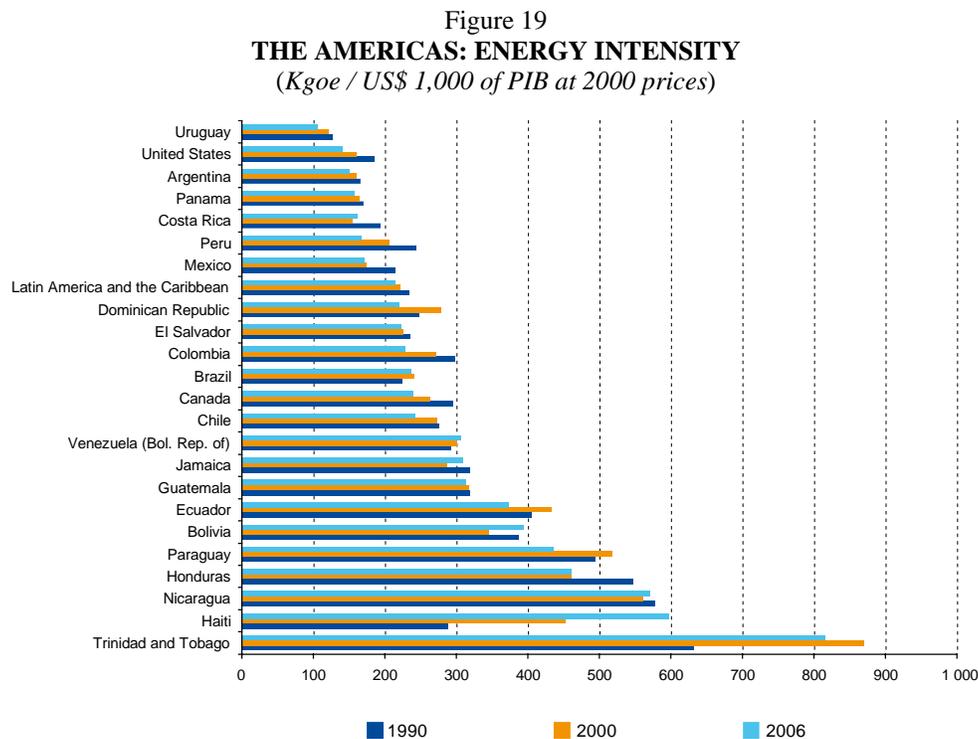
<sup>a</sup> Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>b</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

### C. ENERGY INTENSITY IN LATIN AMERICA

There is plenty of room for improving energy efficiency in the Americas. Energy intensity has hardly changed at all in the last few decades in the region. Between 1990 and 2006, energy intensity dropped only from 221.3 to 213.1 kgoe (kilogram of oil equivalent) per US\$ 1,000 of GDP (at 2000 prices). This contrasts sharply with the reductions that the industrialized countries achieved when, in the wake of the oil price shocks of the 1970s, they began introducing austerity and substitution measures to lower energy intensity, especially their use of petroleum and petroleum derivatives. Demand- and supply-side policies were implemented in the energy sector to diversify supply, reduce the dependency on imported oil and handle growing demand for energy.

Various factors have contributed to the slight variation in energy intensity over the years in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. These include technological factors (such as the increased use of higher-yield energy sources, changes in production technology, energy conservation and efficiency, the better use of installed capacity) and structural factors (such as the shift in production towards less energy-intensive sectors).



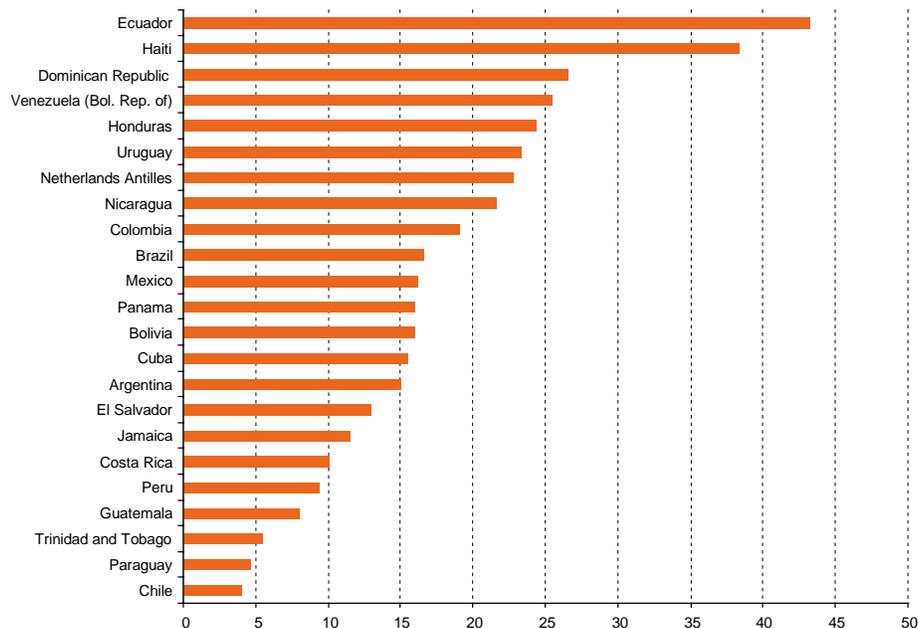
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “América Latina y el Caribe frente a la coyuntura energética internacional: oportunidades para una nueva agenda de políticas”, Project Documents series, No. 220 (LC/W.220), Santiago, Chile, December 2008.

## D. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Inter-American Development Bank makes the following observations about energy efficiency in the region:<sup>3</sup>

“Latin America has rich energy efficiency “reserves,” and it has barely begun to exploit them. Though some countries —notably Mexico and Brazil— are already reaping substantial savings from energy efficiency programs begun in the 1980s and 1990s, most of their neighbors have yet to look seriously at conservation. The opportunities are everywhere, because Latin America’s energy productivity is uniformly low. The region is still overwhelmingly reliant on incandescent light bulbs, for example, even though these consume 70% more power than newer “compact fluorescent” or LED alternatives. The region’s factories and water systems use millions of old, energy-wasting electric motors and pumps. In many countries the transportation infrastructure —which consumes more than 30% of the region’s energy— is inefficient. Commercial and residential buildings are full of outdated air conditioning systems, refrigerators, washing machines and water heaters.”

Figure 20  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ELECTRIC POWER TRANSMISSION  
 AND DISTRIBUTION LOSSES, 2006**  
*(Percentages of output)*



Source: World Resources Institute (WRI).

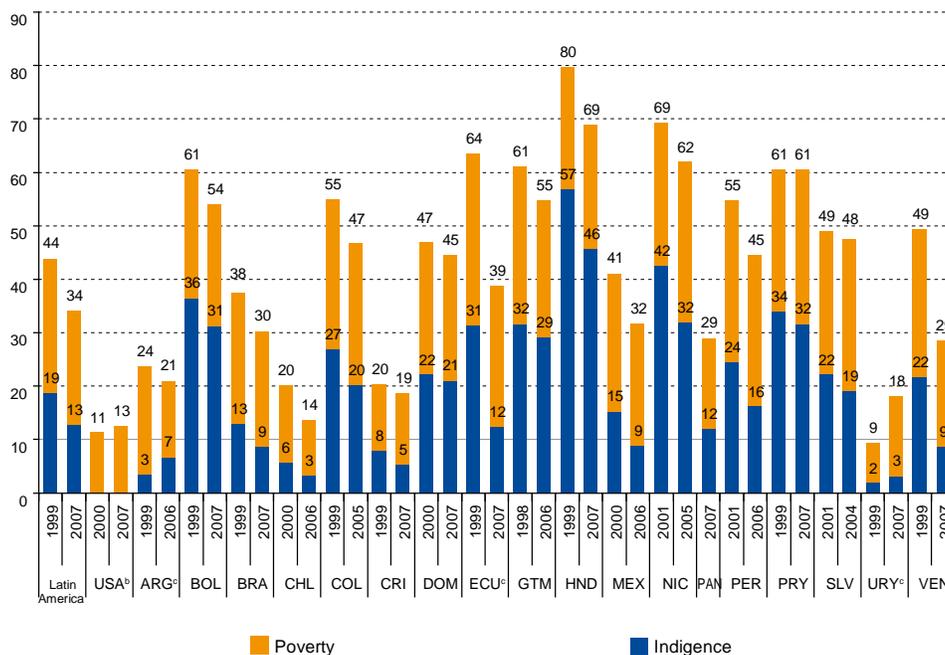
<sup>3</sup> Taken from Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), “How to save US\$ 36 billion worth of electricity (without turning off the lights)”, Washington, D.C., 2008.

#### IV. POVERTY AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION

A significant number of people still do not have the resources to satisfy their basic needs in the Americas, despite poverty levels falling significantly between 2000 and 2007, at least in Latin America. Although income distribution has improved slightly in recent years, inequality continues to be one of the hallmarks of the countries of the Americas in comparison with other regions. To improve social inclusion, poverty will need to be reduced further and the equality of opportunities will need to be enhanced.

Between 2000 and 2007, total poverty fell in 17 Latin American countries. In three of these (Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), the population receiving insufficient income to cover basic needs shrank by between 24.7% and 10% in absolute terms. The population with insufficient income to acquire a basic food basket decreased in 15 of the 17 countries, with the largest drops being recorded in Ecuador, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Honduras and Nicaragua. Poverty rose slightly in the United States, from 11.3% in 2000 to 12.5% in 2007.

Figure 21  
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES) AND THE UNITED STATES: POVERTY AND INDIGENCE LEVELS, AROUND 2000 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries; United States Census Bureau [online] <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html>.

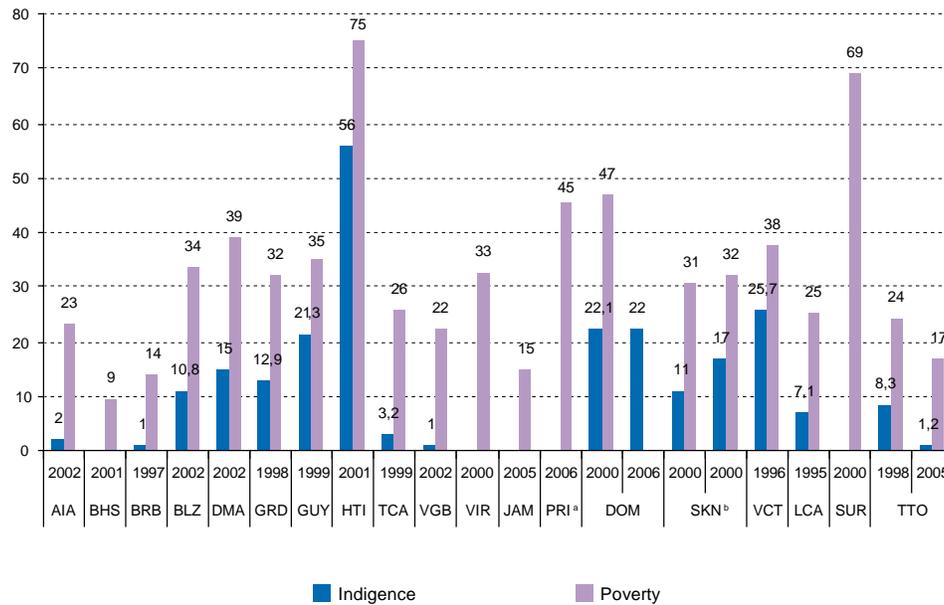
<sup>a</sup> ECLAC methodology is based on the construction of monetary thresholds for indigence and poverty which represent the per capita income necessary for individuals to satisfy their basic food needs and their basic food and non-food needs, respectively.

<sup>b</sup> On the basis of the official poverty line established by the Government of the United States.

<sup>c</sup> Urban areas.

In the Caribbean, the most recent information available (in most cases, around 2000) shows poverty rates highly dispersed among the countries. The highest rates are recorded by Haiti (75%), Suriname (69.2%) and Dominica (49.6%), and the lowest by Jamaica (14.8%), Barbados (13.9%) and the Bahamas (9.3%).

Figure 22  
**THE CARIBBEAN (19 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): POVERTY AND INDIGENCE LEVELS, AROUND 2000 AND 2006**  
*(Percentages)*



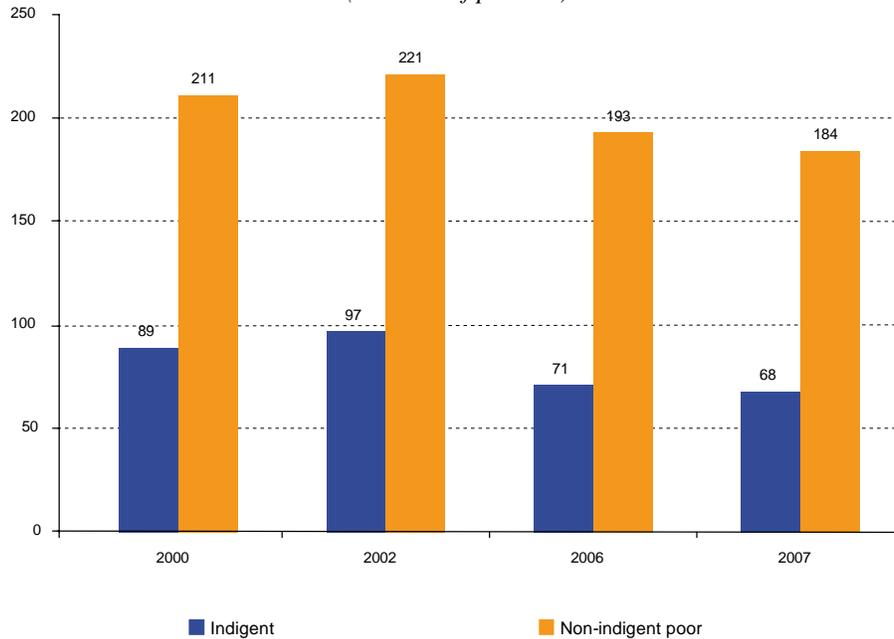
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2007* (LC/G.2351-P/I), Santiago, Chile, 2007, box I.3.

<sup>a</sup> On the basis of the official poverty line established by the Government of the United States.

<sup>b</sup> Data for Saint Kitts and Nevis are provided separately for each island.

In absolute terms, the number of people living below the poverty and indigence lines in Latin America fell dramatically between 2000 and 2007. Nonetheless, in 2008 ECLAC estimated that 184 million people were living below the poverty line in 2007 and that, of these, 68 million still lacked sufficient income to meet their food needs.

Figure 23  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (19 COUNTRIES): POVERTY AND INDIGENCE, AROUND 2000-2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Millions of persons)*

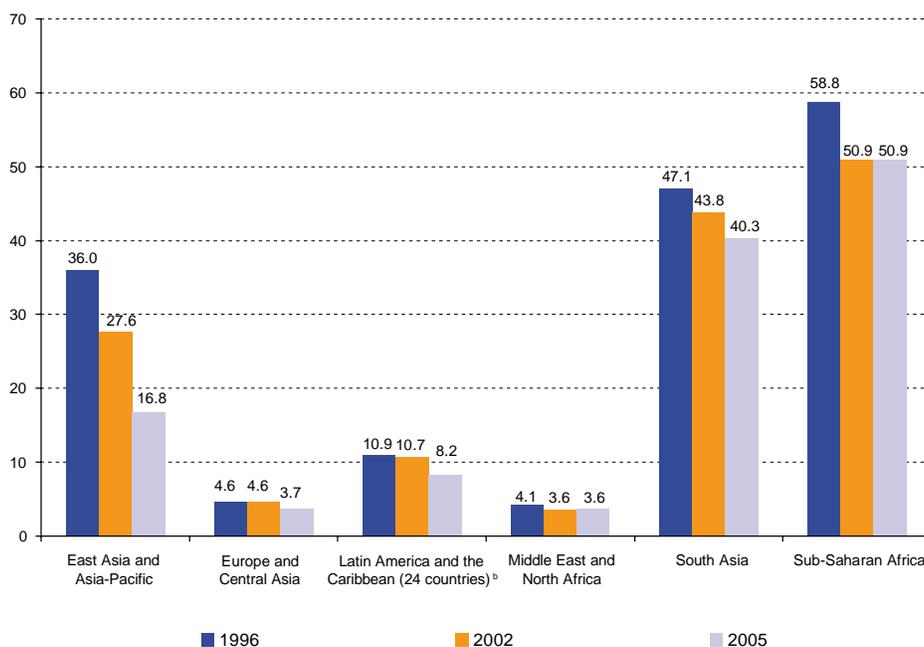


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2008* (LC/G.2402-P), Santiago, Chile, 2008.

<sup>a</sup> 18 Latin American countries plus Haiti. Values for Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay are for urban areas.

Another way to analyse extreme poverty levels is to use the World Bank threshold, according to which the percentage of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean living below the purchasing power parity (PPP)-based poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day declined moderately from 10.9% in 1996 to 8.2% in 2005. In 2005, the incidence of extreme poverty was fairly low compared with other regions.

Figure 24  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND OTHER REGIONS: POPULATION LIVING BELOW  
 THE PURCHASING POWER PARITY-BASED POVERTY LINE OF US\$ 1.25 PER DAY,  
 AROUND 1996, 2002 AND 2006<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of regional totals calculated by the World Bank, Povcal Net database [online] <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/povDuplic.html>.

