



SIXTY YEARS WITH LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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ORIGINAL: SPANISH

**REPORT OF THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE MIDTERM REVIEW
OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION:
ADDRESSING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE LANDLOCKED
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Buenos Aires, 30 June 2008



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CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK	1-7	1
Place and date of the meeting	1	1
Attendance	2-4	1
Election of officers.....	5	1
Organization of work	6-7	1
B. AGENDA.....	8	2
C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS	9-41	2
Opening of the meeting.....	9-12	2
Presentation of the document “ <i>Los problemas del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur</i> ” (agenda item 1).....	13-17	3
Presentation of the results of the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries (agenda item 2).....	18-30	4
Presentation on regional initiatives for the physical integration of landlocked and transit countries and on the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative and the physical integration of the region in the area of multilateral lending agencies (agenda item 3)	31-34	6
Statements by delegations.....	35-41	7
Annex – List of participants.....	-	9

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The regional preparatory meeting for the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: addressing the special needs of the Landlocked Developing Countries, was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 30 June 2008, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/212 of 12 March 2007.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.
3. Also represented were the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Also attending were representatives of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Andean Development Corporation and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) of Argentina, as well as technical experts.

Election of officers

5. The following were elected to serve as officers:

Chairperson: Argentina
Vice-Chairperson: Paraguay

Organization of work

6. The document “*Los problemas del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur*”² was presented, as were the results of the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries.
7. Presentations were given on regional initiatives for the physical integration of landlocked and transit countries and on the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative and the physical integration of the region in the area of multilateral lending agencies.

¹ The list of participants is contained in the annex.

² LC/R.2146.

B. AGENDA

8. The meeting discussed the following agenda:

1. Presentation of the document *“Los problemas del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur”*
2. Presentation of the results of the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries
3. Presentations on regional initiatives for the physical integration of landlocked and transit countries and on the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative and the physical integration of the region in the area of multilateral lending agencies

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening of the meeting

9. The meeting was opened by Graciela Oporto, Under-Secretary for Territorial Planning of Public Investment of the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services of Argentina and National Coordinator of the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative in Argentina; Laura López, Secretary of the Commission of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Harriet Schmidt, Director of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

10. The Under-Secretary for Territorial Planning of Public Investment of the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services of Argentina and National Coordinator of the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative in Argentina, welcoming the participants in the meeting, said that studies such as the one to be presented during the meeting were vitally important for long-term land management measures in the region and were important inputs for the region's integration, which required moving forward with market access for landlocked developing countries. She expressed her gratitude to the international bodies involved in analysing those issues, and reiterated her Government's commitment in that regard.

11. The Secretary of the Commission of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) thanked the Government of Argentina for its hospitality and support for the holding of this meeting to analyse progress achieved in the region in respect of a number of priorities contained in the Almaty Programme of Action. She referred to the document to be presented by the secretariat and the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries, and of other international experts in the field, the results of which would also be presented during the meeting. She said that transport and trade facilitation policies should be implemented in a framework of international assistance to compensate for the additional costs that landlocked countries bore in order to have access to markets; technical cooperation; national capacity-building; and appropriate financing. The institutional framework in South America must provide an effective integration mechanism; in that regard, ECLAC was involved in a number of initiatives

together with other United Nations bodies, and remained committed to seeking solutions to the problems of landlocked developing countries.

12. The Director of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States expressed thanks for the support of ECLAC, an essential partner for progress in analysing the challenges and opportunities facing landlocked developing countries. She added that the current meeting would generate new inputs for the assessment of the priorities contained in the Almaty Programme of Action, adding to the inputs from earlier meetings in other regions. The main achievement since the adoption of the Programme had been worldwide recognition by other countries, donors and regional bodies of the special needs of landlocked developing countries; nonetheless, the latter remained marginalized in terms of the world economy and, although the subregion of South America enjoyed better conditions than some regions, trade transaction costs and delays remained considerable for landlocked countries, weakening their competitiveness. International support and increased investment were crucial to overcoming difficulties in that regard, in addition to internal investment.

