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REPORT OF THE SECOND WORKING MEETING OF THE NETWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mexico City, 28–29 November 2019

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INTRODUCTION

- 1. The second working meeting of the Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean was convened pursuant to agreement 3 of the first meeting of the Network (Havana, 27 May 2019) and was held in Mexico City from 28–29 November 2019.
- 2. The Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean was established by virtue of resolution 730(XXXVII) of the thirty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held in 2018, with the objective of strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of the governments of the region engaged in establishing or seeking to establish national mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Attendance¹

3. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member countries of ECLAC: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Uruguay.

Opening session

- 4. At the opening session, statements were made by María Elena Alcaraz, Coordinator of International Development Forums of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID); Carlos Fidel Martin, Director of the International Economic Agencies Department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX) of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Felipe Ortiz de Taranco, Deputy Director of the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI); Paloma Merodio, Vice-President of the Governing Board of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico; and Rolando Ocampo, Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC.
- 5. After welcoming the participants, the Coordinator of International Development Forums of AMEXCID recalled that the Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean had been established to strengthen countries' capacities to implement and follow up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There were only 10 years left to implement that Agenda, so it was essential for all the countries to pick up the pace. The aim of the second working meeting of the Network was to define the next steps relating to the three pillars: strategy, statistics and South-South cooperation.
- 6. The Director of the International Economic Agencies Department of MINCEX, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC, thanked the participants from the Caribbean for attending and underscored the importance of their participation for Cuba and for ECLAC, within the framework of the "Caribbean first" initiative fostered by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

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For the complete list of participants, see annex 2.

He said that the creation of the Network, by virtue of resolution 730(XXXVII) of the thirty-seventh session of ECLAC, held in Havana in 2018, had provided the countries with an operating tool to face the challenges of the 2030 Agenda. Cuba's chairship of the Committee on South-South Cooperation of ECLAC would come to an end in May 2020 and the Government of Cuba was committed to continuing the work of the Network, which served as a platform for sharing experiences and good practices and helped to strengthen the capacities of the region's countries. There were still challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda, but the measures taken in relation to the three pillars of the Network could lay the foundations for the future and provide much needed support to the Caribbean countries to address their vulnerability to climate change and financing problems. It was hoped that the Network would increase countries' capacities to prepare voluntary national reviews and become a powerful tool for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

- 7. The Deputy Director of AUCI said that the Network was an ambitious project, not just because it focused on three pillars, but also because of the budgetary requirements it would involve. It was vital to secure partners to finance the Network's activities given that the countries had shown considerable interest. He hoped that during the meeting the countries could share successful experiences and secure funds to implement the activities.
- 8. Lastly, the Vice-President of the Governing Board of INEGI reiterated her country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda. INEGI had played an active role in producing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and had participated at the global level in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and in the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management. INEGI had also worked with the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC and was preparing the terms of reference for the management of geospatial information to generate essential data to follow up the 2030 Agenda. INEGI was providing support to the countries of the Caribbean and Central America through workshops, and hoped to formalize these initiatives within the framework of the Network in order to carry out sustainable measures over time to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with geospatial data.
- 9. Next, the Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC presented the proposal for the regional portal on the Sustainable Development Goals for Latin America and the Caribbean —SDG Gateway— which ECLAC was developing along with the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies present in the region and which was expected to be presented at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, to be held in Havana in 2020. The portal would group together the information relating to the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, which would include statistical information linked to the official data of each country as well as global data. This knowledge platform would serve as a repository for data and instruments of the United Nations system in the region, which should be useful for the countries as a single window providing access to available information on the SDGs. The portal would contain updated information on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region, including national and regional activities driven by United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and important information on the institutional architecture and follow-up processes for the 2030 Agenda in the countries. It would also include historical information on the origins of the 2030 Agenda. The platform would contain data organized by SDG, by country and by activity of each fund, programme and specialized agency, in addition to countries' voluntary national reviews, resolutions and agreements, among other important information.
- 10. The Chief of the Statistics Division of ECLAC showed participants each proposed section of the SDG Gateway. The portal would contain a description of each SDG, its respective indicators, and regional and national information. The section on countries, for example, would include voluntary

national reviews in addition to links to the resident coordinator office, to the United Nations system in that country and to official national statistics. The section on statistics would comprise six spaces, with national, regional and global data, including information on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; global indicators and information on custodian agencies, prioritized regional indicators and annual progress reports on SDGs. It would also include information on the exercise carried out by ECLAC to determine the statistical capacity of the region's countries, in order to analyse, at the national and regional levels, which indicators could be calculated and which still needed to be developed. The portal would allow data to be viewed in different ways, by SDG, by country, or for the region, for comparative purposes. The aim was a complete platform including all the relevant information by March 2020. In conclusion, he said that the proposal was a mandate of the Executive Secretary deriving from the Secretary-General's recommendations within the framework of the United Nations reform.