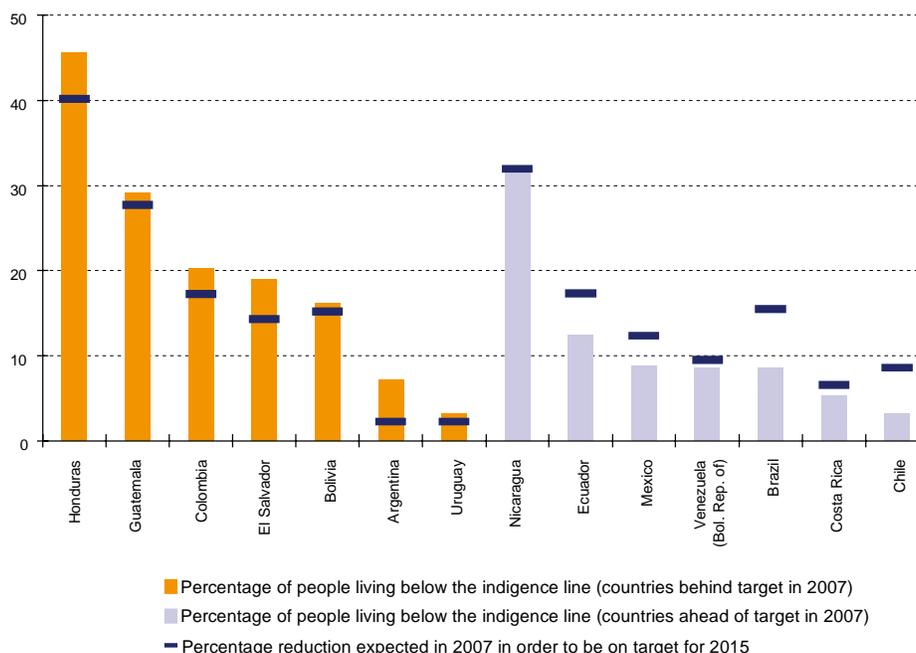
<sup>a</sup> The World Bank poverty line (US\$ 1.25 per day at 2005 purchasing power parity (PPP)) is the average of the national poverty lines of the 15 countries with the lowest per capita income and consumption rates in the world (Malawi, Mali, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Uganda, Gambia, Rwanda, Guinea Bissau, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Mozambique, Chad, Nepal and Ghana) and is higher than the one used by the Bank prior to 2005 (US\$ 1.08 per day at 1985 PPP).

<sup>b</sup> The following countries are included by the World Bank in the regional grouping of Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina (urban areas), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay (urban areas).

In the Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata, 2005), the participating governments stated their commitment to intensify efforts towards attaining the first target of the Millennium Development Goals, which is to halve the proportion of persons living in extreme poverty by 2015.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua have already surpassed this target. Meanwhile, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Uruguay have made less progress than expected.

Figure 25  
**LATIN AMERICA (14 COUNTRIES): PROGRESS TOWARDS THE FIRST TARGET OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, TO HALVE THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE INDIGENCE LINE, BETWEEN 1990 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2009.

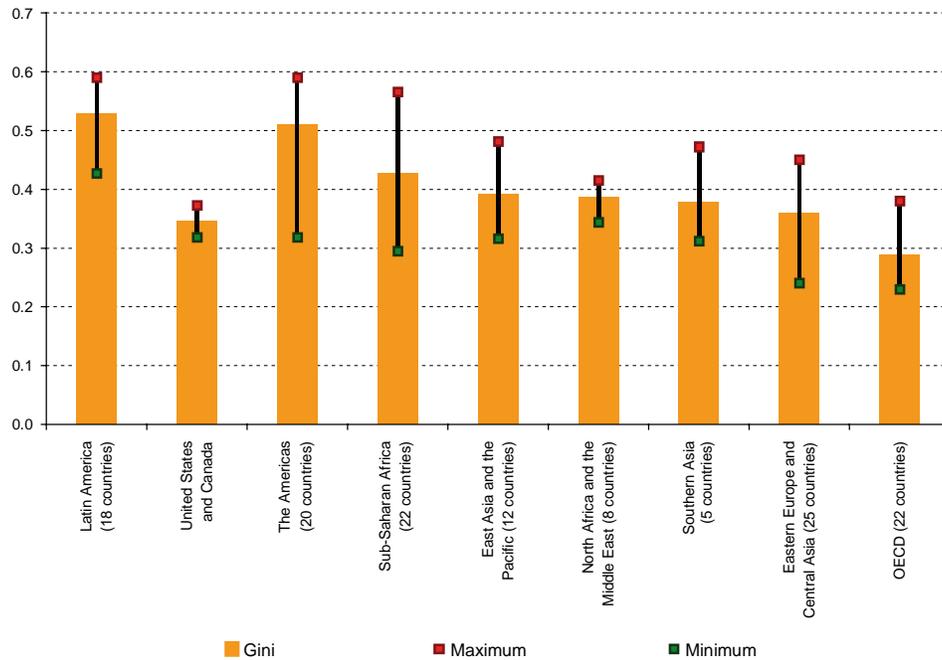
<sup>a</sup> To calculate the level of indigence that a country would need to have reached in 2007 in order to be on track to attain the target in 2015, the number of years in the period in question (1990-2007) was multiplied by the annual average reduction in poverty (in percentage points) needed to attain the target in 2015.

The Americas is the region with the worst income distribution in the world. In 2007, the Gini coefficient for the Americas was 0.51, above the level for sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and Asia-Pacific, North Africa and the Middle East, South Asia, Eastern Europe/Central Asia and the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The highly uneven distribution of income in the Americas overall is accounted for by the asymmetries in the Latin American countries. In 2007, the Gini coefficient in those countries averaged 0.53 and ranged from 0.59 to 0.43.

Income concentration in the United States and Canada is slightly higher than in the OECD countries as a whole (Gini coefficient of 0.345 compared with 0.289) and slightly lower than in Eastern Europe/Central Asia (Gini coefficient of 0.359).

Figure 26  
**THE AMERICAS AND OTHER REGIONS: GINI COEFFICIENT, AROUND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Values between 0 and 1)*

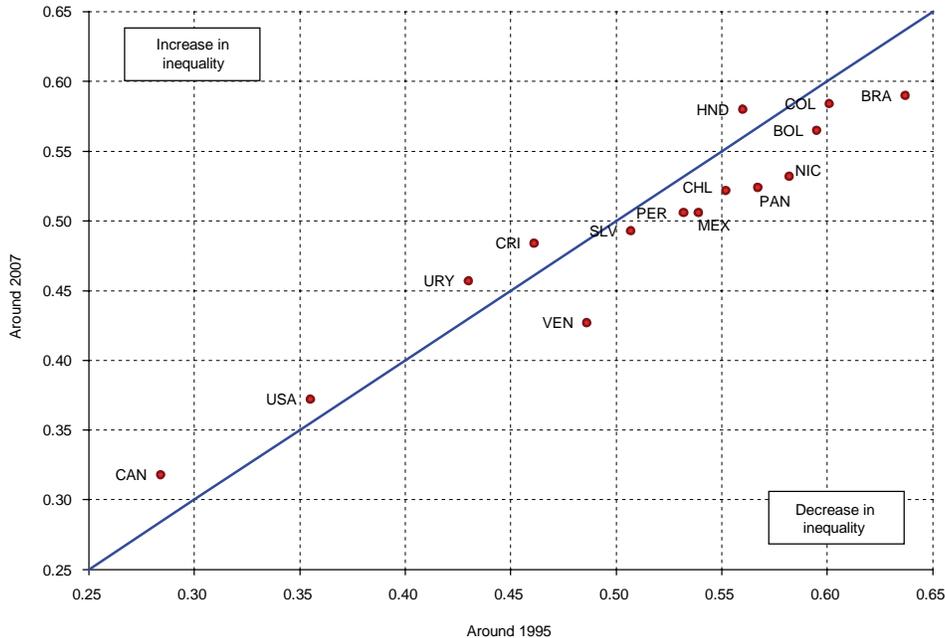


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries; Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Key Figures [online] <http://www.lisproject.org/keyfigures.html>; World Income Inequality Database (WIID) [online] [http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/Database/en\\_GB/database/](http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/Database/en_GB/database/).

<sup>a</sup> The regional figures are simple averages of the most recent observations in each country in 2000-2006. Given the differences in the data sources, the figures are not wholly comparable and serve only as points of reference. Latin America includes: Argentina, urban areas (2006), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2007), Bolivia (2007), Brazil (2007), Chile (2006), Colombia (2005), Costa Rica (2007), Dominican Republic (2007), Ecuador (2005), El Salvador (2005), Guatemala (2006), Honduras (2007), Mexico (2006), Nicaragua (2005), Panama (2007), Paraguay (2007), Peru (2003) and Uruguay, urban areas (2007). The data for the United States and Canada correspond to 2004. The OECD estimate does not include figures for the United States or Canada.

Inequality of income distribution decreased between 1995 and 2007 in 10 countries in the Americas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru) and increased in five (Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, United States and Uruguay).

Figure 27  
**THE AMERICAS (15 COUNTRIES): INCOME INEQUALITY, 1995-2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Gini coefficients, values between 0 and 1)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries; Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Key Figures [online] <http://www.lisproject.org/keyfigures.html> [date of reference: March 2009].

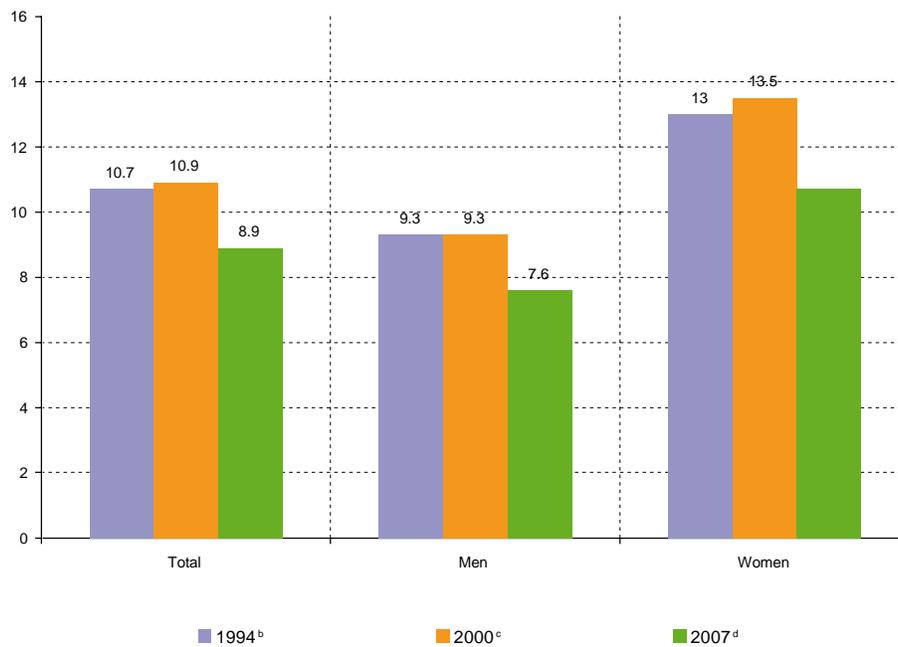
<sup>a</sup> Data for the Latin American countries are calculated on the basis of per capita income distribution in each country. Data includes people with zero income. Data for Uruguay correspond to urban areas.

## V. EMPLOYMENT

Employment increased and open unemployment decreased in the Americas between 2000 and 2008. Unemployment levels remained high and informal employment widespread, however. Wage gaps persisted as well, and a substantial portion of workers were still excluded from contributory social protection schemes. The international economic crisis, the effects of which began to make themselves felt towards the end of 2008, is meanwhile making it increasingly important for governments to redouble their efforts to protect both the quality and the quantity of jobs in their countries.

During the economic boom period of 2000-2007, unemployment in the countries of the Americas fell significantly from 10.9% in 2000 to 8.9% in 2007. In 2007, unemployment continued to be higher among women than men (10.7% and 7.6%, respectively) even though the drop in unemployment during the period had been relatively larger for women (20%) than for men (18%).

Figure 28  
**THE AMERICAS (35 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): UNEMPLOYMENT, TOTAL AND BY SEX,**  
**AROUND 1994, 2000 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages, simple averages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA [online database] <http://laborsta.ilo.org/default.html>.

<sup>a</sup> For Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay, figures refer to the population aged 10 and over; for Costa Rica, to the population aged 12 and over; for Belize, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, to the population aged 14 and over; for Anguilla, Bahamas, Canada, Cayman Islands, Chile, Barbados, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, to the population aged 15 and over; for the United States Virgin Islands, to the population aged between 16 and 65; and for Puerto Rico and the United States, to the population aged 16 and over. The data for Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay correspond to urban areas (pre-1996 values for Argentina are for Greater Buenos Aires). The data for Uruguay correspond to pre-2006 figures for urban areas. The data for Canada do not include people living in indigenous territories or on reservations. The data for Brazil are pre-2003 figures and do not include the rural populations of Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará and Amapá.

<sup>b</sup> The figures for 2004 do not include data for Anguilla, Colombia, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Guatemala or Nicaragua.

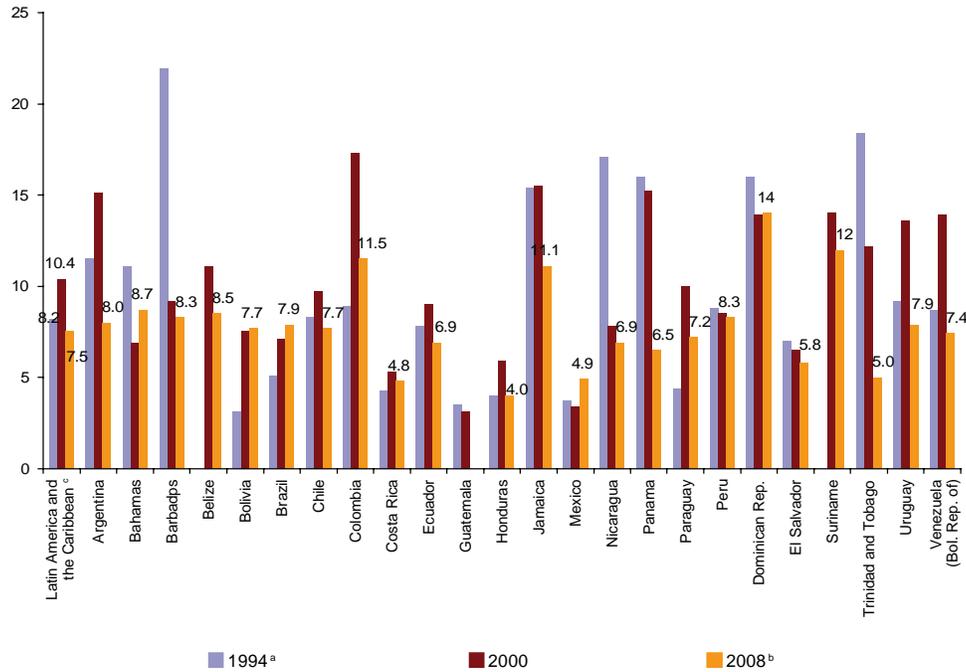
<sup>c</sup> The figures for 2000 do not include data for the Cayman Islands or the United States Virgin Islands.

<sup>d</sup> The figures for 2007 do not include data for the British Virgin Islands, Dominica or Suriname.

The evolution of the open unemployment rate in urban areas confirms the trend described above. Between 2000 and 2008, open unemployment in Latin America and the Caribbean fell from 10.4% to 7.5% (simple averages).

Between 2000 and 2008, open unemployment fell in 18 countries and rose in only five. The largest drops in absolute terms were recorded, in descending order, in Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia and Uruguay.

Figure 29  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (24 COUNTRIES): AVERAGE ANNUAL OPEN UNEMPLOYMENT, 1994, 2000 AND 2008**  
*(Annual average rates)*

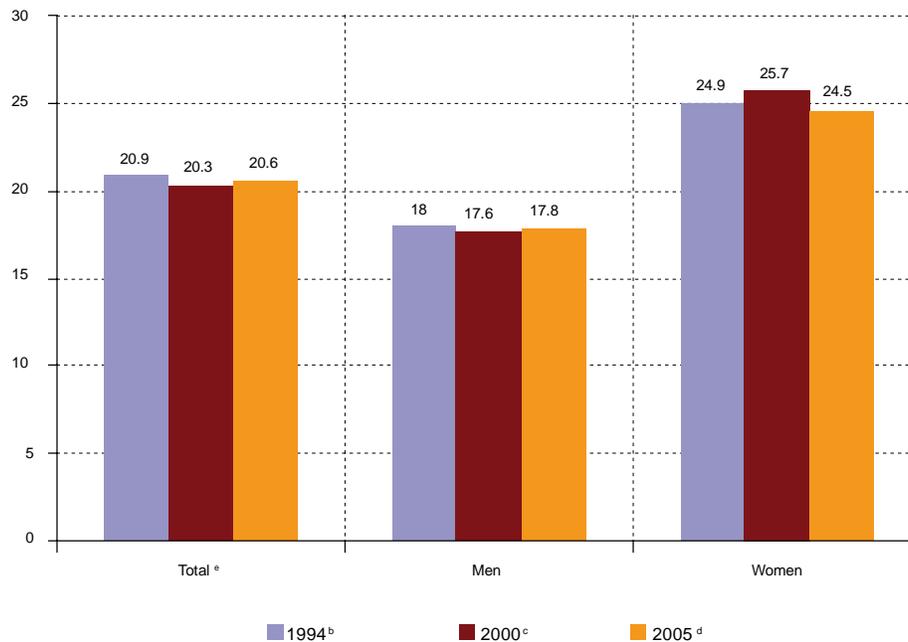


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of CEPALSTAT [online database] <http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idAplicacion=1>.

