

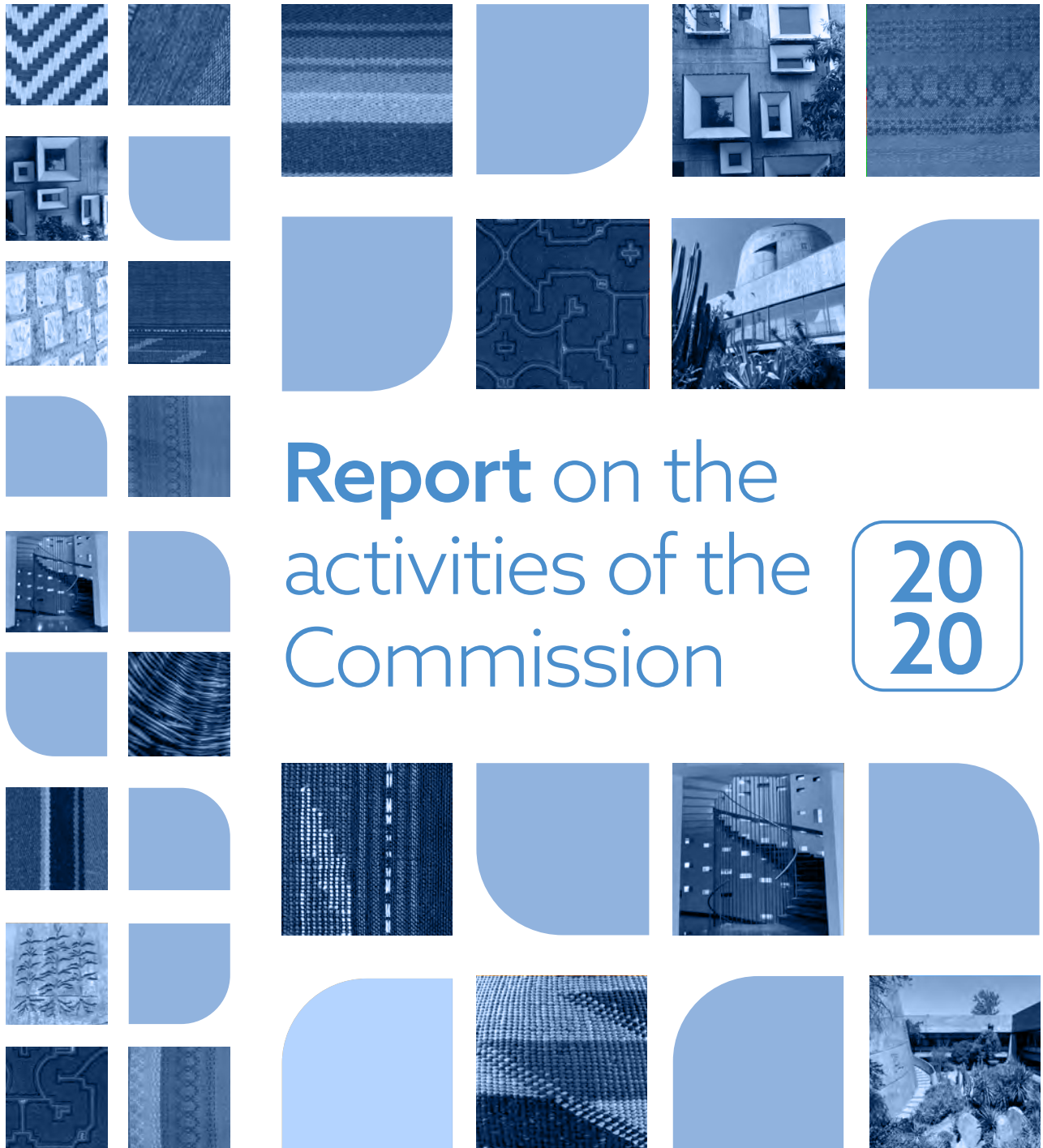
Report on the activities of the Commission

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Foreword



For more than 73 years, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has been fully committed to the sustainable development of the countries of the region. This report on the activities of the Commission highlights its key achievements and contributions in 2020 and is hereby submitted for the consideration of member States in light of the accountability and transparency framework promoted by the United Nations.

During the year, the Commission continued to offer its value proposition to member States by combining its three main functions: its think tank and thought leadership role in performing analytical, normative and knowledge management work; its convening power by fostering intergovernmental platforms that provide space for policy dialogues, consensus-building and peer learning; and its operational role, by providing policy advice and technical cooperation, at the request of member States, to implement capacity development activities at the regional, subregional and national levels, anchored in data and rigorous evidence-based analysis and understanding of the realities of the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean, the developing region that has been hardest hit by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, has faced the most severe crisis in recent decades, with profound health, social, environmental, economic, and political effects. This crisis has also exposed the failings of weak and fragmented social protection systems, health services and welfare schemes. Hence, a “new normal” is not the way forward. The development model must be rethought, and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development must be consolidated to leave no one behind and bring about a profoundly transformative recovery to avoid regression in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The impact of the crisis is compounded by the fact that the region is mostly comprised of middle-income countries, and a significant number of them are small island developing States of the Caribbean, which are increasingly excluded from the international cooperation system that uses per capita income as the main indicator of development and are thus unable to access concessional financing and trade benefits. ECLAC has also continued to lend a strong voice to the region’s sole least developed country and to its landlocked developing countries.

As an organization fully committed to the development of the countries of the region, in 2020 ECLAC responded quickly to support governments, decision makers, the business community and civil society at large with analysis and proposals to assess the full socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide policy advice and recommendations for a transformative recovery. ECLAC also continued to serve as technical secretariat for various subsidiary bodies in the areas of statistics, women and development, population and development, planning and public management, social development, South-South cooperation, and development cooperation in the Caribbean. The Commission's most recent analysis and public policy proposals have helped to stimulate discussion on key regional development issues. It has performed its role as a universal and impartial forum for the fostering of public policy debate, the exchange of good practices and the promotion of regional positions in global forums, as well as in regional and interregional high-level meetings and summits of heads of State and government.

The Commission would like to reiterate its profound gratitude to ECLAC member States for the ongoing support and trust they have placed in the institution.

Alicia Bárcena

Executive Secretary

Economic Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Introduction

About ECLAC

The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) —the Spanish acronym is CEPAL— was established by Economic and Social Council resolution 106(VI) of 25 February 1948 and began to function that same year. By resolution 1984/67 of 27 July 1984, the Council decided to change its name to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to include the countries of the Caribbean; the Spanish acronym, CEPAL, remained unchanged.

ECLAC is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. Headquartered in Santiago, it was founded with the purpose of contributing to the economic development of Latin America. In June 1951, the Commission established the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico City, which serves the needs of the Central American countries, together with Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico, and in December 1966, the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean was founded in Port of Spain, to serve the Caribbean subregion. In addition, ECLAC has country offices in Bogotá, Brasilia, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, as well as a liaison office in Washington D.C. The 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with several Asian, European and North American countries that have historical, economic and cultural ties with the region comprise the 46 member States of ECLAC. Fourteen non-independent territories of the Caribbean are associate members of the Commission.

Mission statement

"The Commission's mission is to promote economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean through technical cooperation and policy advice."

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