Presentation of pillars

- 11. Next, three presentations were given, one on each Network pillar: strategy, by Santiago Soto, Deputy Director of the Office of Planning and the Budget of Uruguay; statistics, by Paloma Merodio, Vice-President of the Governing Board of INEGI; and South-South cooperation, by Odalys Goycochea, Director of Environment of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba.
- The Deputy Director of the Office of Planning and the Budget of Uruguay described the 12. experience of the localization of the SDGs in Uruguay and said that it provided an opportunity for his country to reassess local priorities and needs and contributed to a new framework, showing more accurately how local governments' work helped to reduce inequality and to achieve national and global development objectives. In terms of the institutional framework, the Office of Planning and the Budget focused on three pillars: statistics, cooperation and monitoring and coordination of public policies related to the SDGs. He also said that local governments played a key role as they established priority and multilevel thematic areas, and because they helped to encourage and identify good local practices and to ensure that no one was left behind, taking into account the most neglected populations and communities. Next, he briefly described the process carried out in his country which involved, first, work with the governments of the departments, through their local cabinets and contacts; then, a rapid integrated assessment to determine the extent to which local projects were aligned with the SDGs, and last, the identification of subnational plans, programmes and initiatives. As a result, more than 1,100 links had been established between subnational governments and the SDGs. The linkage between the SDGs and the national budget had deepened since 2016 owing to the identification of SDG targets within each budget programme area. The methodology used involved the linking of each budgetary line item to an SDG. Challenges included finding ways to better define objectives in relation to sections and implementation units or to continue to improve the consistency between planning and budgeting, by adjusting allocations based on existing programmes, with a view to guiding the budget towards the desired targets.
- 13. The Vice-President of the Governing Board of INEGI presented the guidelines and strategies for the use of geospatial data to support the 2030 Agenda. She spoke about the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and its work as an intergovernmental mechanism responsible for guiding the decisions relating to the production and use of geospatial data within national and global public policy frameworks. A project on the integration of statistical and geospatial information in Central America was being implemented within the framework of UN-GGIM Americas, with funding from the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH)

and support from the United States Census Bureau, and in collaboration with Spain's National Centre for Geographic Information (CNIG) and ECLAC. As part of the project, a series of workshops had been organized to add value and enhance knowledge about the integration of statistical and geospatial information in seven Central American countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The project comprised four stages, and work was currently being carried out on the first: collection of data to identify the statistical and geospatial capacity of each country. The objectives included: (i) identifying the problems and priorities of the Central American countries with regard to the integration of information; (ii) identifying innovative ways of displaying and analysing statistical data; (iii) developing a plan for the integration of statistical and geospatial information; and (iv) evaluating the statistical and geospatial capacity of participating countries, among other aims.

- 14. Next, she spoke of the Geospatial Data Cube, a project implemented by INEGI that facilitated the management of large volumes of satellite images and the implementation of time series analysis, which allowed the calculation of the SDG indicators, among other tasks. The Cube could be used to organize free satellite images so that they could be efficiently managed using open software developed by the Government of Australia. The Geospatial Data Cube facilitated the processing of an entire territory, pixel by pixel, over time, and the comparison of different periods. For example, it showed urban growth, deforestation, green cover, coastal erosion and ecosystem change, and allowed the use of these data to analyse the effects of the public policies implemented in these areas. The Cube could be used to analyse some SDG indicators, and therefore was a valuable tool to follow up the 2030 Agenda.
- 15. Next, the Director of Environment of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba described her country's experience in climate change adaptation. The latter was a central and priority theme for the Cuban State and was incorporated into one of the six strategic pillars of the national development plan: environment and natural resources. Cuba was subject to the same climate vulnerabilities as the rest of the Caribbean region, and therefore had been carrying out scientific studies since 1991, which had paved the way for the development of the State Plan for Addressing Climate Change, called Tarea Vida, which was the guiding document that defined 5 actions and 11 tasks, with projections for the short, medium and long term. Adaptation to climate change and its consequences posed a challenge for Cuba, but also represented an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of national development plans, with an emphasis on energy efficiency and based on the country's scientific potential. All this in spite of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which was the main obstacle to Cuba's progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Director of Environment said that her country was committed to reducing dependence on fossil fuels by 24% through the use of renewable energy —mainly solar photovoltaic, wind and biomass energy— and regarded mitigation as an opportunity to transform its energy mix.
- 16. Following the presentations, the participants discussed the capacities of the countries of the region in relation to each pillar, along with the countries that required capacity-strengthening and the areas in which this was needed, and the countries that were willing to share their experience in capacity-building. The idea was for each working group to propose a workplan including measures to be implemented in 2019–2020. For the proposals for each pillar, see annex 1.