- <sup>a</sup> The figures for 1994 do not include data for Belize or Suriname.  
<sup>b</sup> The figures for 2008 do not include data for Guatemala.  
<sup>c</sup> The average for Latin America and the Caribbean includes Cuba.

Between 1994 and 2005, youth unemployment, measured as a simple average, remained above 20% in the Americas. For young men, the rate fell slightly from 18% in 1994 to 17.8% in 2005, while for young women it dropped from 24.9% to 24.5% in the same period. Female youth unemployment was about 25% and male youth unemployment about 18% in all three years examined.

Figure 30  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (31 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, TOTAL AND BY SEX, AROUND 1994, 2000 AND 2005<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Simple averages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA [online database] <http://laborsta.ilo.org/default.html>.

<sup>a</sup> Data for Anguilla, Argentina (1994 and 2000, Greater Buenos Aires; 2005, urban areas), Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia (1994 and 2000, urban areas), Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador (urban areas), El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua (1994 and 2000, urban areas), Panama, Paraguay (1994, urban areas), Peru, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay (14-24-year-olds, urban areas).

<sup>b</sup> The figures for 1994 do not include data on Anguilla, Guyana or Haiti.

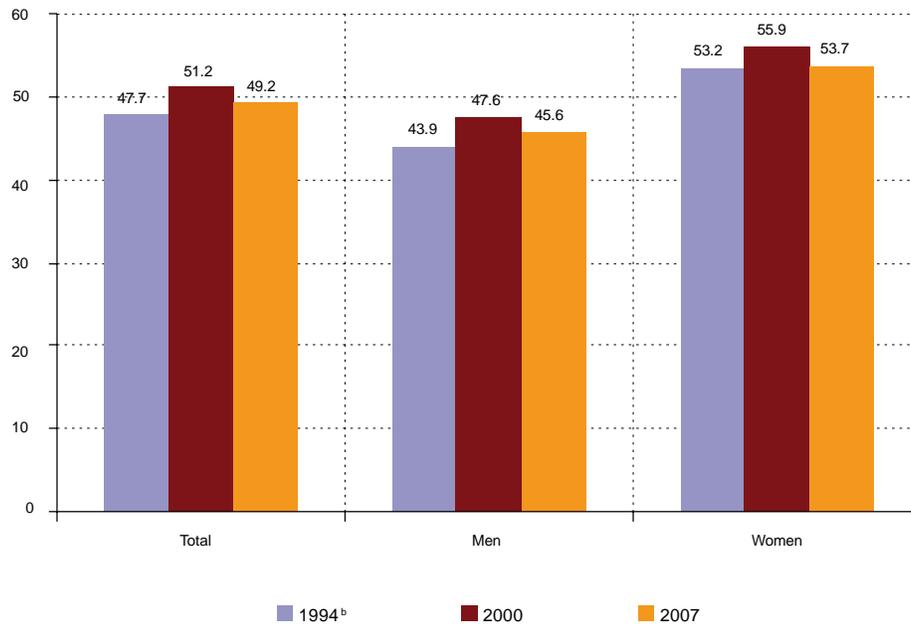
<sup>c</sup> The figures for 2000 do not include data on Aruba, Bolivia or Colombia.

<sup>d</sup> The figures for 2005 do not include data on Anguilla, Aruba, Belize, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Netherlands Antilles, Paraguay, Suriname or Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>e</sup> This indicator was generally calculated for the population aged 15-24 years. The 1994 figures for Belize, Jamaica and Peru and the 2000 figures for Suriname and Uruguay were calculated for the population aged 14-24 years, and the figures for Puerto Rico were calculated for the population aged 16-24 years.

Job quality continues to be a challenge for the developing countries in the Americas. In Latin America, for example, about 50% of jobs in the three years examined were in the informal sector. In 1994, 2000 and 2007, a higher proportion of women than men were employed in low-productivity jobs.

Figure 31  
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES): PEOPLE EMPLOYED IN LOW-PRODUCTIVITY SECTORS,**  
**AROUND 1994, 2000 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Simple averages)*



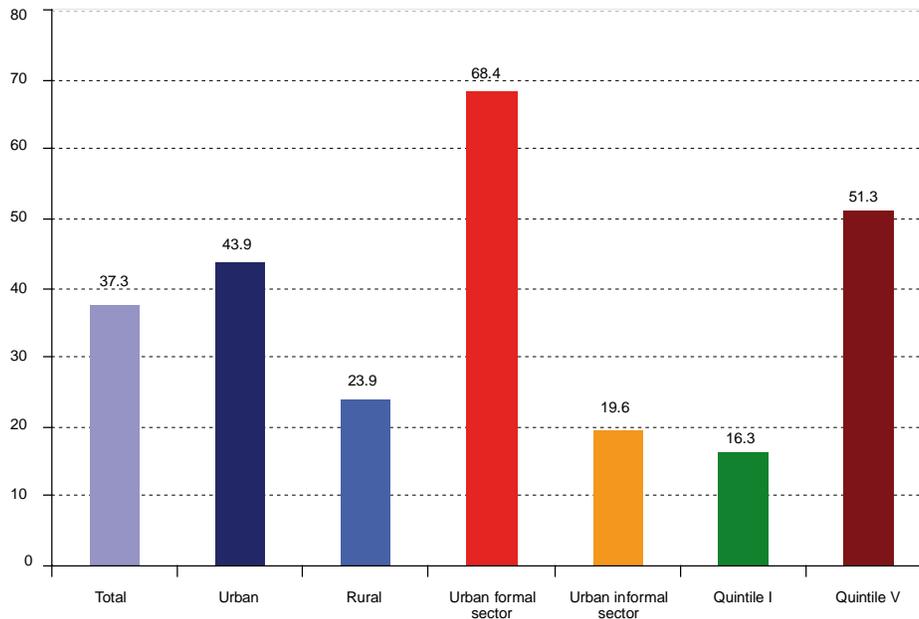
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of CEPALSTAT [online database] <http://websie.eclac.cl/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idAplicacion=1>.

<sup>a</sup> Includes Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

<sup>b</sup> Does not include data on the Dominican Republic or Guatemala.

The high incidence of informal employment explains the low level of access to contributory social protection schemes. In Latin America, only 37.3% of the employed population was registered with the social security system in 2006. Social protection is particularly low among the poorest segments of the population, people living in rural areas and urban employed in the informal sector.

Figure 32  
**LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES): EMPLOYED PERSONS REGISTERED WITH SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS, AROUND 2006<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages, simple averages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2008* (LC/G.2402-P), Santiago, Chile, 2008.

<sup>a</sup> Includes data on Argentina (2006, urban areas), Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2006), Bolivia (2004), Brazil (2006), Chile (2006), Costa Rica (2006), Dominican Republic (2006), Ecuador (2006), El Salvador (2004), Guatemala (2004), Honduras (2006), Mexico (2006), Nicaragua (2005), Panama (2007), Paraguay (2005), Peru (2003) and Uruguay (2005, urban areas). Data corresponds to wage-earners in the case of Argentina and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The international economic crisis, which began in the United States at the end of 2007 and whose effects began to make themselves felt towards the end of 2008, is threatening both the quality and the quantity of employment. In the United States, 5 million people have joined the ranks of the unemployed in the last 12 months. The non-agricultural unemployment rate reached 8.1% in February 2009, and 851,000 people lost their jobs in that month alone.

Ethnic minorities, such as the Afro-American and Hispanic communities, have been the worst affected by the increase in unemployment in the United States. This has worrying implications, not only for the standard of living of these groups, but also regarding the possible repercussions in the other countries of the Americas.

## VI. EDUCATION

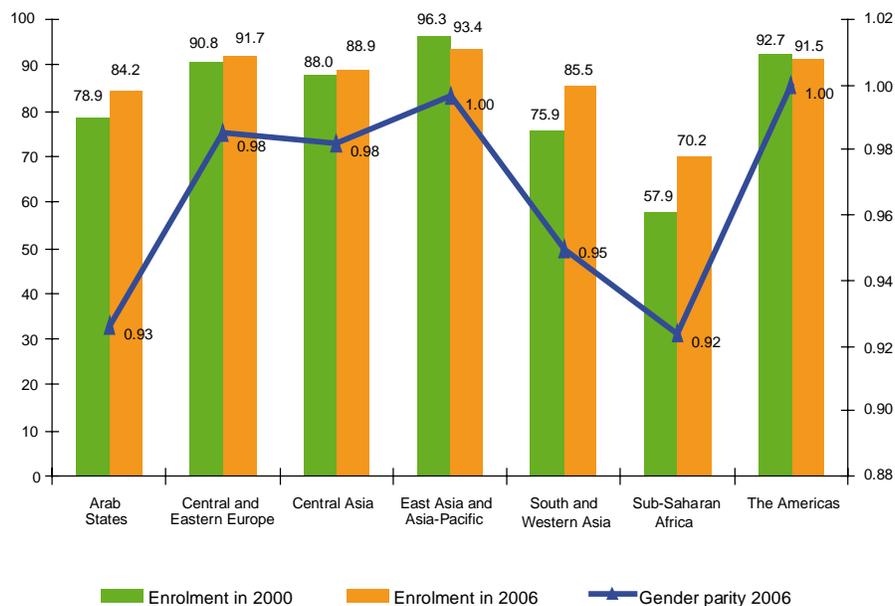
The countries of the Americas have made strides in providing universal primary education, but efforts are still needed to increase access to, and completion of, secondary education (which is not compulsory in several countries) and to expand coverage of preschool education. Major quality and equity challenges

also remain. A large proportion of children in several countries participating in the Summit of the Americas show learning levels below international standards, and there are still large education gaps associated with socio-economic situation, ethnic origin and area of residence, among other factors.

In 2006, the net enrolment rate in primary education in the Americas averaged 91.5%, very close to the rates recorded in Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia and Asia-Pacific, and higher than the rates for Central Asia, the Arab States, South and Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

In the Americas, access to primary education in 2006 showed virtual gender parity, a situation equalled only in East Asia and Asia-Pacific. By contrast, in the rest of the developing regions, in 2006, boys enjoyed greater access to primary schooling than girls.

Figure 33  
**SEVEN WORLD REGIONS: NET ENROLMENT RATE AND GENDER PARITY  
 IN PRIMARY EDUCATION, AROUND 2000 AND 2006.**  
*(Percentages, simple averages)*

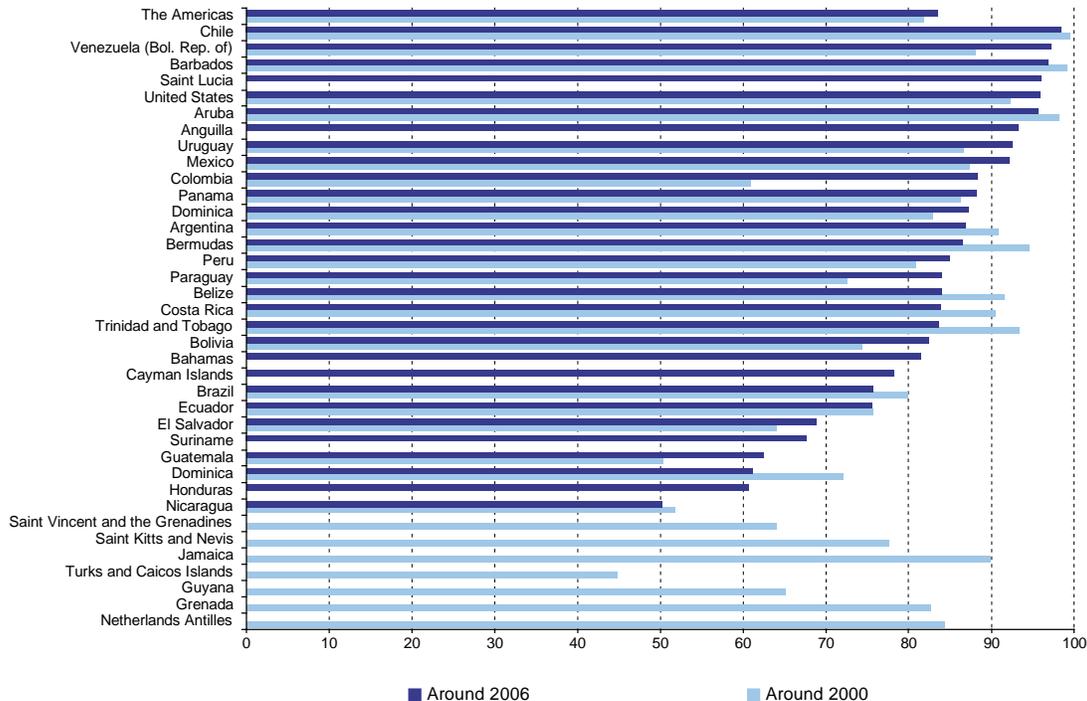


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from UNESCO Institute of Statistics [online] <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>.

With regard to the progression rate in primary education, in 2006, the Americas had a survival rate to the last year of primary schooling of 83.5%, slightly higher than the rate in 2000 (82.1%).

The situation varied considerably from one country to another, however: progression rates for primary schooling ranged from 98.4% in Chile to 50.2% in Nicaragua in 2006.

Figure 34  
**THE AMERICAS (37 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): SURVIVAL RATE TO  
 LAST GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL,<sup>a</sup> AROUND 2000 AND 2006**  
 (Percentages)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from UNESCO Institute of Statistics [online] <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>.

<sup>a</sup> This indicator shows the number of individuals in a cohort beginning the first grade of primary schooling who reach the last year of primary school, regardless of repetitions and of the number of years they take to do so. 1999 values for Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Netherlands Antilles and the United States; 2001 values for Bermuda; 2003 values for Chile; 2004 for Anguilla, Argentina, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Paraguay, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago; 2005 for the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay and the United States. The values for the Americas are simple averages and include only those countries that had data for both years.

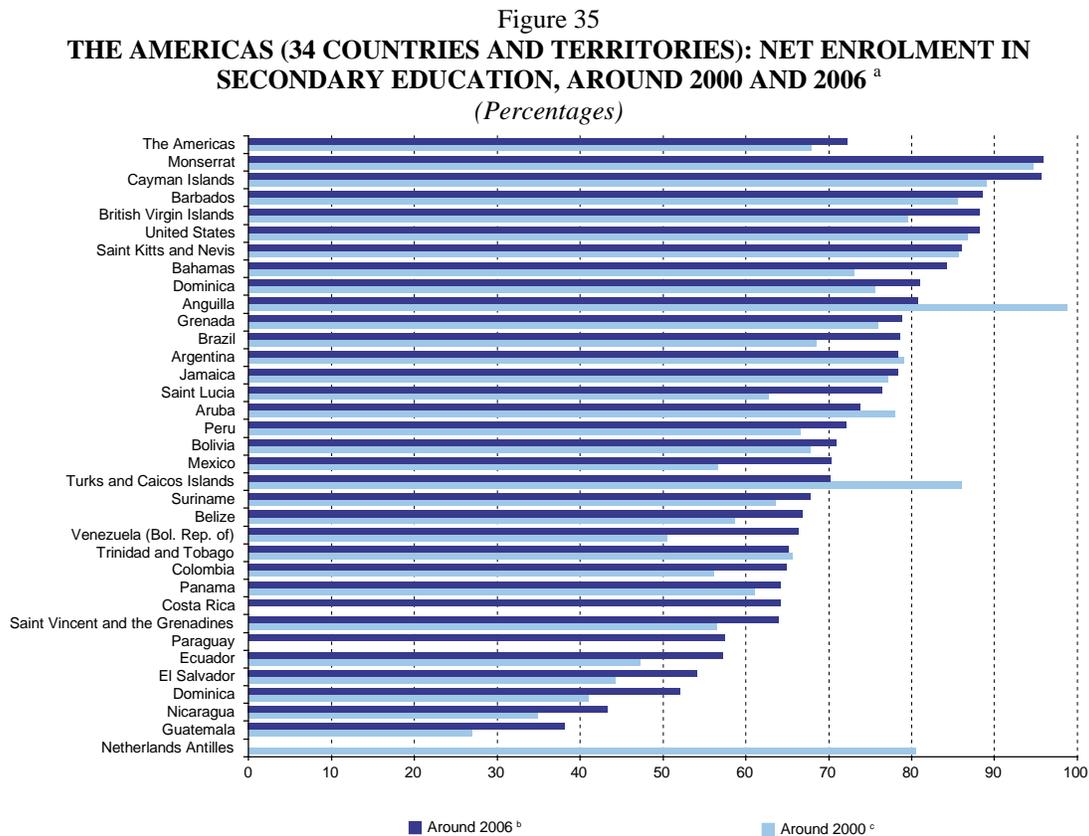
The obstacles to progression have not prevented an improvement in rates of primary completion. In 2005, this rate was 91.9% for 18 Latin American countries, well above the 1990 figure of 79.4%.

The high levels of primary completion in the countries of the Americas have been reflected in an increase in literacy rates in the population aged 15 to 24. A comparison of simple averages of youth literacy in the Americas shows an increase from 90.9% in 1990 to 94.3% in 2000, then to 95.3% in 2007. In addition, rates of youth literacy in the Americas showed gender parity in 2007.

The countries of the Americas need to move ahead on access to secondary education. Although the net enrolment rate on the continent stood at a simple average of 72.3% in 2006, higher than the 2000 value (67.9%), it was below the levels of access to secondary schooling in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Be this as it may, levels of access to secondary schooling in the Americas are higher than those in other parts of the world, such as the Arab States, East Asia and Asia-Pacific. What is more, the Americas are closer to achieving gender parity in access to secondary education than the other regions examined.

