

Developments in the prices of natural resources for export in Latin America and the Caribbean



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Editorial

In 2021, Latin America and the Caribbean saw an increase in the prices of the main export commodities, mainly as a result of the recovery in global demand following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Issue No. 3 of the ECLAC Natural Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean Bulletin, prepared by the Natural Resources Division of ECLAC, offers an analysis of the movements in prices of non-renewable natural resources and agricultural products in Latin America and the Caribbean, considering the effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and sustainable economic recovery in the region.

The international prices of non-renewable natural resources rose significantly in 2021 and contributed to the economic recovery in the region, particularly in hydrocarbon and metallic-mineral-exporting countries. Similarly, agricultural commodity prices rose rapidly in the second half of 2020 and the first half of 2021, which saw agricultural price indices reach 10-year highs. This largely benefited producing countries, however, the combination of high prices and declining incomes is adversely affecting consumers through inflation, particularly the most vulnerable households.

Main article

Developments in the prices of natural resources for export in Latin America and the Caribbean

Introduction

In 2021, the prices of the main export commodities of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) increased, mainly due to the recovery in global demand —particularly from China—for minerals, metals, fossil fuels and agricultural products, following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first months of 2022, those upward trends, especially in hydrocarbon prices, have been strengthened by the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. However, the prices for each major commodity group (minerals, hydrocarbons, agricultural commodities) have performed differently. Similarly, there is heterogeneity in the behaviour of prices within each group, partly in response to factors specific to each product.

The increase in prices of minerals and metals was also due to the recovery of investment in construction and growth in demand for durable goods, such as automobiles, household appliances, and equipment and machinery. Energy transition is also expected to push up demand in the medium and long term for the metals needed for the production of electric vehicles, infrastructure and green technologies. This will increase the profitability of mining projects and attract new investments to the sector, which, on the other hand, could intensify the adverse impacts on economic, environmental and social considerations. Therefore, mining production and consumption activities should be decoupled from those negative impacts, and the higher revenues exploited to finance the change in the production structure, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, avoiding a potential delay in the energy transition due to the increase in the prices of the minerals required for it.

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Activities, notable publications and news

Water

Briefing notes

July 2021

Investment to universalize basic services in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2030

June 2021

ECLAC's role in universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services and facilities

Events

November 2021

ECLAC's participation in the Conference on Water Finance and Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean

October 2021

ECLAC's participation in the seminar on cross-border and sectoral cooperation with a focus on regional experiences of the institutionalization and governance of the Water-Energy-Food Nexus

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73 p. | Julio 2021

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Lecciones del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia para la adopción del enfoque del Nexo: análisis del Plan Nacional de Cuencas, el Sistema Múltiple Misicuni y las políticas de riego

Energy

Briefing notes

June 2021

Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) for Developing National Clean Energy Transition Plans in Latin America

January 2021

Conclusion of the "First training course within the framework of the BIEE-ROSE Project on Energy Efficiency and SDG7 Monitoring in Latin America and the Caribbean"

Events

November 2021

Active participation by the Division in the event Energy Efficiency in Latin America and the Caribbean for climate change adaptation and mitigation within the framework of the Paris Agreement

October 2021

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