



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
23 May 2019

Original: English

---

**2019 session**

26 July 2018–24 July 2019

Agenda item 15

**Regional cooperation**

## Summary of the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018–2019

### *Summary*

The present report contains highlights of the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 2018 and from January to May 2019. ECLAC has pursued its core functions to support the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those functions are: (a) to work as a regional knowledge hub and think tank providing an integrated approach and multisectoral perspective across the economic, social and environmental pillars of development and generating analytical frameworks on the key means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (b) to act as a repository of comparable data and statistics for evidence-based decision-making and policymaking; (c) to build on its convening capacity to provide intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue and support for normative processes at the subregional, regional and interregional levels; and (d) to provide operational and capacity-building services to member States.



## I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals represent a crucial step in the building of a new and ambitious consensus among members of the international community.

2. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the General Assembly in 2015, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has provided support to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, effectively contributing to a system-wide effort to support member States in the follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on six pillars for action and cooperation: (a) strengthening the inter-institutional and intersectoral architecture for sustainable development at the highest level; (b) building the Sustainable Development Goals into national and territorial development plans, including public budgets and public investment systems; (c) strengthening statistical capacities and the development of data ecosystems; (d) analysing and promoting innovative avenues for the means of implementation, taking into consideration regional and subregional specificities in financing, technology, trade and accountability; (e) strengthening access to information through observatories on gender equality, planning, environment and energy, among others; and (f) generating spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue between government, business and citizens, enhancing coordination with the United Nations system, regional entities and development banks.

3. The present report describes the contribution of ECLAC in 2018 and from January to May 2019 to the achievement of this global agenda in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in the region and beyond to achieve sustainable development for all.

## II. Advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region

### A. Supporting member States in Latin America and the Caribbean to follow up and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

4. The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, established in May 2016 by the member States of ECLAC, is the regional mechanism for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, their targets and their means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The objective of the multi-stakeholder Forum, which is convened annually under the auspices of ECLAC, gathering member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and representatives of civil society, is to generate a regional platform for peer learning and the exchange of experiences and good practices. It consists of four segments: (a) the presentation of the annual progress report by ECLAC; (b) the presentation of the report of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC and other actors on their contribution to regional progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (c) a peer review and peer learning exchange in which multiple stakeholders share their insights and activities related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region; and (d) high-level dialogues and analysis on the integrated approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental).

5. The second meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago in April 2018, at which ECLAC presented the *Second annual report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the*

*Caribbean*. In their intergovernmentally agreed conclusions, the ministers and high representatives commended the work carried out by ECLAC throughout its 70 years of existence and its continued efforts to support country-led processes, and committed to ensuring that ECLAC functions and mandates were fully recognized and maintained, in particular the Commission's crucial role in the regional dimension of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The third meeting of the Forum was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 24 to 26 April 2019. Chaired by Cuba, the meeting was attended by over 1,200 participants from 25 countries. This space of discussion was strengthened by the deliberations in 50 onsite side events.

6. In preparation for the conclusion of the first cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2019 and the high-level week of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly in September 2019, which will include the Sustainable Development Goals summit, the Climate Action Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, among others, the Forum sought to provide an opportunity for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to reflect upon the policies needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda on the basis of the experiences from the first cycle of the high-level political forum regarding follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and to yield some messages from the region to be conveyed during the events of the high-level week.

## **B. Integrating the 2030 Agenda and resilience-related Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning**

7. The role of planning, at the national and subnational levels, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is clearly set forth in General Assembly resolution 70/1. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, ECLAC has emphasized that planning is a key tool of policymaking and public administration and a means of implementing the 2030 Agenda effectively, as it enables the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in medium- and long-term planning instruments. The integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and the cross-cutting themes of the 2030 Agenda in development planning, public management, budgeting and public investment at the national and local levels are therefore central aspects to its implementation and follow-up. Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Peru and Uruguay, among other countries, have made significant commitments and taken significant steps to integrate the Goals into their national and subnational planning schemes. An example is the support provided to the Government of Guatemala, where, as a result, national planning for development was strengthened, evidenced by the formulation of its national development plan, entitled "K'atun: Our Guatemala by 2032". The plan was approved in 2014 and portrays a long-term vision for the country, its national priorities and a plan for promoting structural changes with the objective of closing persistent equality gaps.