The net enrolment rate rose in most countries in the Americas between 2000 and 2006. The situation varied considerably from country to country, however, with levels ranging from 95.8% in Montserrat to 38.1% in Guatemala.



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from UNESCO Institute of Statistics [online] <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>.

<sup>a</sup> This indicator is calculated on the basis of the number of individuals enrolled in secondary education who are officially of age to attend secondary school.

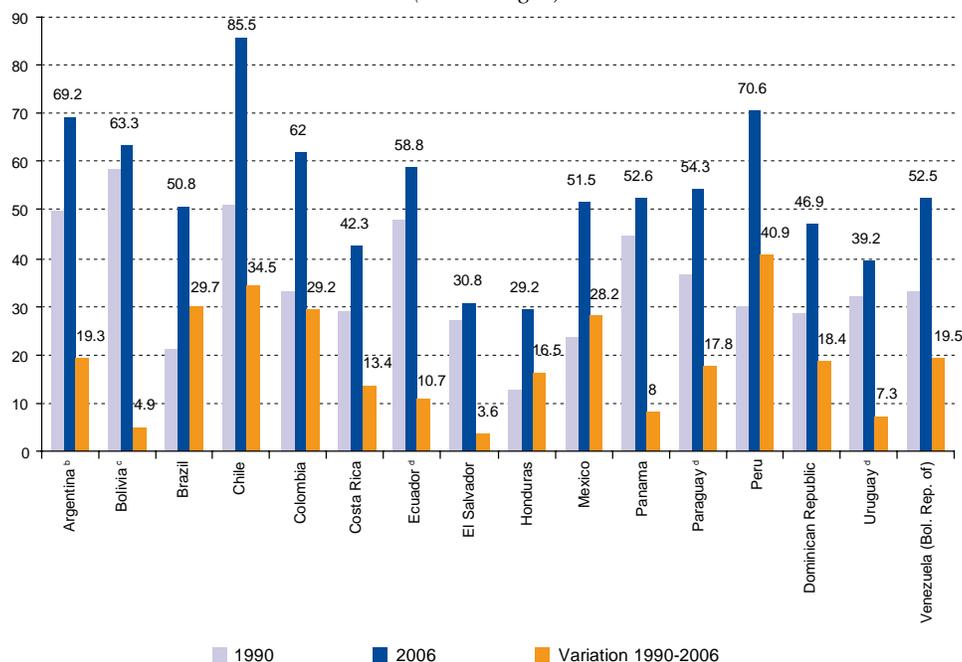
<sup>b</sup> 2001 values for Bolivia; 2002 values for Grenada and Montserrat;

<sup>c</sup> 2004 values for Montserrat; 2005 values for Anguilla, Argentina, Grenada, Turks and Caicos Islands, Jamaica, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Analysis of secondary completion rates in 2006 shows considerable variation from country to country, from 14.8% (Suriname) to 87.5% (United States). Eight countries of the Americas had secondary completion rates of under 50% in 2006, which highlights the need to redouble efforts to increase the schooling of the population.

In any case, the countries of the Americas have made progress as regards secondary completion in the last two decades: trends in this indicator for the 16 countries that had data series for 1990 and 2006 show completion percentages rising in all cases.

Figure 36  
**LATIN AMERICA (16 COUNTRIES): COMPLETION RATES for SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE POPULATION AGED 20 TO 24 YEARS, AROUND 1990 AND 2006<sup>a</sup>**  
 (Percentages)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2007* (LC/G.2351-P), Santiago, Chile, 2007, and special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries.

<sup>a</sup> 1997 and 2005 values for Argentina; 1990 and 2005 values for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 1994 and 2004 values for Bolivia; 1990 and 2006 values for Brazil; 1990 and 2007 values for Chile and Costa Rica; 1991 and 2007 values for Colombia; 1997 and 2005 values for Dominican Republic; 1990 and 2005 values for Ecuador; 1995 and 2007 values for El Salvador; 1990 and 2007 values for Honduras; 1996 and 2007 values for Mexico; 1991 and 2005 values for Panama; 1994 and 2005 values for Paraguay; 1997 and 2007 values for Peru; and 1990 and 2005 values for Uruguay.

<sup>b</sup> Greater Buenos Aires.

<sup>c</sup> Eight major cities and El Alto.

<sup>d</sup> Urban areas.

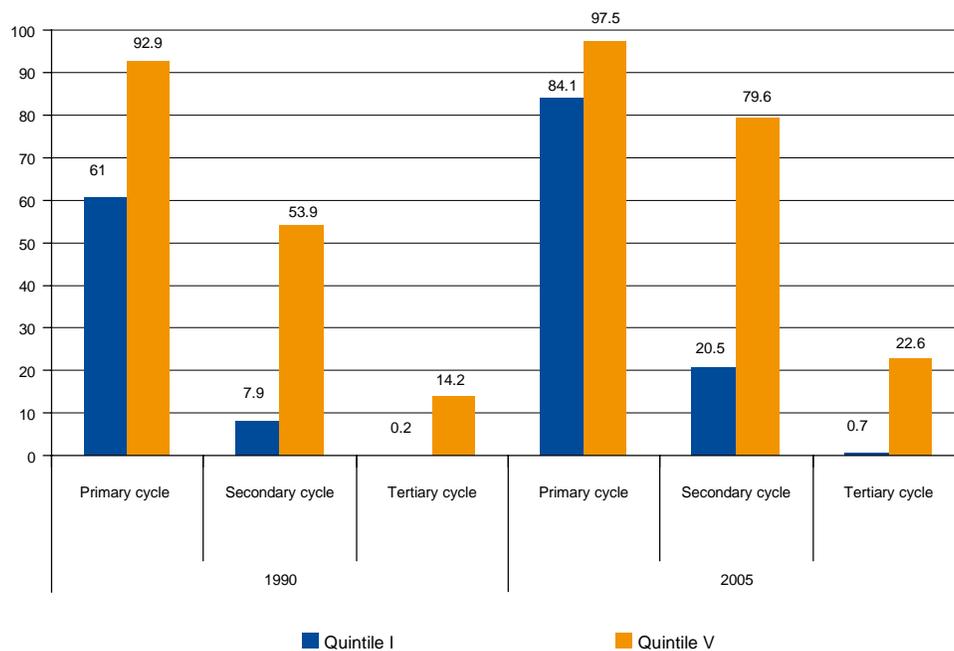
The challenges of schooling are not confined to secondary education. Another pending task is to increase access to preschool education, both because of the short- and long-term benefits associated with comprehensive care in early childhood and because of the opportunities it opens up for the region's poorest women to join the labour market.

In 2006, the enrolment rate among children at an age corresponding to the final year of preschool stood at 84.3% in the Americas (simple average); this was significantly higher than the 2000 figure of 72.9%, but still needs to be improved. Furthermore, these rates are likely to be lower in the earlier years of preschool.

The countries of the Americas should continue to move towards closing the socio-economic, ethnic and geographical gaps in access, progression and completion at the various levels of education.

Although socio-economic gaps in the completion of the various education cycles have narrowed in the past 15 years, in 2005 completion rates at the primary and, particularly, the secondary and tertiary levels were significantly lower among the poorest groups, indigenous peoples (especially indigenous women), Afro-descendants and the rural population.

Figure 37  
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): COMPLETION OF EDUCATION CYCLES  
 BY PER CAPITA INCOME QUINTILES, AROUND 1990 AND 2005<sup>a</sup>**  
 (Percentages)



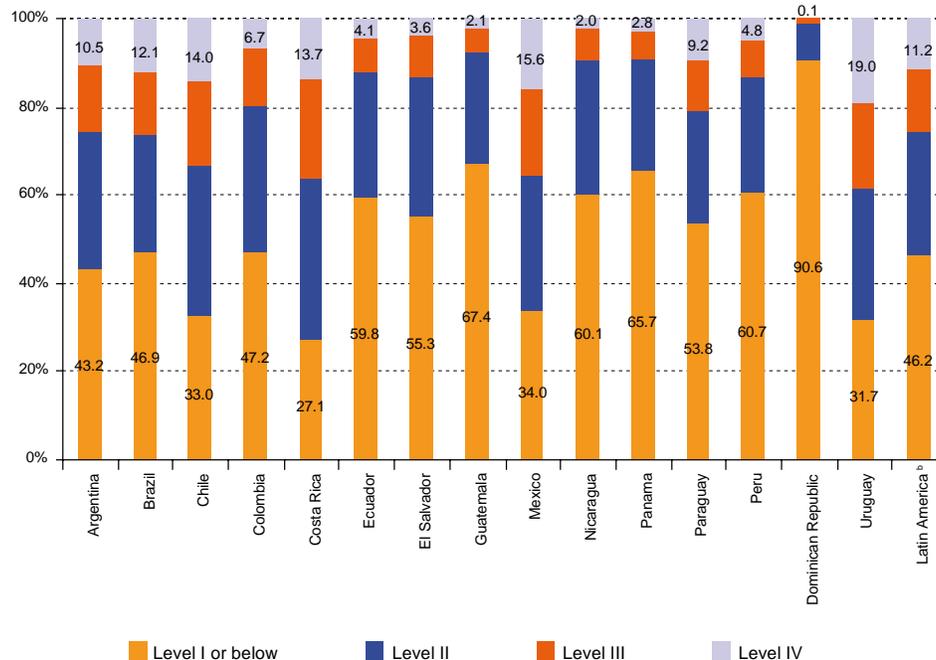
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2007* (LC/G.2351-P), Santiago, Chile, 2007

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of the population that has completed primary education is estimated for the population aged 15 to 19, the percentage of the population that has completed secondary education is estimated for the population aged 20 to 24, and the percentage of the population that has completed tertiary education is estimated for the population aged 25 to 29. The measure used for the completion of tertiary education was completion of at least five years of that cycle.

One of the major challenges facing many of the countries of the Americas is to improve the quality of education. Evidence systematically shows that the learning levels of students from the less developed countries on the American continent are lower than those attained by their counterparts in the developed countries. A significant portion of Latin American children in the first grades of primary school can give only a basic cognitive performance in mathematics, if that.

The learning gaps may be attributed to sharp differences in the quality of the education children receive and to the segmentation and segregation of education. Learning outcomes thus reproduce the gaps associated with socio-economic situation, ethnic origin and area of residence.

Figure 38  
**LATIN AMERICA (15 COUNTRIES): ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN MATHEMATICS OF CHILDREN  
 IN THE THIRD GRADE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL, 2006<sup>a</sup>**  
 (Percentages)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), *Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (SERCE). Los aprendizajes de los estudiantes de América Latina y el Caribe. Primer reporte*, Santiago, Chile, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>a</sup> The Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE) organizes achievement levels in order of the difficulty of cognitive processes. Level I students at most recognize basic numeric, geometric and information-handling concepts. Level II students can solve simple problems and recognize explicit facts, concepts and relationships. Level III students can solve simple problems and recognize implicit facts and concepts. Level IV students can solve complex problems.

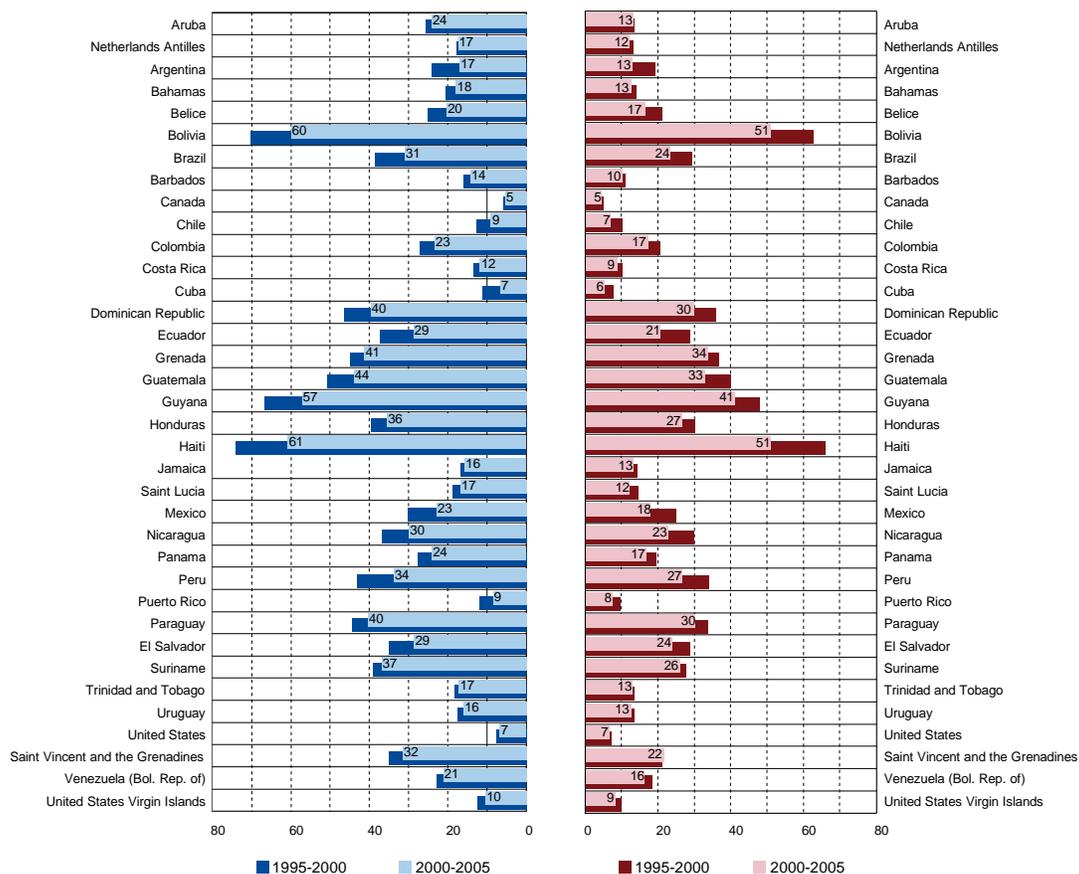
<sup>b</sup> Estimates for Latin America include Cuba.

## VII. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The expansion of sanitation services and maternal and child health care in urban areas, together with changes in people's behaviour, has helped lower child mortality in the Americas. In the poorest rural areas, however, there are still large gaps in access to basic sanitation and drinking water services, and new health problems are arising in connection with changes in the population structure and morbidity profiles. The Americas produce enough food to satisfy the nutritional needs of the population, but access problems and child undernutrition are still unresolved challenges.

In 1995-2000 and 2000-2005, male child mortality rates fell throughout the Americas. Female child mortality rates behaved almost identically. The rates varied considerably from one country to another, however: in 2000-2007 male child mortality rates, for example, ranged from 60.8 deaths per 1,000 live births (Haiti) to 5.4 per 1,000 live births (Canada), while female child mortality rates ranged from 51 deaths per 1,000 live births (Haiti) to 4.6 deaths per 1,000 live births (Canada).

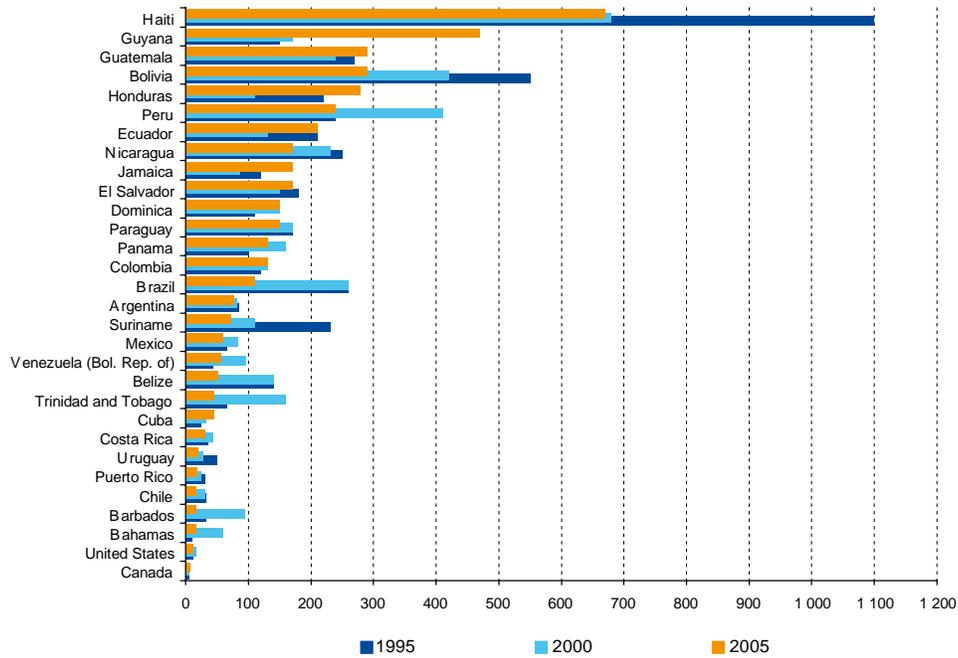
Figure 39  
**THE AMERICAS (36 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): CHILD MORTALITY, BY SEX**  
*(Per 1,000 live births)*



**Source:** United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects, 2006 Revision [population database]; Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC, Population database, 2006 revision.

Maternal mortality fell in 17 countries of the Americas between 1995 and 2005 and increased in 10. In absolute terms, the largest increases were reported in Guyana, Honduras and Jamaica, while the largest decreases were observed in Haiti, Bolivia, Suriname and Brazil.