Presentation of the document “*Los problemas del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur*” (agenda item 1)

13. The speakers for the presentation of the document “*Los problemas del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur*” were Ricardo Sánchez, Economic Affairs Officer of the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division of ECLAC; Pedro Sosa Pinilla, member of the panel of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation of ECLAC, and Manuel Royg, consultant of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and of ECLAC.

14. The Economic Affairs Officer of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, referring to the content of the document being presented, described the methodology used in studying the logistical costs of transport in Paraguay and the results obtained. He argued that the principal losses of competitiveness resulted from inadequacies in infrastructure (such as insufficient dredging and deficiencies in road connections) and from problems with trade and transport facilitation in general (such as insufficient coordination, complicated procedures at frontier crossings and excessive administrative formalities).

15. The publication of a revised version of the document presented was announced. Entitled “*Los desafíos del sistema de transporte en los países sin litoral de América del Sur*”, the new document would include countries' comments on the subject.

16. The member of the panel of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation of ECLAC gave a brief summary of conditions of transport and trade facilitation in Bolivia and provided information on the main corridors and forms of transport used, the export products and the difficulties the country was facing and which were lowering its competitiveness of its exports. These included the lack of investment in new works and in infrastructure maintenance, the difficulties involved in carrying out works at border crossing points, the failure of the public and private sectors to comply with certain international standards, delays relating to infrastructure in neighbouring countries, problems with habits and customs in compliance with rules, and specific sectoral interests which obstructed the execution of transport improvement works.

17. The consultant of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and of ECLAC referred to the particular situation of Paraguay in the light of a study conducted by the two bodies. In particular, he referred to the need to design policies for institutional improvements and for eliminating excess costs incurred because of infrastructure deficiencies and regulatory and coordination problems. Concerning the river access corridor for Paraguay, he listed the current difficulties, including the failure to execute widening and signalling works on the Paraguay-Paraná waterway to the north of Santa Fe (Argentina), cargo restriction policies, double taxation of freight, excessive administrative requirements, collection of high taxes, the length of delays affecting the movement of vessels, the practice of detaining containers in transit, port costs and the lack of reliable statistical data. Nonetheless, he emphasized that the outcome of United Nations Development Account project 04/05M, conducted by UNCTAD and ECLAC, was still current because it had helped to promote a climate of mutual understanding and to set up a facilitation network and round tables made up of public- and private-sector representatives from both ends of the corridor. As for trade and transport facilitation measures, he said that there was still a need for improved administration, re-engineering of bodies involved in managing, conducting and coordinating transport activities and bodies involved in transport and trade, providing them with appropriate staff, effective compliance with international rules and update national legislation, and strengthening of the capacity of institutions to improve negotiation and coordination processes with a view to achieving free transit, eliminating tariffs, restructuring port systems and increasing investment, among other things.

Presentation of the results of the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries (agenda item 2)

18. Ricardo Sánchez, Economic Affairs Officer of ECLAC, presented the results of the consultation of regional experts in infrastructure, transport, logistics and trade and transport facilitation, from both landlocked and transit countries.

19. Regarding the methodology used for the consultation, the members of the panel had been requested to evaluate the various measures provided for by the Almaty Programme of Action under the heading of each of its five priorities, according to their importance and viability for the region. To that end, "importance" was defined as the ability of the proposal to favour, support and promote the goals of the Programme of Action, and "viability" as the real possibility of implementing each of its recommendations from the political, technical, economic and institutional viewpoints.

20. Of the 65 members of the panel, 30 had completed the survey satisfactorily. The participants were experts from Argentina (4), Bolivia (4), Brazil (2), Chile (7), Paraguay (4), Peru (2) and Uruguay (7).

21. Concerning the results of the consultation in relation to priority 1 of the Programme of Action: fundamental transit policy issues, most of the experts had attached high importance to transport corridors and the implementation of common rules, although they stated that the viability of these measures was only moderate. The importance attached to training and its viability was also high. The experts emphasized the role of the IIRSA initiative in the discussion of these matters and the need for awareness among the governments and private-sector actors of the need to construct agreed national and regional infrastructure plans and improve regional business integration, as well as to establish national and regional transport policies based on an integrated approach, taking into account the individual characteristics and asymmetries existing between the countries. To that end, the experts suggested that specific studies should be conducted by multilateral bodies such as ECLAC.