## **C. Building on the 2030 Agenda for strengthening effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for sustainable urbanization**

8. As of 2018, 80 per cent of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean live in cities or urban areas. Cities are the source of 70 per cent of regional greenhouse gas emissions, owing mainly to energy use, in particular electricity consumption, transportation and waste disposal. In addition, the region's highly unequal and socioeconomically segregated cities are characterized by the exclusion of low-income

groups from participating in the management of their cities. Given this context, ECLAC and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) have partnered to strengthen accountability systems in cities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil and Peru to enable the monitoring of local government policies for achieving Sustainable Development Goals that are related to cities. The ongoing activities focus on how cities, including civil society, can improve accountability and participatory policymaking in the field of urban sustainability. The initiative seeks to provide an operational platform for South-South cooperation and to make available a set of virtual tools to facilitate and systematize city-to-city cooperation and knowledge exchange among peers from government, the private sector and civil society, including academic institutions and non-governmental organizations in the fields of accountability in urban governance, urban management and planning. The second Cities Conference was held in Santiago in October 2018, co-organized by ECLAC, the General Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean and UN-Habitat. The Conference provided a space for national authorities to discuss evidence-based public policies designed to improve the integration of urban planning, management, financing and mobility and transit systems in Latin America and the Caribbean towards sustainable urban development, as part of the regional action plan for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the region. It also facilitated the exchange of good practices and policy recommendations to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable urban mobility and exploration of the functions and responsibilities of different stakeholders that could facilitate a sustainable transport agenda at the national and subnational levels.

#### **D. Regional framework of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals**

9. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the definition of internationally agreed indicators to follow up and review progress in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, expressed their interest in the prioritization and adaptation of the global monitoring framework for the Goals to the region's priorities and challenges. This not only would allow for a framework that takes into account the regional realities, but would also be a useful guide to national efforts in the development of measuring tools and indicators and serve as a reference for horizontal and international cooperation in the area of statistics.

10. In 2018, the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, a working group established within the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, carried out the above-mentioned request jointly with other countries in the region on the basis of a methodology for prioritization that took into consideration several dimensions simultaneously. As a result, a prioritized list of 154 indicators was endorsed by countries in the region, covering all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 94 of the 169 targets that are part of the official global indicator framework. Those efforts, as well as the effective coordination of horizontal, regional and international cooperation efforts, will help to close gaps in statistical capabilities in the region.

#### **E. Regional inter-agency coordination**

11. The first review cycle of the Sustainable Development Goals by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019 presented a timely opportunity for an inter-agency report to be coordinated by ECLAC jointly with the regional

offices of the United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. The *Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, presented to member States at the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in April 2019, was therefore prepared under the coordination of ECLAC as a joint inter-agency report of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, which serves as a regional contribution of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean to the 2019 high-level political forum, to be held in New York in July 2019.

### III. Strengthening the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda

12. ECLAC supports the design of and follow-up to means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level and analyses key policy interlinkages on topics related to trade, financing for development, technology transfer and rules of engagement with the private sector, among other things. On the basis of its traditional, integrated approach to development and its multidisciplinary work and structure, ECLAC places emphasis on strengthening policy analysis and dialogue centred on the key dimensions of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from the regional perspective. By tapping into its accumulated experience in all areas of sustainable development, the Commission provides comprehensive analysis, policy advice and technical assistance to member countries. Thanks to its convening power at the thematic and sectoral levels through its forums, subsidiary bodies and intergovernmental meetings, ECLAC brings together policymakers and stakeholders from civil society, academia and the private sector to exchange knowledge and ideas, focusing on innovative solutions for implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. During the period 2018–2019, ECLAC focused on the following priorities to support Latin American and Caribbean countries in its implementation:

- (a) Placing equality at the core of sustainable development;
- (b) Promoting the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions in the formulation and implementation of national sustainable development strategies and policies;
- (c) Progressive structural change in order to incorporate more knowledge into production, ensure social inclusion and move forward on a low-carbon growth path through an environmental big push;
- (d) Analysis of key aspects of financing for development and the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (such as traditional financing and innovative mechanisms to close gaps, technology transfer and fair trade), including innovative debt relief initiatives in the Caribbean, efforts to combat illicit financial flows and the reduction of tax evasion and avoidance;
- (e) Diversifying the production matrix with public and private investment towards lower-carbon consumption and new production and energy patterns, taking into consideration the circular economy and smart cities;
- (f) Pursuing technological innovation, the digital economy and the information and knowledge society;

- (g) Building capabilities through good-quality education, universal protection and the care economy, the creation of employment with rights and the provision of better public goods;
- (h) Ensuring natural resource governance;
- (i) Strengthening regional action and integration in production, trade, technology, taxation, finance, infrastructure and value chains for environmental goods and services;
- (j) Ensuring access to information and citizen participation;
- (k) Reaffirming the importance of institution-building and redefining the equation between the State, the private sector and civil society;
- (l) Supporting South-South cooperation and sustaining the rise of middle-income countries;
- (m) Promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue and forums to build policy coherence and legitimacy;
- (n) Democratizing decision-making in global forums on finance and trade and promoting access for developing countries to those forums.