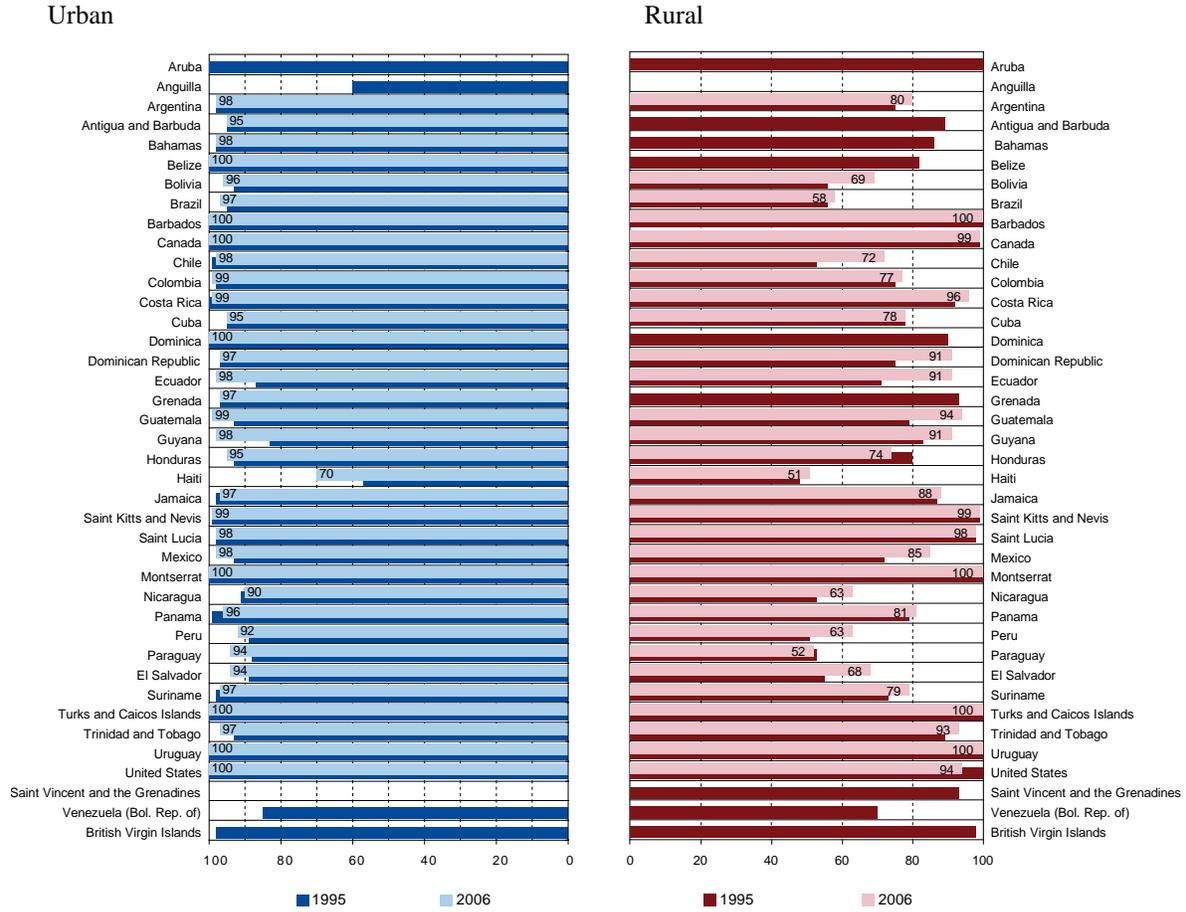
Figure 40  
**THE AMERICAS (30 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES) MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE**  
*(Per 100,000 live births)*



**Source:** World Health Organization (WHO), maternal mortality estimates 2000 and 2005; United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Goals Indicators [online] <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx>.

Although in 2006 there was virtual parity in access to drinking water in some of the countries of the Americas, in others there were sharp asymmetries between one residential area and another. In 2006, the largest differences between urban and rural areas were observed in Brazil, Paraguay, Peru and Nicaragua.

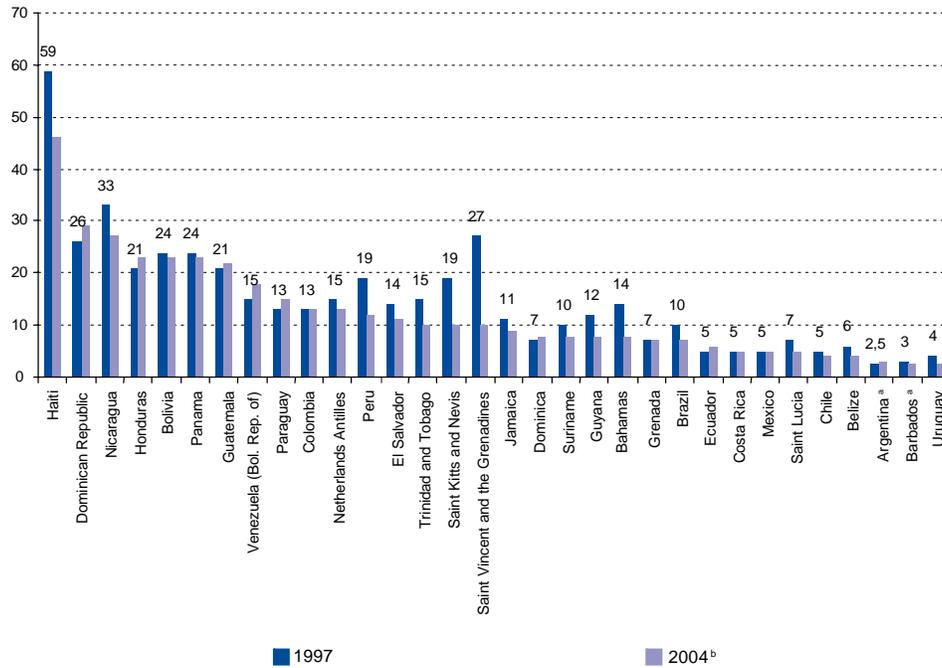
Figure 41  
**THE AMERICAS (40 COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES): POPULATION WITH REGULAR ACCESS TO AN IMPROVED DRINKING WATER SOURCE, RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, 1995 AND 2006**  
*(Percentages of the total population)*



Source: World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Joint Monitoring Programme for the Water and Sanitation Sector.

The percentage of the population whose minimum dietary energy requirements were not being met fell between 1997 and 2004 in most countries of the Americas. Nevertheless, in seven countries (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, Bolivia, Panama and Guatemala) the proportion was above 20% in 2004.

Figure 42  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (32 COUNTRIES): POPULATION WHOSE MINIMUM  
 DIETARY ENERGY REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT BEING MET, AROUND 1997 AND 2004**  
*(Percentages)*



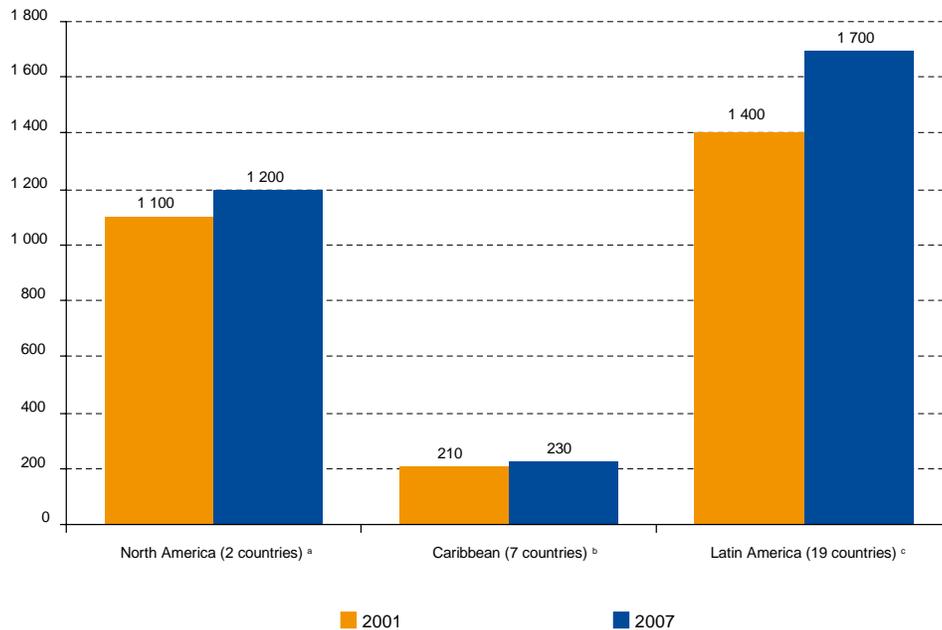
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Food Security Statistics [online] [http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/faostat/foodsecurity/index_en.htm).

<sup>a</sup> Undernutrition is less than 2.5% in these countries, but the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) uses a classification of 2.5% or less.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary estimate.

HIV/AIDS levels remained relatively constant between 2001 and 2007 in all the countries of the Americas, but the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS rose by 100,000 in the United States and Canada, 20,000 in the Caribbean and 300,000 in Latin America.

Figure 43  
**THE AMERICAS: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS, 2001 AND 2007**  
*(Thousands of persons)*



**Source:** Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic [online] [http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008\\_Global\\_report.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008_Global_report.asp).

<sup>a</sup> Canada and the United States.

<sup>b</sup> Includes the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>c</sup> Includes Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay.

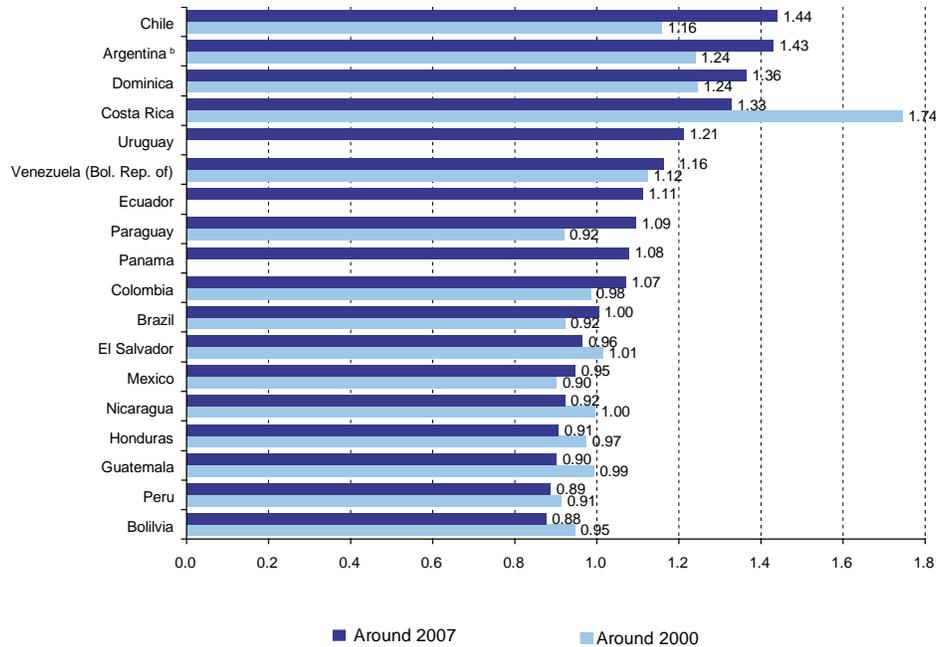
## VIII. GENDER EQUITY

Despite progress made in some aspects of gender parity, substantial obstacles still constrain the empowerment of women in the Americas, which prevents them from fully enjoying equal rights. Countries need to join forces to empower women in terms of their economic, physical and decision-making autonomy.

Up to 2007, in 10 of 18 countries in the Americas for which gender-disaggregated data were available, households headed by women were poorer than households headed by men. The largest gaps were recorded in Chile, Argentina and the Dominican Republic.

The simple average of the gender parity index rose from 1.02 in 2000 to 1.09 in 2007, reflecting a worsening of the situation of women. The gap widened the most in Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic and Paraguay.

Figure 44  
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): POVERTY BY GENDER OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD, PARITY INDEX, AROUND 2000 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**



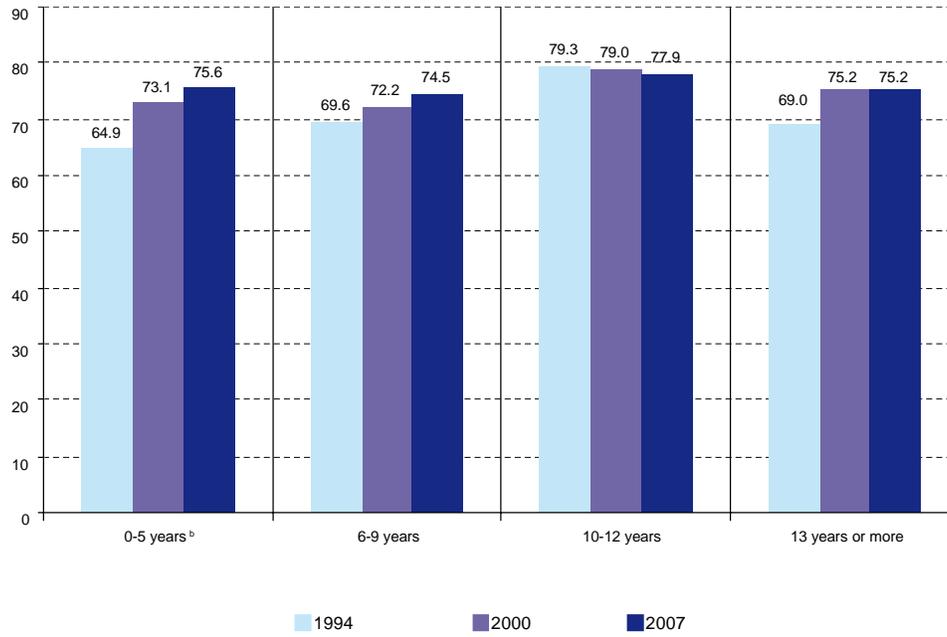
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries.

<sup>a</sup> The parity index is the ratio between the percentage of poor households headed by women and the percentage of poor households headed by men. Values of more than 1 indicate a more unfavourable situation for women, and values of less than 1 indicate a more unfavourable situation for men.

<sup>b</sup> Urban areas.

Women's labour income continued to be lower than that of men for similar levels of education in 2007, although the gap had narrowed, especially among wage-earners with relatively fewer years of schooling.

Figure 45  
**LATIN AMERICA (18 COUNTRIES): RATIO BETWEEN MEN'S AND WOMEN'S URBAN WAGES, BY YEARS OF SCHOOLING, AROUND 1994, 2000 AND 2007<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages, simple averages)*



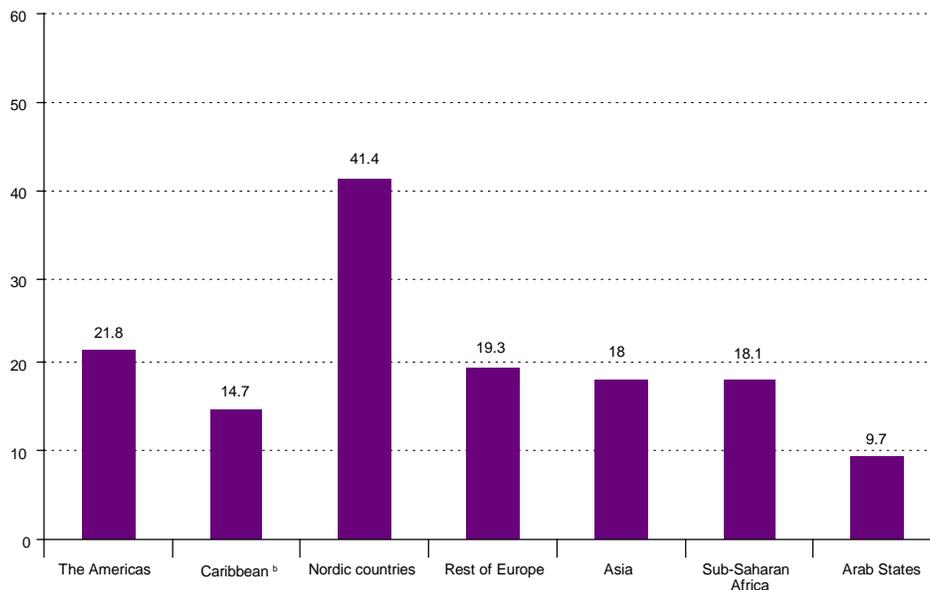
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the relevant countries.

<sup>a</sup> The indicator refers to wage-earners aged between 20 and 49 who work at least 35 hours per week. The percentage represents the relationship between women's and men's average wages. The data cover the following countries: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

<sup>b</sup> No data for Argentina (0-5 years of schooling) or Guatemala (6-9 years, 10-12 years and 13 years or more).

The percentage of parliamentary seats held by women provides an indication of the extent to which women participate in decision-making processes in their countries. The proportion of women in parliament in many of the countries of the Americas has increased in recent years, but the 2008 figure of 21.8% fell far short of the 41.4% seen in the Nordic countries.

Figure 46  
**THE AMERICAS AND OTHER REGIONS: PROPORTION OF  
 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS HELD BY WOMEN, 2008<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages, simple averages)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) [online] <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>.

