

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE ECLAC SYSTEM

2023



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INTRODUCTION

The draft programme of work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for 2023 is hereby submitted to the member States of the Commission for their consideration. It highlights the priorities for 2023 that will be considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the United Nations General Assembly as part of the intergovernmental reviewing exercise.

The overall purpose of the programme is to promote the economic, social and environmentally sustainable development of Latin America and the Caribbean through international cooperation, by undertaking applied research and evidence-based comparative analysis of development processes and providing relevant normative, operational, capacity development, technical cooperation, and advisory services in support of regional development efforts.

The mandate for the programme derives from the priorities established in relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions, as well as Economic and Social Council resolution 106(VI) of 25 February 1948, by which the Council established the Commission for the purpose of contributing to, and coordinating action towards, the economic and social development of the region and reinforcing economic relationships among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and with other regions and countries of the world. In 1996, pursuant to ECLAC resolution 553(XXVI), the Commission decided, inter alia, to collaborate with member States in the comprehensive analysis of development processes geared to the design, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and the resulting provision of operational services in the fields of specialized information, advisory services, training and support for regional and international cooperation and coordination. The Commission's support aimed at developing the capacity of governments to formulate and implement policies for sustainable development is also provided through an array of instruments, including the regular programme for technical cooperation, Development Account projects, and extrabudgetary projects and programmes.

The Commission will continue to pursue key objectives to support the development pillar of the United Nations, to foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels, to support member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the international agreements stemming from the major summits and conferences in the sustainable development field, and to facilitate sustainable development by helping to bridge economic, social and environmental gaps between and among countries in the region and the industrialized economies.

To achieve these objectives, ECLAC will continue to offer its value proposition to member States by combining its three main functions: the think-tank and thought leadership role in performing analytical, normative and knowledge management work; the convening role through its intergovernmental platforms and subsidiary bodies; and the operational role by providing technical cooperation, advisory and capacity development services, as well as peer learning, anchored in data and rigorous evidence-based analysis and understanding of the realities of the region.

Latin American and the Caribbean is the developing region hardest hit by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and this has occurred against a particularly complex backdrop. In 2020 regional GDP contracted by 6.8% and the poverty rate is estimated to have reached 33.7% (209 million people) with extreme poverty rising to 12.5% (78 million people). The impact of this crisis is equivalent to losing a decade of progress in the region and has exposed the failings of weak and fragmented social protection systems and welfare schemes, highlighting the vulnerability of the middle-class population. It worsened the region's structural problems, namely, low investment and productivity, labour informality, unemployment, inequality and poverty. Women have been most severely affected, as their mass exit from the labour market reflects their unbalanced role in the care economy and the

loss of jobs in the service sectors. Even though a positive GDP growth rate is estimated for 2021, it will not be sufficient to regain the output level recorded in 2019.

For these reasons, 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. A transformative recovery will require public policies with a long-term vision, to include progressive structural change and an expansion of social protection. In this context, ECLAC proposes an innovative framework: a big push for sustainability aimed at inducing profound and transformative changes in production and consumption patterns. This proposal, contained in the document *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability*,¹ was endorsed by ECLAC member States at the thirty-eighth session of the Commission, held in October 2020. The basis for the transformative recovery is investment conducive to an environmentally sustainable economy and business opportunities that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. Special emphasis is placed on issues related to inclusiveness, sustainability and smart cities, towards building forward better with more resilient cities, communities and societies. This approach, while giving due consideration to the interconnection with the rural dimension, has particular significance in a region with an urbanization index of over 80%.

The systematic work by ECLAC during the past decade on equality issues in the context of the region’s development enabled the Commission, very early on, to align its programme of work with the new and emerging needs and demands from member States in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adaptation of the Commission’s programme of work to those exigencies has become a permanent feature of its engagement. The Commission will continue to foster a multisectoral and integrated approach to development, and provide a voice to countries in special situations, including the single least developed country in the region, the landlocked developing countries, the small island developing States of the Caribbean, and middle-income countries, which make up most of the region.

With regard to cooperation with other entities at the global, regional and national levels, the Commission will continue to work closely with the governments of the region and other stakeholders (such as the business community, universities and academia, as well as civil society) to reinforce linkages of national experiences with regional perspectives, comparability and exchange of good practices, and provide effective technical cooperation services for transboundary issues. Finally, the implementation of the Secretary-General’s reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS) has enabled the Commission to deepen coordination and collaboration with United Nations agencies, funds, and programmes in the region, as well as with the resident coordinator system, including through the newly created Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean.

ECLAC will continue to provide integrated and comprehensive follow-up to world summits from a regional perspective, by coordinating the region’s approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It will also continue to act as the secretariat of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, providing support for the follow-up and review process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, as well as for the reporting by the Forum to the high-level political forum on sustainable development at the global level, thereby linking the national, regional, and global dimensions of the process.

Furthermore, the Commission will continue to make its intergovernmental architecture available for consensus-building and regional dialogues to analyse the key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and share experiences in this area, serving as the technical secretariat for the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, the Committee on South-South Cooperation, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social

¹ LC/SES.38/3-P/Rev.1.