22. As for priority 2 of the Programme of Action: infrastructure development and maintenance, most respondents stated that it was essential to increase public investment and to promote multimodal transport in landlocked developing countries; however, they considered the former to be more viable than the latter. They also underlined the importance of public-private partnerships, an instrument that they considered to be highly viable, and recognized the important role of the IIRSA initiative in promoting such partnerships.

23. Concerning rail infrastructure, most respondents said that improvements to and maintenance of railway lines and rolling stock were the most important aspect, but they were cautious in relation to the viability of those measures. Accession to international agreements was also seen as important and was considered to be much more viable.

24. As for road infrastructure, the experts were unanimous concerning the importance of transit corridors, the implementation of which they considered highly viable. The results of the survey showed that accession to and faithful compliance with international agreements was more important than transport-sector liberalization. The experts recommended further research into customs facilitation and increased use of information and communications technologies in order to facilitate frontier crossings, and establishment of South American sanitary standards in order to promote that process.

25. Regarding port and inland waterway infrastructure, the experts stated that improving port installations and services for goods in transit was as important as cooperation and coordination among public- and private-sector bodies. Although less emphasis was placed on training programmes in relation to the other measures, they were considered to have the highest viability. As for waterways, infrastructure rehabilitation and expansion was considered the most important initiative by the majority of the experts and improving legal mechanisms was seen as more important than the development of new waterways.

26. In respect of air transport infrastructure, the most important and viable initiative was the development of special training programmes, followed by infrastructure expansion and the conclusion of aircraft pooling agreements. The experts recommended continuing with the signing of bilateral agreements for the application of open sky policies and efforts to attract private investors, all of which, in their opinion, would help to remedy the lack of frequency or of services in certain remote areas and improve the quality and security of airport installations.

27. Concerning telecommunications infrastructure, no conclusive responses were received. Although it was recognized that liberalization of the sector, which had allowed major international telecommunications firms into the market and promoted competition, was a significant step forward, there was no consensus on future measures to accelerate its implementation; this was clearly related to differences among the countries. Some respondents advocated intensifying liberalization of the sector and ending State monopolies, while others called for an increased role for the State. The panel expressed no opinion on the subject of gas and oil pipelines.

28. As for priority 3 of the Programme of Action: International trade and trade facilitation, the panel emphasized the importance of international conventions and regional, subregional and bilateral agreements as the principal means of achieving simplification, normalization and transparency in rules and procedures. A strong majority of the experts said that expanded market access through trade and transport facilitation on the basis of bilateral or multilateral agreements was the most important aspect. While recognizing that progress had been made under the aegis of multilateral bodies, they said that more institution-building was still needed and that comprehensive policies should be defined and disseminated.

29. Regarding priority 4 of the Programme of Action: International support measures, all the experts clearly stated that promoting institutional capacities was the most important aspect, followed by technical support, which the respondent considered more viable. The consultants noted little significant progress in the area of international assistance and therefore recommended a review of mechanisms for granting loans and non-refundable aid, with emphasis on institution-building and projects incorporated into an integrated development programme.

30. When consulted on the financial measures called for by the Almaty Programme of Action for the implementation of priority 4, the experts attached the greatest importance to the connections of the regional network of infrastructure, especially rail and road. In the area of technical cooperation initiatives, the panel considered that the sharing of experiences should be given top priority, taking into account the relatively low cost of that activity in comparison with other alternatives. They recommended that measures of financial support should be mainly focused on improvements in trade and transport facilitation, particularly in the area of customs, and on training.

Presentations on regional initiatives for the physical integration of landlocked and transit countries and on the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative and the physical integration of the region in the area of multilateral lending agencies (agenda item 3)

31. Graciela Oporto, Under-Secretary for Territorial Planning of Public Investment of the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services of Argentina and National Coordinator of the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative in Argentina; Roberto Salinas, National Coordinator of the IIRSA initiative in Paraguay, y Rolando Terrazas, representative of the Andean Development Corporation, gave presentations on regional initiatives for the physical integration of landlocked and transit countries and on the IIRSA initiative and the physical integration of the region in the area of multilateral lending agencies.