<sup>a</sup> Refers to seats held in lower or single chambers

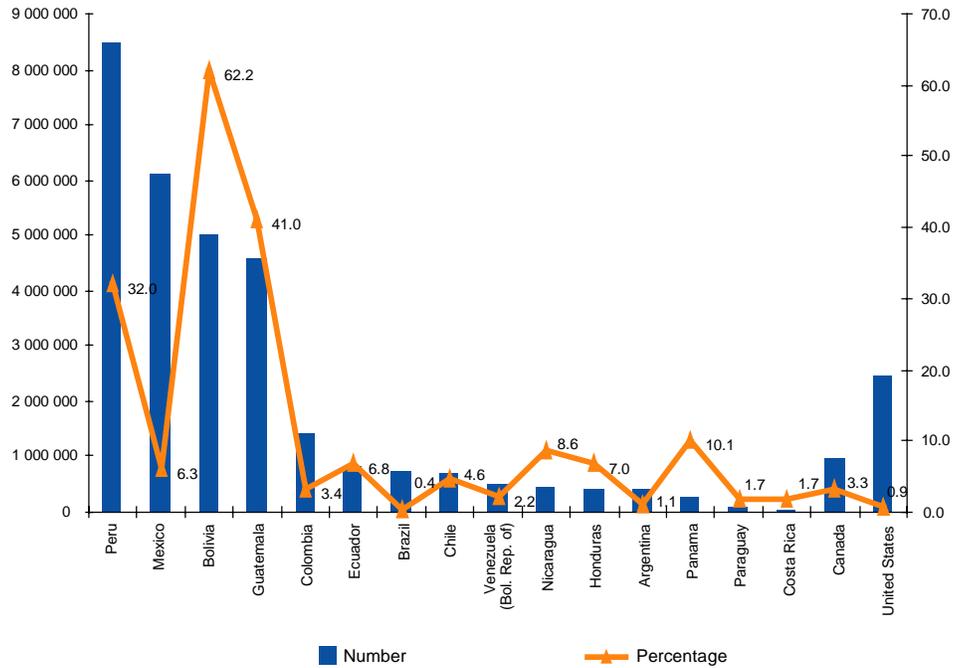
<sup>b</sup> Includes Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

## IX. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The countries of the Americas must forge ahead with efforts to generate opportunities for indigenous peoples and reduce the disadvantages they suffer, show respect for diversity and promote the social inclusion of these communities. Currently, indigenous peoples have higher mortality and fertility rates and lower levels of completion of primary education than non-indigenous populations; they also have to contend with the gender inequities that prevail.

Towards the year 2000, the population of indigenous peoples in Latin America and North America stood at 33,606,965 persons, of whom 72% (approximately 24 million) lived in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. In terms of their relative significance, persons of indigenous origin had a greater demographic weight in Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru and Panama, in that order.

Figure 47  
**LATIN AMERICA AND NORTH AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES): INDIGENOUS POPULATION BY COUNTRY, AROUND 2000<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages and numbers of persons)*

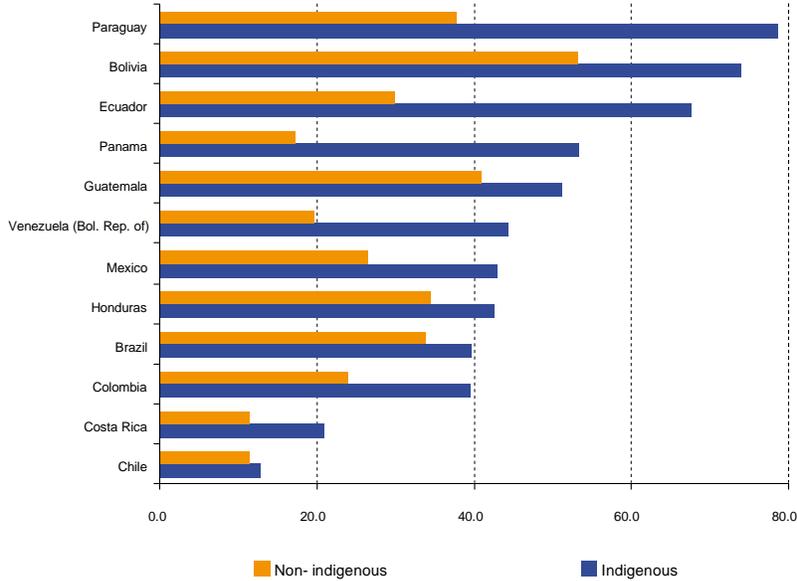


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2006* (LC/G.2326-P/I), Santiago, Chile, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2001 population census; United States Census Bureau, 2000 population census.

<sup>a</sup> Includes the United States and Canada.

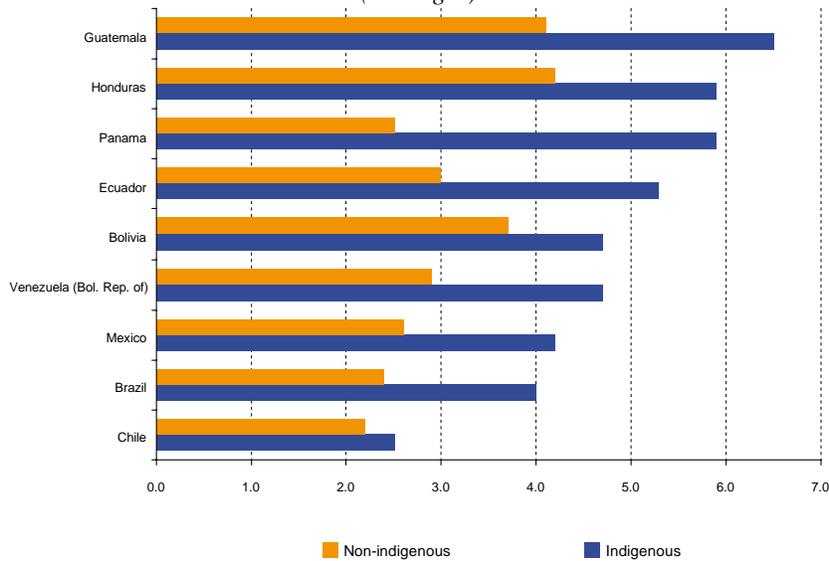
Indigenous populations have high fertility and child mortality rates (indeed; these rates are much higher than among the non-indigenous population). Their age structures are “young” or “very young”.

Figure 48  
**LATIN AMERICA (12 COUNTRIES): CHILD MORTALITY RATES OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS, 2000**  
*(Per 1,000 live births)*



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2006* (LC/G.2326-P/I), Santiago, Chile, 2006, on the basis of census data.

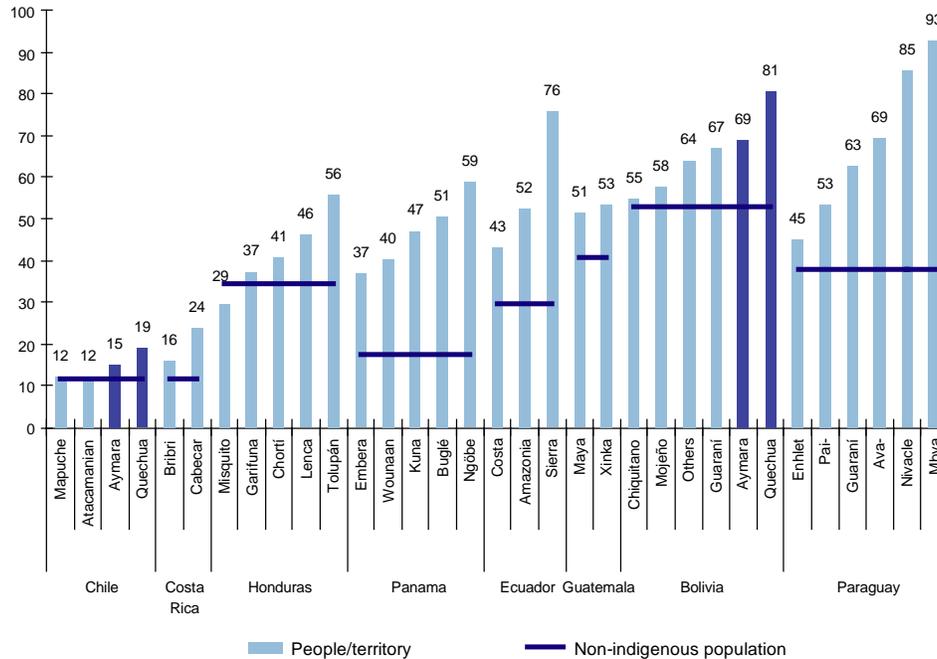
Figure 49  
**LATIN AMERICA (12 COUNTRIES): TOTAL FERTILITY RATES (TFR) OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS WOMEN, 2000<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Averages)*



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2006* (LC/G.2326-P/I), Santiago, Chile, 2006, on the basis of census data.

<sup>a</sup> The total fertility rate refers to the average number of children that would be born to a woman of a hypothetical cohort of women if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years [15-49] and bear children at each age in accordance with the prevailing age-specific fertility rates.

Figure 50  
**LATIN AMERICA (8 COUNTRIES): CHILD MORTALITY RATE AMONG  
 DIFFERENT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 2000**  
 (Per 1,000 live births)

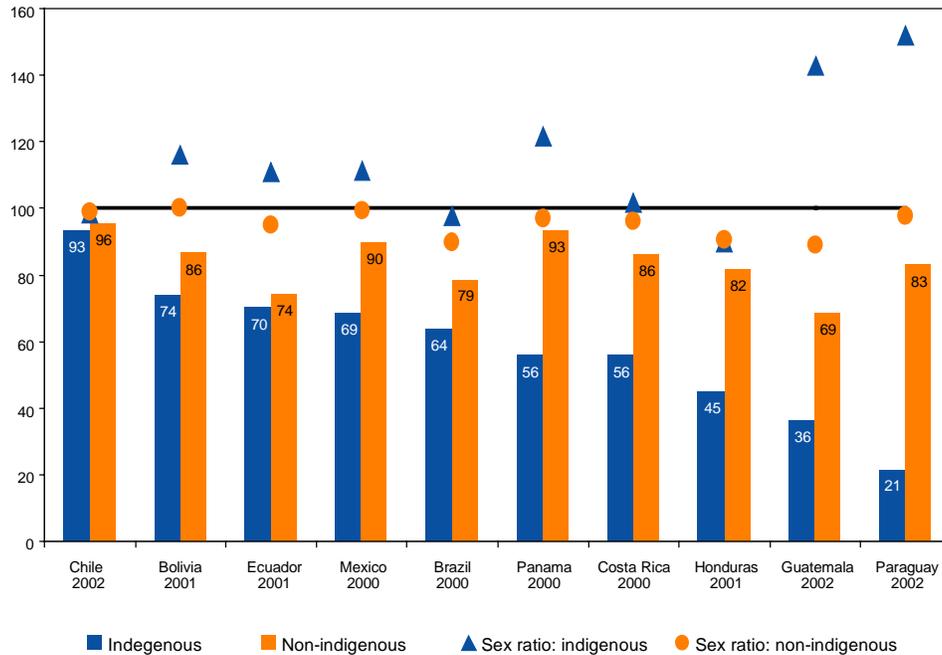


**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2006* (LC/G.2326-P/I), Santiago, Chile, 2006, on the basis of census data.

As regards completion of primary education by indigenous and non-indigenous populations in 10 Latin American countries, in all the groups studied, the levels observed are lower among populations identified as indigenous than among non-indigenous populations.

In addition, it should be noted that among indigenous peoples, men tend to have higher levels of completion of primary education than women, while the opposite is true in the non-indigenous population.

Figure 51  
**LATIN AMERICA (10 COUNTRIES): YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 TO 19 WHO HAVE COMPLETED  
 PRIMARY EDUCATION, BY ETHNIC STATUS AND SEX RATIO,  
 AROUND THE YEAR 2000**  
*(Percentages)*



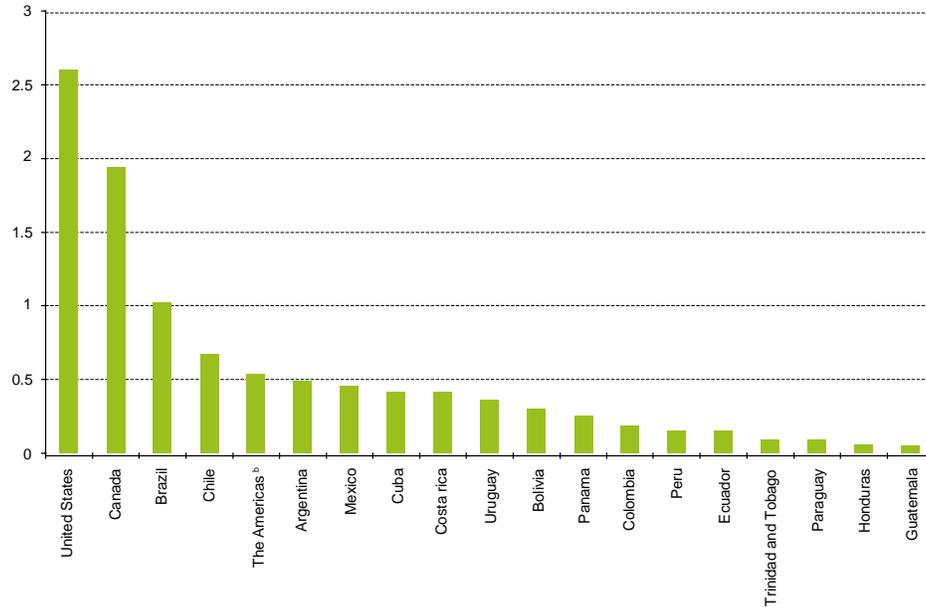
**Source:** F. Del Popolo and A.M. Oyarce, “América Latina, población indígena: perfil sociodemográfico en el marco de la Conferencia Internacional sobre la Población y el Desarrollo y de las metas del Milenio”, Notas de población, No. 79 (LC/G.2284-P), Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2005; and System of Sociodemographic Indicators for Indigenous Peoples and Populations of Latin America (SISPP).

## X. THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

### A. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Spending on research and development in the countries of the Americas averages 0.53% of GDP (2006), well below the figure for the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2.3% of GDP, 2008). These figures, however, conceal wide differences within the region. The figures for the more developed North American countries are similar to the average level for developed countries, and those for the rest of the region are lower.

Figure 52  
**THE AMERICAS: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SPENDING, 2006<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentage of GDP)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of information from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Ibero-American Network of Science and Technology Indicators (RICYT).

<sup>a</sup> Or last available year.

<sup>b</sup> Simple average.

There have been no significant changes in this indicator since the mid-1990s.

## B. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### 1. Expansion of mobile telephones

In line with the worldwide trend, growth in fixed-line telephone services has been sluggish since 2004; around 30% of the population now covered. In the area of voice communication, fixed-line technology is rapidly being replaced by mobile telephones. In late 2007 there were over 650 million mobile subscribers; this represented a penetration rate of 72% of the population, 2.3 times higher than the rate for fixed-line telephones.

Figure 53  
**THE AMERICAS: FIXED-LINE AND MOBILE TELEPHONE PENETRATION, 1994, 2000 AND 2007**  
*(Telephone lines per 100 inhabitants)*