13. In line with the above-mentioned priorities, ECLAC organized a series of activities to deliver on its mandate in this regard, as follows:

- (a) The thirty-first Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy, organized by ECLAC with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, held in Santiago on 25 and 26 March 2019, provided for normative, analytical and technical cooperation activities on financing for development and other means of implementation, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
- (b) During the sixth session of the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in April 2018, ECLAC member States adopted the Cartagena Declaration approving the eLAC 2020 Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean;
- (c) At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, 10 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean issued a declaration on principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development for the full implementation of principle 10 in the region. ECLAC actively supported the process, which evolved into an international negotiation. As the culmination of this process, the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement) was adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica, on 4 March 2018, after two years of preparatory meetings (2012–2014) and nine meetings of the negotiating committee established in 2014, with significant public participation;
- (d) The Escazú Agreement aims to guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation. It aims to combat inequality and discrimination and to guarantee the rights of every person to a healthy environment and to sustainable development. In so doing, it devotes attention to persons and groups in vulnerable situations and places equality at the core of sustainable development. By linking global and national frameworks, the Agreement sets regional standards, fosters capacity-building, in particular through South-South cooperation, lays the foundations for a supporting institutional architecture and offers tools for

improved policymaking and decision-making. The Agreement was opened for signature by the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on 27 September 2018 at United Nations Headquarters. As of the end of April 2019, a total of 16 countries had signed the Agreement and 1 country had proceeded with ratification.

#### **Debt for climate adaptation swap initiative**

14. Caribbean countries are among the most highly indebted countries in the world. It is noteworthy that although not all Caribbean countries have been affected equally, the debt issue is sufficiently common to make it a serious regional issue. In order to address the challenges that the region is facing to access external financing, ECLAC presented its “Proposal on debt for climate adaptation swaps: a strategy for growth and economic transformation of Caribbean economies” at the fourth meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable, held in Basseterre in April 2016, which calls for donors to use pledged resources from the Green Climate Fund to finance a gradual write-down of 100 per cent of the multilateral debt stock of the Caribbean small island developing States held at various multilateral institutions, as well as the bilateral debt stock of member States.

15. An agreement to contribute a fraction of such funds for resilience-building in the Caribbean based on a debt for climate adaptation swap could assist in addressing the severe Caribbean debt situation. This proposal was well received by Caribbean member States, the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat and was presented at the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the theme “Aftermath of recent hurricanes and earthquakes: achieving a risk-informed and resilient 2030 Agenda”, held in New York on 24 October 2017, and at the high-level donor conference on the theme “Building a more climate-resilient community”, organized by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and held in New York on 21 November 2017. Finally, the debt swap task force was inaugurated at a meeting held in Port of Spain on 24 November 2017. In 2018, ECLAC leveraged its debt for climate adaptation swap initiative. Three member States, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia, were identified to pilot the first phase of the initiative.

## **IV. Spotlight on Commission sessions and work on inequality**

16. The thirty-seventh session of ECLAC was held from 7 to 11 May 2018 in Havana. The session of the Commission is the most important event of each biennium for ECLAC. It provides a forum for the consideration of issues of importance for the development of the countries of the region and an opportunity to review the progress of the Commission’s activities. The session also enables the Governments of member States to examine the secretariat’s report on the Commission’s activities and thus apprise themselves of the work accomplished by ECLAC during the two preceding years. Furthermore, through the programme of work that the Governments adopt and the calendar of conferences they approve, member States define the mandates that will guide the Commission’s work for the following two years.

17. The opening ceremony of the thirty-seventh session and the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of ECLAC took place with the participation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico and the Executive Secretary of ECLAC. For the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of ECLAC, four former Executive Secretaries were invited to discuss and present their views on the role of the Commission throughout its history and in the years to come to support

the economic, social and environmental development of Latin American and Caribbean countries.

18. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC presented the ECLAC position document entitled *The Inefficiency of Inequality*. The main message of the document is that inequality entails major costs for the economy as it hinders technological change and economic and productivity growth, and compromises the provision of environmental services to production. Environmental unsustainability further reinforces inequality, since the costs of natural disasters and the loss of natural resources are felt more strongly by the poor and the less technologically advanced countries. To break this vicious circle of low productivity growth, low technological intensity and high inequality, ECLAC proposes an environmental big push, a set of coordinated investments aimed at encouraging structural change, making the new technological revolution endogenous to the region and directing investments and research and development towards higher energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions, as absorption of new technologies is central for developing countries to sustain employment and reduce the equality gap while at the same time minimizing the environmental impacts of growth and moving towards a new, sustainable pattern of production and consumption. The document highlights the need to provide global public goods for development on the basis of a revived multilateralism, as well as the contributions of regional and national policies to foster low carbon growth, focused on the production structure, sustainable cities and renewable energy.

19. Additionally, as the result of an interregional development account project implemented under the coordination of ECLAC, in July 2018 the regional commissions published a report entitled *Promoting equality: An interregional perspective*, which was presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda, which reflects a consensus on the need to move towards more egalitarian, cohesive and solidarity-based societies, the regional commissions of the United Nations came together to prepare the report, which synthesizes regional findings and lessons learned in the conceptualization, design and implementation of public policies and programmes oriented towards greater equality. The report highlights that inequality not just includes, but transcends, income inequality and relates to the uneven exercise of rights, unequal access to opportunities and capacity development, and unequal results. In the report, the regional commissions argue that social inequality gives rise to adverse social, environmental and economic consequences, stratified by economic status, age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin or religion. The report concludes that social inequality can be successfully addressed and is not an inevitable outcome. Indeed, promoting greater equality through adequate social protection, health, education, labour and fiscal policies not only helps to safeguard the economic, social and cultural rights of all people, but also fosters growth, development and greater social justice.

## V. Leveraging partnerships for sustainable development

20. ECLAC has forged partnerships both interregionally and intraregionally in mutual strategic priority areas spanning all three dimensions of sustainable development.

### **Partnerships with agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations development system**

21. ECLAC has worked in close partnership with entities of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on the various aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

22. Joint publications issued in 2017 and 2018 include the ECLAC-UNICEF quarterly bulletin on child poverty from different perspectives; the ECLAC-ILO bulletin entitled *Employment situation in Latin America and the Caribbean: labour immigration in Latin America*; a report entitled *The Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas: A Perspective on Latin America and the Caribbean 2017–2018*, published by ECLAC and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and a paper entitled “The cost of the double burden of malnutrition: social and economic impact”, published jointly with WFP.

23. In November 2018, ECLAC, together with UNICEF and América Solidaria, launched the “Concausa 2030” initiative, which seeks to identify and share widely social innovation projects that aim to achieve equality and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the countries of the region. At the event, some 50 adolescents from 16 countries in the Americas unveiled their proposals for overcoming poverty and protecting the environment in the region. ECLAC and UNICEF organized back-to-back with the event the first regional dialogue on the theme “On the road to equality: 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”. National authorities, international officials and young people reaffirmed the urgency and relevance of guaranteeing, protecting and promoting the rights of boys, girls and adolescents.

24. ECLAC has also organized jointly with other entities of the United Nations development system regional intergovernmental meetings and policy dialogues at the thematic level on key issues related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Those meetings include the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized jointly with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized jointly with UNFPA.

25. ECLAC has also developed partnerships and joint activities with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in trade facilitation and cooperation, trade in services and global value chains.

26. ECLAC has also collaborated with the secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, UNDP, UNFPA and other specialized agencies of the United Nations system in formulating policies and adopting measures to address economic, social and environmental issues pertaining in particular to climate change and mitigation, as well as natural disasters, including the carrying out of disaster assessments using the ECLAC damage and loss assessment methodology.

27. In April 2018, the meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, in the framework of the second meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The meeting was convened and chaired by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and had the special participation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, represented by the Deputy Secretary-General. It gathered regional directors and senior representatives from 16 entities of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as 10 resident coordinators from the region. In accordance with

the mandate of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (see General Assembly resolution 32/197, para. 20), the objective of the meeting was to enhance cooperation and the coordination of United Nations activities at the regional level and agree on common messages to be transmitted to member States at the second meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, with due consideration to the current process of the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the current regional context in Latin America and the Caribbean. Following an introduction on the current regional trends and developments and an analysis of the opportunities and challenges related to the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all representatives were able to assess how to strengthen collaboration in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

28. The Regional Coordination Mechanism endorsed various decisions aimed at strengthening regional cooperation. It agreed that the meeting of the Mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean would be systematically convened by ECLAC back-to-back with the annual meetings of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and be open to the participation of resident coordinators from the region attending the Forum. The inter-agency *Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, coordinated by ECLAC and prepared jointly with the regional offices of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in Latin America and the Caribbean, mentioned in section II of the present report, was one of the products agreed upon.