32. The Under-Secretary for Territorial Planning of Public Investment of the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services of Argentina and National Coordinator of the Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA) initiative in Argentina described the main characteristics and the organization of the IIRSA initiative, a forum consisting of the 12 countries of South America. Its objective was to plan and promote the physical integration of the region through shared approaches in the areas of transport, communications and energy. Set in motion at the Meeting of the Presidents of South America held in Brasilia in August 2000, this initiative received technical support from the Inter-American Development Bank, the Andean Development Corporation and the Financial Fund for the Plata Basin Development. On the basis of the rules and guiding principles defined at that meeting in 2000, the transport, communications and energy ministers had drafted a plan of action for the initiative, emphasizing an approach based on integration and development hubs, complemented by the design and implementation of measures in the area of sectoral integration processes through harmonization of policies, plans and legal and institutional frameworks relating to the countries' infrastructure use in order to facilitate integration, improve competitiveness and promote sustainable growth in the subregion.

33. The National Coordinator of the IIRSA initiative in Paraguay said that it was playing a fundamental role in achieving efficiency in selecting and coordinating physical integration projects and obtaining funds for infrastructure investment. He described some of the difficulties facing the region in that area, such as the need to increase investment in road infrastructure, the lack of sufficient coordination of roads, ports and waterways and railway corridors, the insufficiency of public-private investments in the Paraguay-Paraná

waterway and the deficiencies of port and storage services, as well as the lack of infrastructure for maintaining the cold chain. He added that multilateral technical and financial assistance bodies had no special policies for landlocked developing countries, and that the United Nations system should give greater impetus to supporting reforms in the areas of transport and trade.

34. The representative of the Andean Development Corporation mentioned the importance of integration hubs as geographic areas where a strong impetus must be given to social development, and noted that the infrastructure projects designed in the framework of the IIRSA initiative in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications were among the most important elements contributing to that development. Multilateral bodies had consistently supported the initiative from the technical, institutional and financial viewpoints by means of pre-investment funding for project preparation. They did not receive different financial treatment in the framework of the Corporation, although if they were infrastructure projects to integrate the region, they fulfilled the requirements for receiving funding. He added that in many cases the end result of financing policy favoured the landlocked developing countries although there was no policy specifically designed for them.

Statements by delegations

35. In their statements, some delegations focused on the specific needs of the landlocked developing countries. They emphasized the importance of trade and transport facilitation and the difficulties resulting from the lack of differential treatment for the landlocked countries which, although they were providers of raw materials and commodities, could not gain access to world markets or enter markets for more highly processed goods because of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. A number of representatives stated that it was vital to eliminate excessive inspection formalities, to harmonize legislation and to update rules and standards which did not take account of the current necessities of trade, so that the latter could take place with fewer delays at the ports, border crossings and intermediate storage facilities. More analysis and research were also needed on the part of multilateral bodies and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, to produce concrete proposals for trade and transport facilitation. Some speakers said that the export difficulties affecting food-producing landlocked countries would lead to still-greater price increases.

36. One delegation said that the landlocked developing countries had not only endogenous problems resulting from their unfavourable geographic situations, but also exogenous problems affecting their competitiveness. Speakers then reiterated the need for landlocked developing countries to receive differential treatment in the area of trade and solidarity from the transit countries to avoid duplication of controls and solve internal problems in those countries which affected them directly.

37. Representatives of transit countries referred to the need to achieve more progress in establishing mechanisms at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to translate political will into practical measures to contribute to implementing the Almaty Programme of Action in the region. They also agreed that transit countries were making unceasing efforts, within the existing institutional framework, to facilitate the trade and transport of the region's landlocked countries.

38. One delegation described some of the advances achieved in the region, including the establishment of forums for dialogue and for reaching agreements at the multilateral level such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and negotiations for the creation of the Bank of the South. At the bilateral level, speakers drew attention to trade monitoring and the establishment of coordination and integration mechanisms. It was noted that Brazil had helped to promote infrastructure financing in

South America by means of official programmes and institutions, and the broadening of its participation in the Andean Development Corporation.

39. Speakers referred to the importance of risk mitigation instruments and guarantee mechanisms for the financing of infrastructure problems in the region. The Convention on Reciprocal Payments and Credit of the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) was a useful instrument in that regard. It was proposed that this subject should be considered by the working group for the preparation of proposals on the creation of UNASUR financial mechanisms.