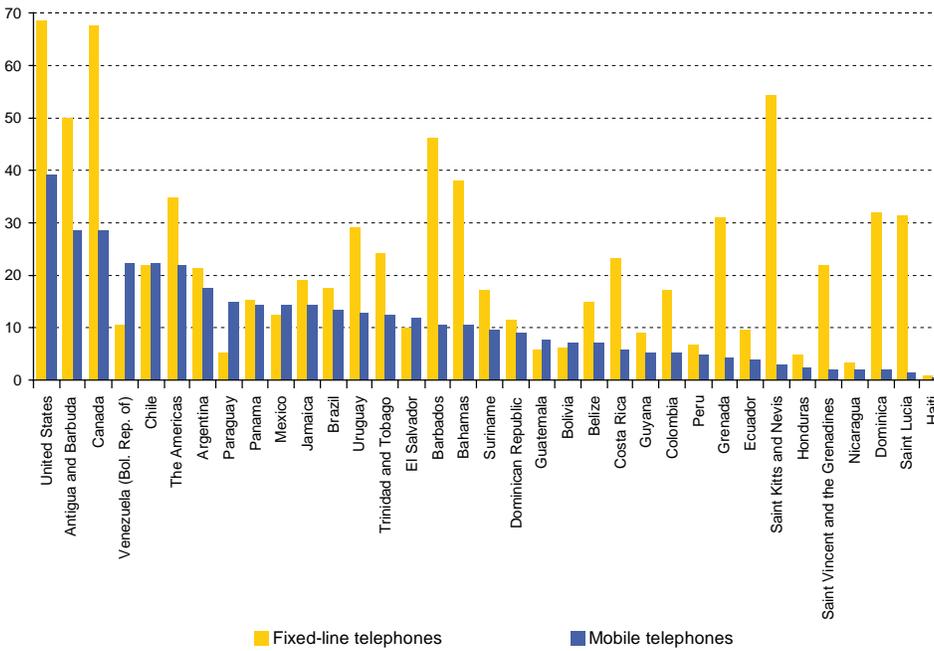
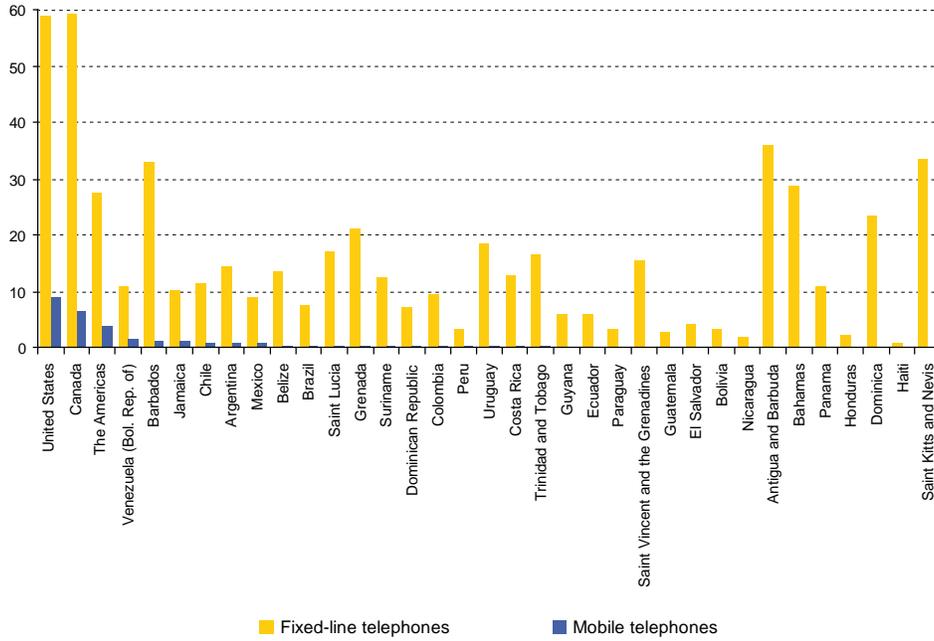
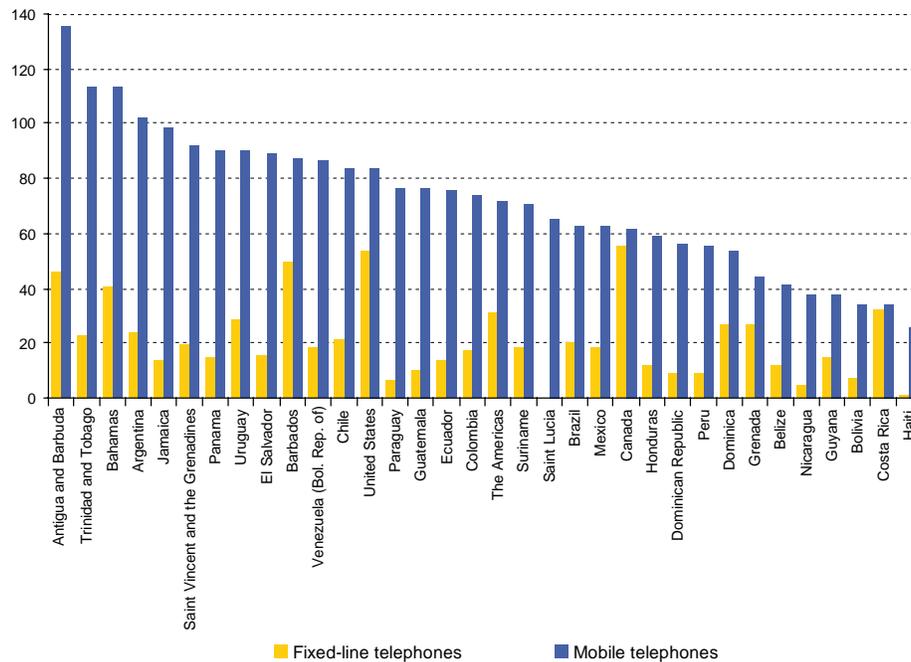


Figure 53 (concluded)



Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), *ICT Indicators*, 2007.

The highest levels of mobile telephone penetration in the region, exceeding 100%, are found in several Caribbean countries and Argentina, whereas the rates for Bolivia, Costa Rica and Haiti are below 35%; this illustrates the diversity of the region in terms of the adoption of mobile technology.

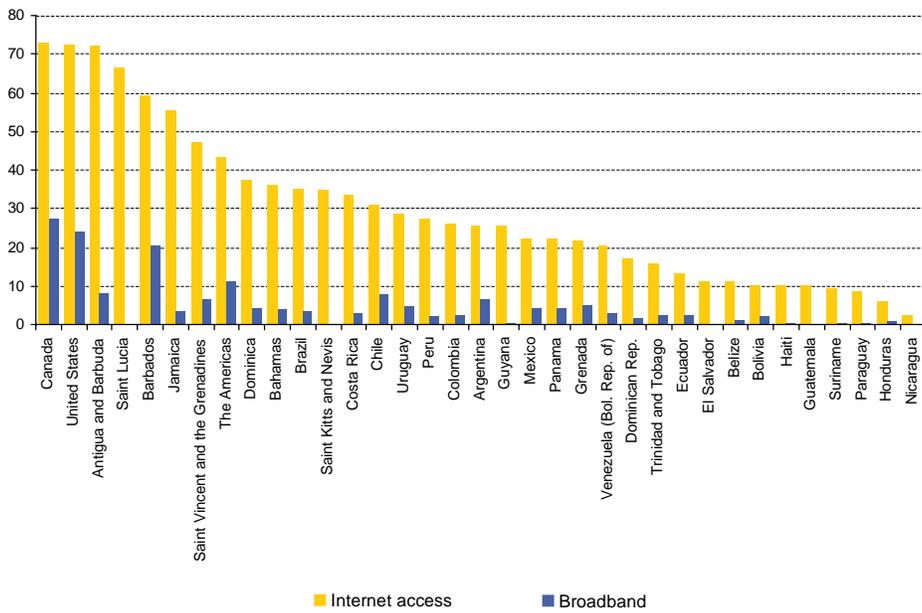
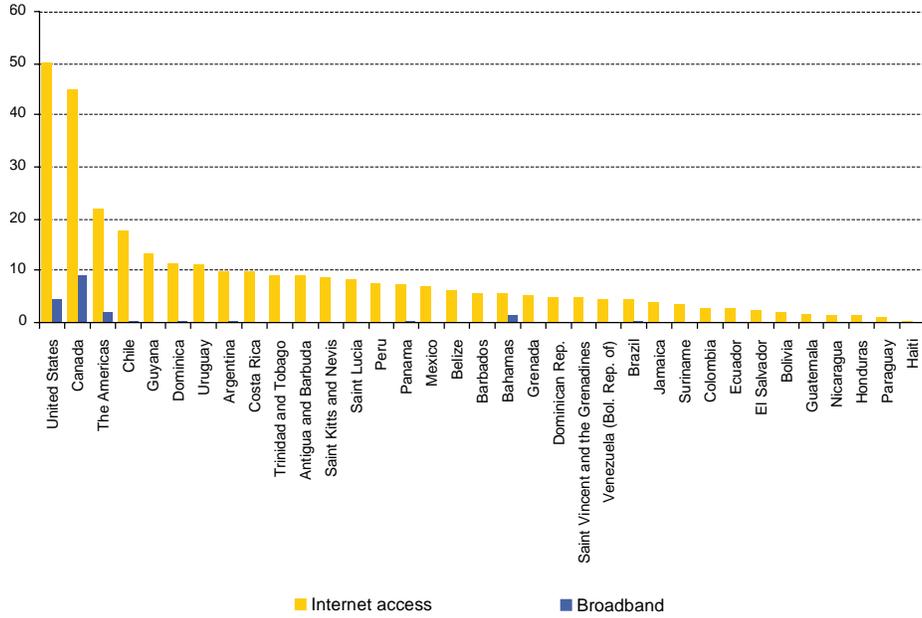
The expansion of this technology in the region is significant. In 2000, there were 21 subscribers per 100 inhabitants, but by 2007 the figure had risen to 72. There has also been a narrowing of the gap between the countries with the highest and lowest rates of penetration.

## 2. Internet access and broadband use

The penetration of Internet access in the Americas showed an upward trend from 2000 to 2007, with the numbers of users increasing from 19 to 43 per 100 inhabitants. The rate of growth of Internet use varies between the countries, but the gap has tended to narrow with the passage of time.

The penetration of broadband Internet services has grown even faster, although the absolute levels are lower, with an average increase for the Americas from 1.9 to 11.2 users per 100 inhabitants. The gaps between countries have also been narrowing in this area.

Figure 54  
**THE AMERICAS: INTERNET AND BROADBAND PENETRATION, 2001 AND 2007**  
*(Users per 100 inhabitants)*



Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), *ICT Indicators*, 2007.

## **XI. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY**

The main environmental problems facing North America are air and water pollution, uncontrolled urban sprawl and high consumption of electricity generated from fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup>

Latin America and the Caribbean, for its part, is facing an ever-increasing loss of biodiversity and forests, as well as overexploitation of the region's natural resources beyond its capacity for replenishment. This results in soil degradation and depletion of fish stocks. In addition, rapid and unbridled urbanization and persistently unsustainable patterns of production and consumption exacerbate problems such as excessive waste generation or worsening air pollution in cities, and augment the need for basic services in substandard housing settlements.

Throughout the continent, the panorama described above is compounded by the growing impact of climate change and the increase in the intensity and frequency of hurricanes, floods and landslides, which call for adaptation policies to assist the hardest hit territories and populations. Production trends in the mining, industrial and energy sectors also contribute to the problem by polluting surface water and damaging coastal ecosystems, thereby augmenting the region's environmental liabilities.

### **A. LOSS OF FOREST COVER AND SOIL DEGRADATION**

Forests provide crucial environmental services that are of tremendous ecological value (carbon sequestration, regulation of the water cycle, soil protection and conservation of biodiversity, among others). They also contain a variety of economically valuable goods. In 2005, the region of the Americas accounted for almost 40% of global forested areas, that is, approximately 1.526 billion hectares, in a land area that represented 30% of the world total. The distribution of forest areas among the countries in the region is as follows: 95% concentrated in 11 countries, of which eight are located in South America (51%), two in North America (40%), while Mexico accounts for 4%.

Sustainable exploitation of forest resources has not been achieved. Continuing overexploitation, together with the encroachment of areas under cultivation on forested areas, has led to a reduction in forest cover in the region. This trend is deeply disturbing since the region lost 65 million hectares of forest between 1990 and 2005.

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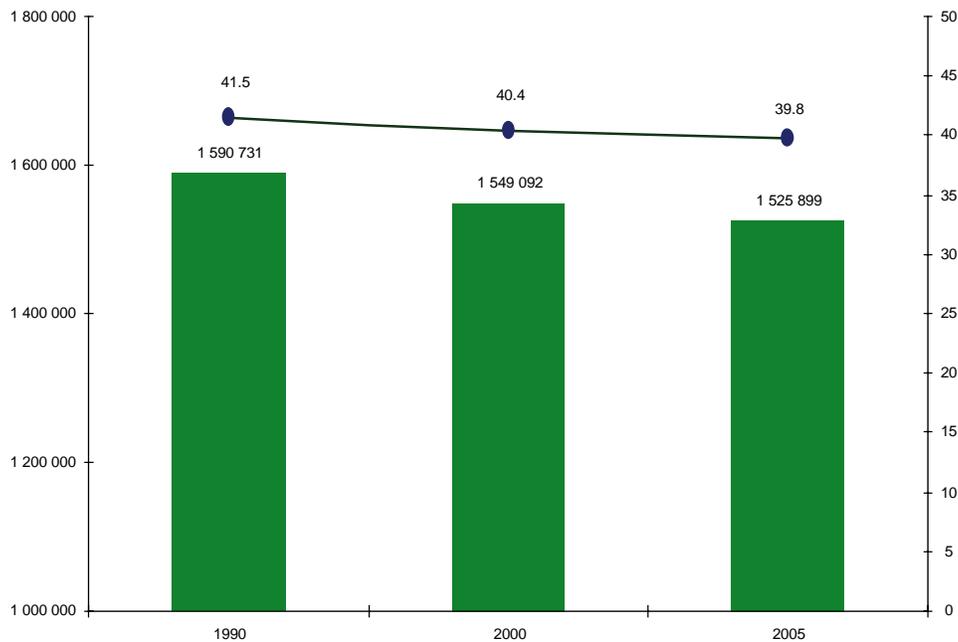
<sup>4</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook, Environment for Development, GEO 4*, Nairobi, 2007.

Figure 55  
**THE AMERICAS AND THE REST OF THE WORLD: DISTRIBUTION OF FOREST AREA 2005**  
*(Thousands of hectares and percentages)*



**Source:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2005 (FRA 2005)*, Rome, 2005.

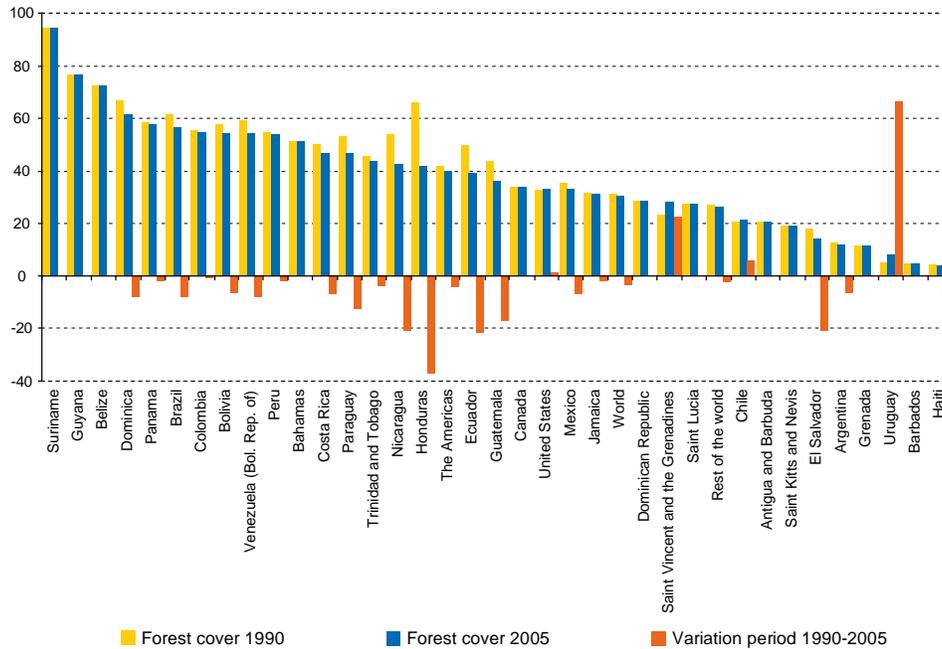
Figure 56  
**THE AMERICAS: VARIATION IN FORESTED AREAS AND FOREST COVER 1990-2005**  
*(Thousands of hectares and percentages of land area)*



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAO Statistical Databases (FAOSTAT) [online] for land area and *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2005 (FRA 2005)*, Rome, 2005, for forest area.

Although there was a manifest loss of forest cover in the period 1990-2005, a look at the different countries reveals a mixed picture: forested areas actually increased in four countries, in 11 there was no change, while the majority (22 countries) have seen a reduction in their forest cover.

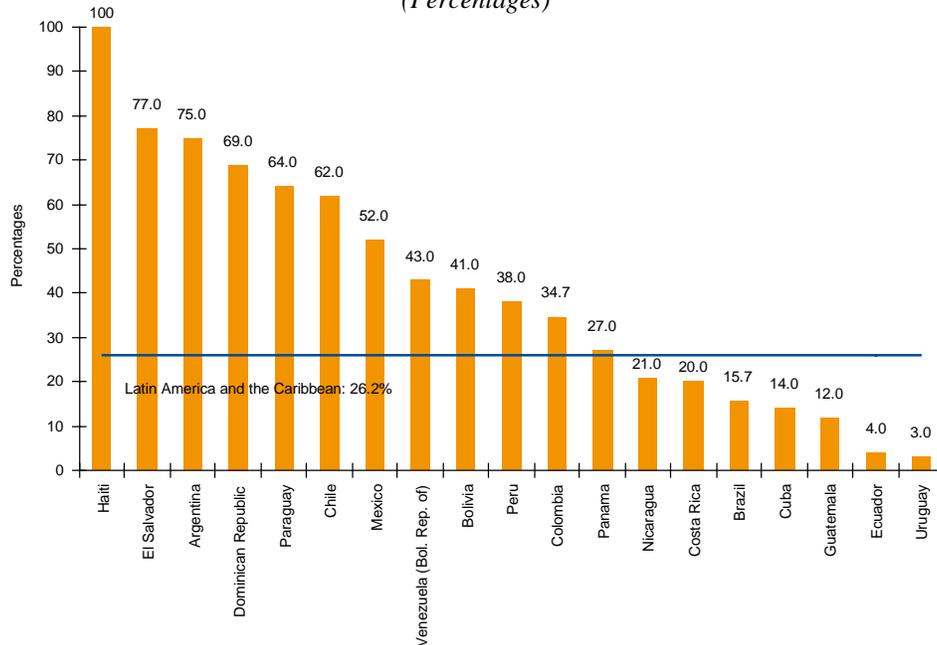
Figure 57  
**AMERICAS: CHANGE IN THE TERRITORY'S FOREST COVER, 1990-2005**  
*(Percentage and rates of variation)*



**Source:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2005 (FRA 2005)*, Rome, 2005.

As a supplement to the information on changes in the region's forest cover, the figure below shows the proportion of land subject to desertification. This phenomenon is a growing problem in Latin America and the Caribbean and may be further aggravated by the impact of climate change. Desertification is the result of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas and is mainly due to factors including climatic variations and human activities, such as overfarming and excessive grazing, deforestation and lack of irrigation.

**Figure 58**  
**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (19 COUNTRIES): THE IMPACT OF DESERTIFICATION**  
**ON NATIONAL TERRITORIES 2000, 2002<sup>a</sup>**  
*(Percentages)*



**Source:** National reports presented by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

<sup>a</sup> The year varies depending on the date on which the countries submitted their national reports.