Closing session

- 17. At the closing session, statements were made by María Elena Alcaraz, Coordinator of International Development Forums of AMEXCID and Carlos Fidel Martin, Director of the International Economic Agencies Department of MINCEX of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South cooperation of ECLAC, who expressed their appreciation for the broad participation of the countries in the second working meeting of the Network and for the productive outcomes that would ensure its continuity.
- 18. The Director of the International Economic Agencies Department of MINCEX of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on South-South cooperation of ECLAC, said that the road map for each pillar should be used to continue the work of the Network once Cuba handed over the chairship of the Committee on South-South cooperation of ECLAC to Costa Rica, in May 2020. He also called on the countries present to participate in the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, to be held in Havana from 28–31 March 2020, where it was hoped that a side event on the Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean could be organized.

Annex 1

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2019-2020

STRATEGY PILLAR

The working group identified four components of the strategy pillar:

- (i) Institution_building: governance for SDG follow-up; central structures; inclusion of multiple actors: the legislature, the executive, the private sector.
- (ii) Link between planning, budgeting, national programmes and SDGs: how to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into the budget.
- (iii) Local adaptation of the SDGs: how to incorporate the SDGs into subnational plans and programmes, local agendas, municipalities; support for the local planning system; shedding light on the SDGs in local planning.
- (iv) Dissemination of the 2030 Agenda: the need to make the 2030 Agenda accessible at the local level, with the United Nations, through resident coordinators; in suitable language for each actor, with appropriate knowledge outputs for each level.

2019 to May 2020

- Workshop on institution-building to follow up the 2030 Agenda in Nicaragua (with support from Mexico and Honduras, among others) — component 1.

May to December 2020

- Workshop on the successful integration of SDGs into local governments and municipal planning systems, organized by Mexico and Honduras.
- Workshop for the Caribbean or other countries in the Network on building institutional frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, organized by Jamaica component 1.
- Workshop on mainstreaming the SDGs in local plans and municipal budgets, organized by Uruguay — components 2 and 3.
- Workshop on policymaking for the dissemination of the 2030 Agenda at all levels, organized by the Dominican Republic — component 4.

STATISTICS PILLAR

The working group identified four components of the statistics pillar:

- (i) Institutional coordination.
- (ii) Elimination of information gaps:
 - Possible project: working groups on specific indicators.
 - Cooperation objective: create a methodology or suggest proposals for sources in order to calculate a specific indicator.
 - Possible cooperation mechanisms: identify country "clubs" that want to work on specific indicators. These may be coordinated by custodian agencies and the regional coordination group.
 - Time frame: dependent on the indicator.
 - Proposed by: Colombia and Costa Rica.
- (iii) Infrastructure to generate information:
 - Possible project: geospatial data cube.
 - Cooperation objective: create a regional data cube or equip countries with the capacity to build their own.
 - Possible cooperation mechanisms: consolidation of shared information technology infrastructure (storage and computing); methodological development of algorithms and quality frameworks to produce indicators for the entire region; helping countries to build their own infrastructure; support from ECLAC to obtain images (e.g. arrange negotiations with NASA); guide to help find data processing locations; a coordination system with INEGI and the possibility of providing technology and technical cooperation.
 - Time frame: medium term (three- to five-year investment).
 - Proposed by: Mexico, ECLAC (general support).
- (iv) Infrastructure to disseminate information.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION PILLAR

The working group identified the following areas of work:

- Strategically position South-South and triangular cooperation as means of implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development:
 - How to reflect in voluntary national reviews the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation as mechanisms, and also as forms of work, experiences and outcomes.
 - Select specific SDGs and examine how to convey successful experiences based on flagship projects.
- Create spaces for the coordination and sharing of experiences in risk mitigation between Central America, the Caribbean and Cuba, for example, in terms of drought, seismology and building technology and regulations.
- Training to follow up South-South and triangular cooperation at the local level.
- Sharing of experiences in South-South and triangular cooperation with multi-actor partnerships (work with the academic and private sectors, among others).
- Training in the methodological development of projects that reflect the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and that disseminate the outcomes among the countries of the region.

Offer of cooperation

Colombia:

- Technical training focusing on work and labour security.
- Instruments to quantify and add value to South-South cooperation.
- Template for the alignment of projects with the SDGs and the contribution of each project.

Mexico:

Quantification of South-South cooperation and systematization. Registration system.

Proposed initiative

Preparation of a study on how the region reflects the contribution of South-South cooperation to the achievement of the SDGs, beyond SDG 17, in its national mechanisms to follow up the 2030 Agenda, such as voluntary national reviews. The study will be used to strategically position South-South cooperation as a resource for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in accordance with the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40).

Annex 2

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