Planning (ILPES), the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, and the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Concerning cooperation with other entities, ECLAC will continue to collaborate with the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as with other inter-American and Ibero-American organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). ECLAC will reinforce its close cooperation with various subregional integration mechanisms and strengthen its collaboration with private sector associations, non-governmental and civil society organizations, think tanks and academia to promote policy dialogue and to engage them in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which is ultimately driven by member States. The Commission will continue its active participation to foster substantive global coordination among all participating entities in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

ECLAC will continue to enhance its bilateral and multilateral collaboration with cooperation partners within and outside the United Nations system, to strengthen its strategic partnerships and mobilize additional extrabudgetary resources to enhance the implementation of the programme of work and maximize its impact in beneficiary countries and at the regional level. The Commission will continue to consolidate development partners' trust and confidence by undertaking strategic dialogues with them on a regular basis, ensuring the efficient delivery of mandates, showing concrete new and results-oriented achievements, and providing comprehensive information on the use of their contributions.

The Commission's overall strategy for achieving the objectives of the programme is structured around 13 interdependent and complementary subprogrammes, implemented through an integrated and multidisciplinary approach, ensuring that the gender mainstreaming strategy of the Commission is reflected throughout the programme of work for 2023. In line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and the ECLAC Disability Inclusion Strategy (CEPALDIS), the Commission is implementing inclusive and comprehensive measures regarding accessibility, security and improvements in audiovisual technology in conference rooms, reasonable adaptation of office spaces and furniture, and access to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities to facilitate their full participation in the daily work of the Commission, with a view to further advancing their inclusion and ensuring the full realization of their rights.

The content of the 13 subprogrammes is presented in the following pages. The subprogrammes have been clustered thematically as follows: the first three relate to ECLAC activities in the field of economic development (subprogrammes 1–3); followed by social development (subprogrammes 4–6). Activities relating to environmentally sustainable development are grouped under subprogrammes 7 and 8, while cross-cutting programmes focusing on training and public management are contained in subprogramme 9 and statistics in subprogramme 10. The remaining three subprogrammes focus on subregional activities and regional integration: one relates to Mexico, Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Haiti (subprogramme 11); one is devoted to small island developing States of the Caribbean (subprogramme 12); and the last one seeks to reinforce Latin America and Caribbean integration processes and the participation of the region in interregional and global political dialogues (subprogramme 13). Each subprogramme is introduced by its objective, a brief presentation setting out the main development challenges to be addressed and the corresponding thematic areas. The strategy and proposed list of activities to be implemented during 2023 are also presented. For all the subprogrammes, the main linkages with the SDGs are identified and summarized in table 1. This approach is in line with the Commission's efforts to continue building an institutional accountability culture within the organization, including through the improvement and strengthening of monitoring and evaluation.

Table 1
Main links between SDGs and the draft programme of work of the ECLAC system for 2023, by subprogramme

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Subprogramme 1: International trade, integration and infrastructure								8	9	10		12					17
Subprogramme 2: Production and innovation								8	9			12					
Subprogramme 3: Macroeconomic policies and growth								8								16	17
Subprogramme 4: Social development and equality	1	2	3	4	5			8		10						16	
Subprogramme 5: Gender equality and women's autonomy	1		3	4	5			8	9	10	11	12				16	17
Subprogramme 6: Population and development			3							10							17
Subprogramme 7: Sustainable development and human settlements											11	12	13		15	16	17
Subprogramme 8: Natural resources		2				6	7						13	14	15		
Subprogramme 9: Planning and public management for development											11					16	17
Subprogramme 10: Statistics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Subprogramme 11: Subregional activities in Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico	1	2			5		7	8		10			13				17
Subprogramme 12: Subregional activities in the Caribbean					5			8	9	10		12	13	14	15		17
Subprogramme 13: Support for regional and subregional integration and cooperation processes and organizations																16	17

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

SUBPROGRAMME 1: INTERNATIONAL TRADE, INTEGRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective

The main objective to which this subprogramme contributes, is to advance sustainable development and strengthen the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in international trade and the global economy by deepening regional integration and enhancing logistics and infrastructure.

Presentation

Over the past three decades, developing countries have greatly increased their share of global GDP and trade, gradually shifting the centre of gravity of the world economy from North to South and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This has led to the proliferation of international production networks spanning both developed and developing countries and to a sharp increase in South-South trade.

The sustained increase in the weight of developing economies in world trade has taken place along with the ongoing reshaping of global and regional logistics and value chains in the context of rapid technological changes, shifts in global purchasing power and the digital revolution. The global trading landscape is also changing as a result of increased tensions among some key economies and the negotiation of new agreements that seek to reflect the major changes that have occurred in global trade in recent years, such as the increased weight of e-commerce. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the fragility of global supply chains and the international economic interdependence in the case of certain essential goods. This has pushed countries to rethink the value and strengthen their regional supply chains.

Overall, Latin America and the Caribbean has not shared in the increased dynamism of developing countries' trade. The region's share of world merchandise exports remains at about the same level as in the 1970s. Moreover, its export basket remains heavily reliant on raw materials, particularly in South America, and the pandemic has worsened the reprimarization process as demand for the region's manufactured goods has weakened. Against this background, the current challenge for Latin American and Caribbean countries is to redefine and adapt their international integration strategies. In this regard, they will need to improve the quality of their linkages with the region's traditional trading partners, diversify their export baskets, and strengthen production linkages with emerging economies in East Asia and other regions, including by reducing the infrastructure gap and logistics costs. The biggest efforts should be devoted to deepening regional integration, since the regional market is the main instance for industrial exports and for exports from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in most countries. This would increase the region's resilience to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

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