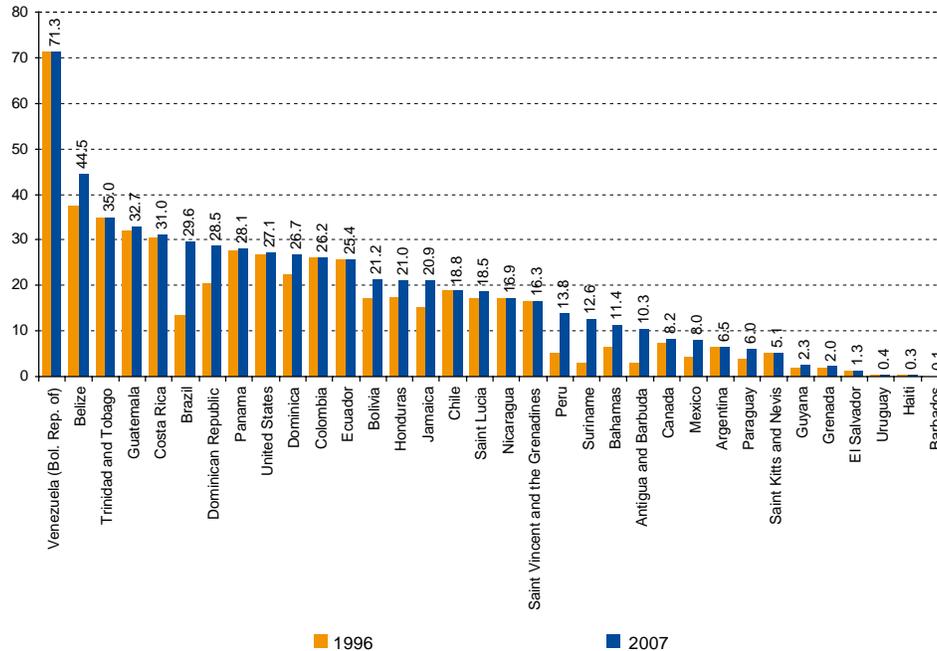
## B. LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY – ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS

The biodiversity of ecosystems, species and genetics are extremely important in the context of environmental sustainability, since their equilibrium ensures the conditions that enable human life to develop with favourable prospects for the future. Biodiversity is valuable both economically, in terms of the food and products obtained from the wide variety of plants and animals, and ecologically, since by conserving balanced populations of plant and animal species, it is possible to avoid the over-proliferation of some species and the potentially detrimental effect this can have on human life.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is noted for its rich biological diversity, being home to a wide variety of life forms. It contains several megadiverse ecosystems. Areas designated as protected land and marine areas for conservation of biodiversity are specially set aside in order to conserve and manage in a sustainable way this vital biological endowment. Between 1996 and 2007, most countries in the region expanded their protected land areas<sup>5</sup> bringing the regional total to 8,061,548 km<sup>2</sup> in 2007, up from 6,062,421 km<sup>2</sup> in 1994. Not all countries have the same concept of what constitutes a protected area, however; furthermore, since each country applies its own management practices, the effectiveness in protecting the ecosystems of the various protected areas varies from one territory to the next.

<sup>5</sup> The indicator used was the proportion of protected land areas; no account was taken of protected marine areas.

Figure 59  
**THE AMERICAS: PROTECTED LAND AREAS AS A PROPORTION OF THE COUNTRY'S AREA**  
**1996 AND 2007**  
*(Percentage)*



Source: United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Indicators" [online database] <http://mdgs.un.org>

More recently, Latin American and Caribbean countries have begun to create and administer protected marine areas as well; in 2007, the regional total stood at 979,700 kms<sup>2</sup>.

### C. THINNING OF THE OZONE LAYER – CONSUMPTION OF OZONE-DEPLETING SUBSTANCES (ODS)

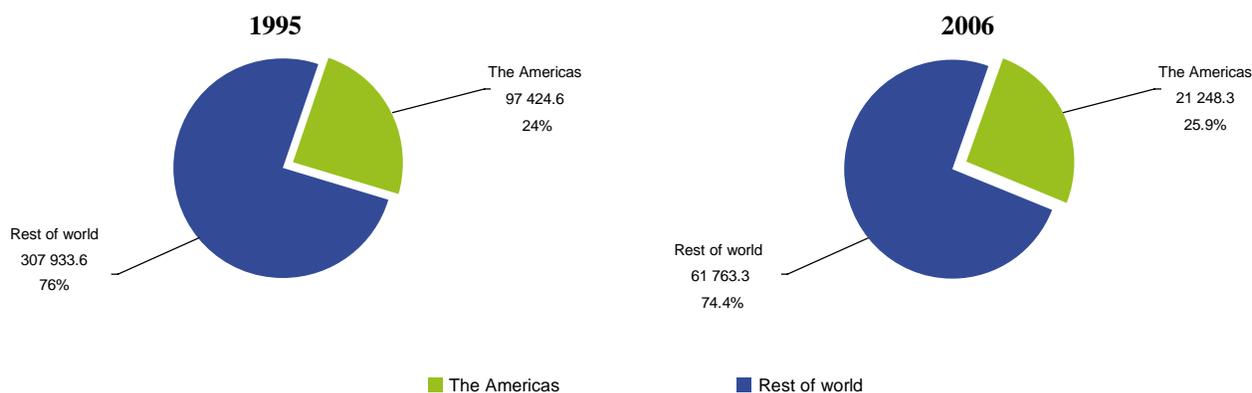
The ozone layer provides a vital environmental service by protecting human beings from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. The consumption of ozone-depleting substances clearly undermines this environmental service. In 1995, the region accounted for 24% of the consumption of ozone-depleting substances. South America is the subregion where the impact is greatest owing to the increase in ultraviolet radiation caused by the deterioration in the ozone layer in the stratosphere. The ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth's surface can impair human health and damage ecosystems. Moreover, some of the ozone-depleting substances are powerful greenhouse gases, which also contribute to climate change.

The consumption of these substances in Latin America and the Caribbean alone decreased substantially (from 44,154 tons of ozone-depleting potential (ODP) in 1995 to 7,282 tons ODP in 2007). Within Latin America, Mexico accounted for the highest consumption in 2007: 1,918 tons of ODP. Some Caribbean countries had consumption levels of less than 1 ton ODP in 2007.

The most developed countries in the Americas show the same trend, with reductions —between 1995 and 2007— which in the United States ranged from 48,462 tons to 8,417 tons ODP, while in Canada, it diminished from 4,809 tons to 559 tons ODP.

The implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer has led to a significant absolute reduction in the consumption of ozone-depleting substances. However, although the region reduced its consumption considerably in absolute terms, from 97,425 tons ODP in 1995 to 21,248 tons ODP in 2006, it now accounts for a slightly higher proportion of world consumption; 26% of total ODS in 2006, compared with 24% in 1995.

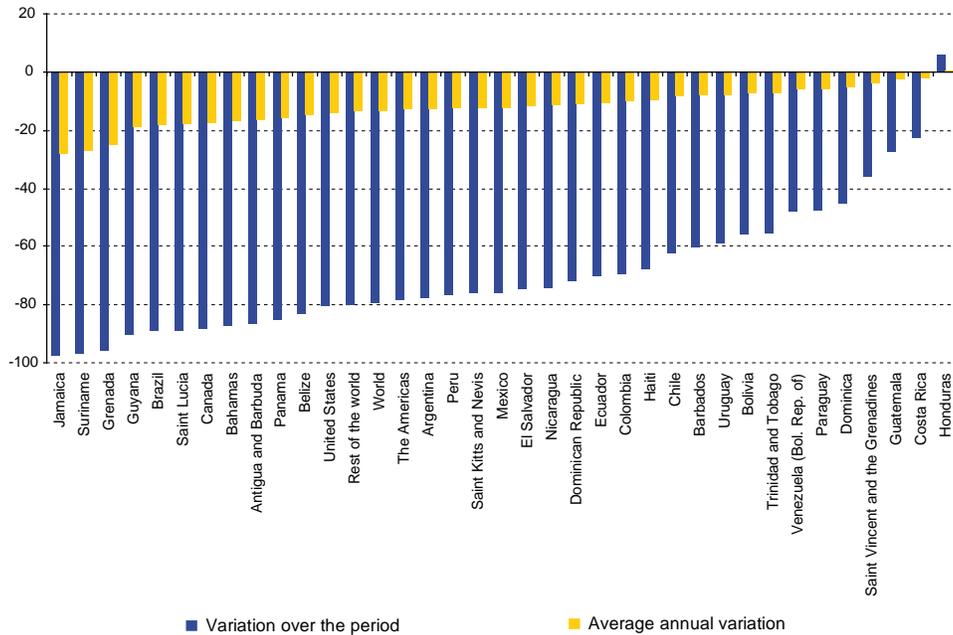
Figure 60  
**CONSUMPTION OF OZONE-DEPLETING SUBSTANCES**  
**1995 AND 2006**  
*(Tons of ODP and percentages)*



**Source:** United Nations, “Millennium Development Goals Indicators” [online database] <http://mdgs.un.org>.

Almost all the countries in the region recorded an absolute reduction in their ODS consumption in the period 1995-2006.

Figure 61  
**THE AMERICAS: CONSUMPTION OF OZONE-DEPLETING SUBSTANCES, 1995-2006**  
*(Average annual rate of variation and variation over the period)*



Source: Ozone Secretariat, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

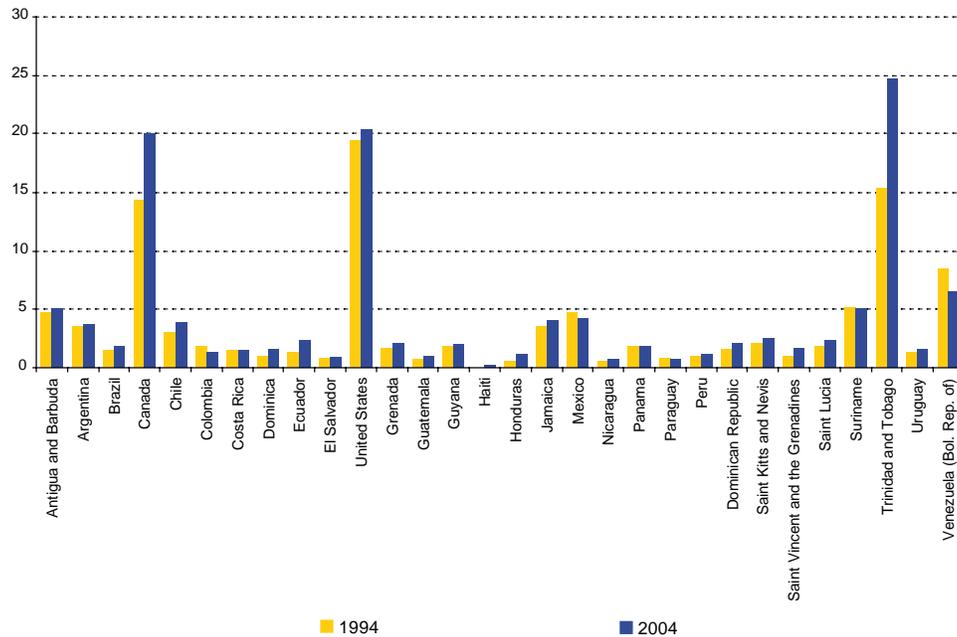
#### D. POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE – CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

Greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere generate negative impacts that undermine environmental sustainability when they exceed the environment's absorption capacity. This raises their concentration in the atmosphere, which in turn, causes the greenhouse effect leading to a rise in global temperatures, with an impact on various sectors due to changes in the water cycle, the occurrence and intensity of extreme natural phenomena and environmental conditions that allow certain types of ecosystems to subsist in specific locations.

Per capita emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas responsible for global climate change, have increased, albeit in significantly varying degrees, in most countries of the region. As indicated in the figure, most countries in the region emit less than five tons of carbon dioxide per capita.

Nevertheless, given the size of the economies and populations of the region's countries, it is also important to take into account their respective contributions to emissions and these vary significantly. The United States accounted for the highest level of emissions with approximately 6 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2004, while Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for carbon dioxide emissions totalling 1.4 million tons in 2004.

Figure 62  
**THE AMERICAS: CARBON DIOXIDE (CO<sub>2</sub>) EMISSIONS 1994 AND 2004**  
*(Tons per capita)*



Source: United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Indicators" [online database] <http://mdgs.un.org>

## E. INSTITUTION-BUILDING – MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Multilateral environmental agreements are policy responses designed to protect the environmental goods and services of each country. These agreements are geared towards the establishment of international cooperation mechanisms and the integration of the environmental development dimension, as a response to the various environmental problems existing at the global level. As indicated in the table below, most of the countries in the region are parties to the most important environmental agreements.

Table 2  
**THE AMERICAS: MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**  
*(Year of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession)*

	Ramsar <sup>a m</sup>	Migratory species <sup>d n</sup>	Vienna <sup>c</sup>	Montreal <sup>d</sup>	Basel <sup>e</sup>	Biological diversity <sup>f</sup>	Climate change <sup>g</sup>	Desertification <sup>h</sup>	Kyoto <sup>i</sup>	Rotterdam <sup>j</sup>	Cartagena <sup>k</sup>	Stockholm <sup>l</sup>
Antigua and Barbuda	2005	2007	1992	1992	1993	1993	1993	1997	1998	...	2003	2003
Argentina	1992	1992	1990	1990	1991	1994	1994	1997	2001	2004	...	2005
Bahamas	1997	...	1993	1993	1992	1993	1994	2000	1999	...	2004	2005
Barbados	2005	...	1992	1992	1995	1993	1994	1997	2000	...	2002	2004
Belize	1998	...	1997	1998	1997	1993	1994	1998	2003	2005	2004	...
Bolivia	1990	2003	1994	1994	1996	1994	1994	1996	1999	2003	2002	2003
Brazil	1993	...	1990	1990	1992	1994	1994	1997	2002	2004	2003	2004
Canada	1981	...	1986	1988	1992	1992	1992	1995	2002	2002	...	2001
Chile	1981	1983	1990	1990	1992	1994	1994	1997	2002	2005	...	2005
Colombia	1998	...	1990	1993	1996	1994	1995	1999	2001	2008	2003	2008
Costa Rica	1991	2007	1991	1991	1995	1994	1994	1998	2002	...	2007	2007
Dominica	...	...	1993	1993	1998	1994	1993	1997	2005	2005	2004	2003
Ecuador	1990	2004	1990	1990	1993	1993	1993	1995	2000	2004	2003	2004
El Salvador	1999	...	1992	1992	1991	1994	1995	1997	1998	1999	2003	2008
United States	1987	...	1986	1988	...	...	1992	2000	...	...	...	...
Grenada	...	...	1993	1993	...	1994	1994	1997	2002	...	2004	...
Guatemala	1990	...	1987	1989	1995	1995	1995	1998	1999	...	2004	2008
Guyana	...	...	1993	1993	2001	1994	1994	1997	2003	2007	2008	2007
Haiti	...	...	2000	2000	...	1996	1996	1996	2005	...	...	...
Honduras	1993	2007	1993	1993	1995	1995	1995	1997	2000	...	2008	2005
Jamaica	1997	...	1993	1993	2003	1995	1995	1997	1999	2002	...	2007
Mexico	1986	...	1987	1988	1991	1993	1993	1995	2000	2005	2002	2003
Nicaragua	1997	...	1993	1993	1997	1995	1995	1998	1999	2008	2002	2005
Panama	1990	1989	1989	1989	1991	1995	1995	1996	1999	2000	2002	2003
Paraguay	1995	1999	1992	1992	1995	1994	1994	1997	1999	2003	2004	2004
Peru	1992	1997	1989	1993	1993	1993	1993	1995	2002	2005	2004	2005

Table 2 (concluded)

	Ramsar <sup>a,m</sup>	Migratory species <sup>d,n</sup>	Vienna <sup>c</sup>	Montreal <sup>d</sup>	Basel <sup>e</sup>	Biological diversity <sup>f</sup>	Climate change <sup>g</sup>	Desertification <sup>h</sup>	Kyoto <sup>i</sup>	Rotterdam <sup>j</sup>	Cartagena <sup>k</sup>	Stockholm <sup>l</sup>
Dominican Republic	2002	...	1993	1993	1999	1996	1998	1997	2002	2006	2006	2007
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	...	1992	1992	1994	1993	1993	1997	2008	...	2001	2004
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	...	...	1996	1996	1996	1996	1996	1998	2004	...	2003	2005
Saint Lucia	2002	...	1993	1993	1993	1993	1993	1997	2003	...	2005	2002
Suriname	1985	...	1997	1997	...	1996	1997	2000	2006	2000	2008	...
Trinidad and Tobago	1992	...	1989	1989	1994	1996	1994	2000	1999	...	2000	2002
Uruguay	1984	1990	1989	1991	1991	1993	1994	1999	2001	2003	...	2004
Venezuela (Bol. Rep. of)	1988	...	1988	1989	1998	1994	1994	1998	2005	2005	2002	2005

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on the basis of the official website of each of the agreements and of the United Nations Treaty Collection database.

<sup>a</sup> Ramsar: the 1971 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

<sup>b</sup> Migratory species: 1979 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

<sup>c</sup> Vienna: 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

<sup>d</sup> Montreal: Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

<sup>e</sup> Basel: 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

<sup>f</sup> Biological diversity: 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity.

<sup>g</sup> Climate change: 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>h</sup> Desertification: 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

<sup>i</sup> Kyoto: 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>j</sup> Rotterdam: 1998 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

<sup>k</sup> Cartagena: 2000 Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

<sup>l</sup> Stockholm: 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

<sup>m</sup> No information is available regarding the year in which the countries signed this convention.

<sup>n</sup> The year indicated is the year when the convention came into force for purposes of that country.