40. The representatives of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States expressed their satisfaction at the work done during the meeting and welcomed the proposals made by delegations, which would constitute a substantive input for analysing the needs of the landlocked developing countries and for the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly for a Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held on 2 and 3 October 2008.

41. Concluding the meeting, the Chairperson thanked the delegations, bodies, institutions and experts who had attended, for the valuable comments they had made and thanked ECLAC for the successful organization of the meeting.

Annex

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Estados miembros de la Comisión
Member States of the Commission****ARGENTINA**

- Graciela Oporto, Subsecretaria de Planificación Territorial de la Inversión Pública, Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios y Coordinadora nacional de la IIRSA en Argentina
- Juan José Iriarte Villanueva, Director de Temas Económicos Especiales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
- Juan Miguel Cassisa, Ministro, Dirección de Temas Económicos Especiales, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
- Liliana Benítez, Subsecretaría de Planificación Territorial de la Inversión Pública, Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios
- Antonio Cuenca, Asesor, Subsecretaría de Transporte Automotor, Asuntos Internacionales, Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios

BOLIVIA

- Betty Hilda Flores Monterrey, Jefa de Unidad de Integración Latinoamericana, Viceministerio de Relaciones Económicas y Comercio Exterior, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Cultos

BRASIL/BRAZIL

- Flavio Campestrin Bettarello, Segundo Secretario, Coordinación General Económica de América del Sur, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

CHILE

- Marcela Espinoza, experta en materia fronteriza y funcionaria de la Dirección Nacional de Fronteras y Límites del Estado (DIFROL)
- Rodrigo Gutiérrez Marticorena, abogado, Dirección Nacional de Fronteras y Límites del Estado (DIFROL), Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
- Mónica Bravo, Tercer Secretario, Embajada de Chile en Argentina

PARAGUAY

- Juan Alfredo Buffa, Representante Permanente Alterno, Misión Permanente de Paraguay ante las Naciones Unidas
- Raúl Cano Ricciardi, Director General de Comercio Exterior, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
- Roberto Salinas, Coordinador nacional de la IIRSA en Paraguay
- Juan Carlos Muñoz Menna, Director Titular, Administración Nacional de Navegación y Puertos
- Jhancy Sanabria, Jefa de Relaciones Internacionales, Administración Nacional de Navegación y Puertos
- Juan Miguel González Bibolini, Ministro, Embajada del Paraguay en Argentina

PERÚ/PERU

- Ana Teresa Lecavos Terry, Segunda Secretaria, Embajada del Perú en Argentina

URUGUAY

- Noelia Martínez, Secretaria, Embajada de la República Oriental del Uruguay.

B. Secretaría de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas United Nations Secretariat

Oficina del Alto Representante para los Países Menos Adelantados, los Países en Desarrollo sin Litoral y los Pequeños Estados Insulares en Desarrollo/Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

- Harriet Schmidt, Directora/Director
- Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, oficial de primera/First Officer

C. Organizaciones intergubernamentales Intergovernmental organizations

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Fernando Urduz, Sector de Infraestructura y Medio Ambiente, División de Transporte/Infrastructure and Environment Sector, Transport Division (INE/TSP)

Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF)/Andean Development Corporation (CAF)

- Rolando Terrazas, Representante adjunto/Deputy representative

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO-Argentina)/Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO-Argentina)

- Georgina Cipoletta Tomassian, investigadora y consultora/Researcher and consultant

D. Expertos
Experts

- Pedro Martín Sosa Pinilla, consultor independiente, experto en transporte
- Manuel Royg, consultor, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) y Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre Comercio y Desarrollo (UNCTAD)
- Mauricio Navarro, consultor independiente, experto en transporte
- Carlos Leguizamón, experto en transporte

E. Secretaría
Secretariat

Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Commission économique pour l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes (CEPALC)

- Laura López, Secretaria de la Comisión/Secretary of the Commission
- Gerardo Mendoza, Oficial de Programas, Secretaría de la Comisión/Programme Officer, Office of the Secretary of the Commission
- Ricardo J. Sánchez, Oficial de Asuntos Económicos, División de Recursos Naturales e Infraestructura/Economic Affairs Officer, Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division