29. In addition, members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in Latin America and the Caribbean decided: (a) to identify and select two or three thematic areas and locations, including at the subregional level (such as Central America or the Caribbean), to jointly focus inter-agency efforts for concrete work in the future; and (b) to mainstream the gender perspective in all its endeavours. ECLAC also decided to further encourage the participation of entities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in Latin America and the Caribbean and resident coordinators in the meetings of its subsidiary intergovernmental bodies<sup>1</sup> in order to enhance coordination at the thematic level. Finally, the topic of migration in northern Central America and Mexico was agreed upon as a priority area for the future.

### **Partnerships with organizations outside the United Nations development system**

30. At a high-level event on the margins of the general debate of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in 2018, ECLAC, the European Union and the OECD Development Centre held a debate on the evolving concepts regarding development cooperation, with an emphasis on the emerging concept of “development in transition”. ECLAC and the OECD Development Centre presented the document entitled *Emerging challenges and shifting paradigms: new perspectives on international cooperation for development*, which raises the timely question of how to ensure that international relations are more relevant, receptive and suited to the aim of “leaving no one behind”. Subsequently, ECLAC, the European Union, OECD and the Development Bank of Latin America organized a seminar on the theme “What do we know and still wonder about development in transition?” within the framework of the “development in transition” week, organized by ECLAC, the European Union and the Government of Chile, which was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago. The event was aimed at discussing the need to rethink the

<sup>1</sup> See list of ECLAC subsidiary bodies, available from [www.cepal.org/en/organos-subsidiarios](http://www.cepal.org/en/organos-subsidiarios).

concept of development in itself and analyse some of the key dimensions of the process, as well as the interconnections between them, elements that will be addressed in the 2019 edition of *Latin American Economic Outlook*. The high-level dialogue on the theme “Development in transition: development challenges in a changing world”, organized jointly by ECLAC and the European Union, enabled government authorities and representatives of international organizations to discuss the complexity of the distinct challenges faced by Latin American and Caribbean countries along their path to development and the requirements of a new cooperation narrative that gives special consideration to so-called “economies in transition.” With this aim, countries of the region and those of the European Union have bolstered their complementarities and efforts to develop new forms of cooperation and go beyond traditional instruments.

31. ECLAC forged an alliance of think tanks from Mexico and three Central American countries to construct a narrative on migration that is closely linked to development models and human security and not just to security and containment concerns, and also established partnerships with civil society and government officials in the negotiation process that led to the adoption of the Escazú Agreement.

32. More recently, ECLAC started to implement a project that will partner with the International Renewable Energy Agency and the Latin American Energy Organization, to create capacities to monitor and follow up various indicators for sustainable energy oriented towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7.

#### **Partnerships with subregional and regional integration organizations**

33. ECLAC collaborates with the Central American Integration System, an organization that has long supported the energy integration process in the subregion. One of the results of this long-standing collaboration was the presentation of the first draft of the 2030 energy strategy for the countries of the System in 2018.

34. At the thirteenth ministerial summit of the Pacific Alliance, held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in July 2018, ECLAC reiterated its commitment to supporting the convergence between the Pacific Alliance, as a promoter of free trade, and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The ECLAC publication entitled *La convergencia entre la Alianza del Pacífico y el MERCOSUR: enfrentando juntos un escenario mundial desafiante* (The convergence between the Pacific Alliance and MERCOSUR: facing together a challenging global scenario) was made available to presidents and ministers, with an analysis of the current state of trade between both groups and the opportunities and challenges that it presents. The summit brought together the Presidents of the Alliance’s four member countries, namely, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, along with the Presidents of Brazil and Uruguay and ministers of foreign affairs, trade and finance from various countries of Latin America and other regions of the world.

35. To promote the financial inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8, ECLAC partnered with the Latin American Association of Development Financing Institutions, which is the international organization that represents Latin American and Caribbean development banking to promote innovative policies in development banking.

36. ECLAC has also developed partnerships with the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation to support the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Asian and Latin American value chains. Synergies have also been explored, and technical cooperation projects funded by external donors implemented, with the German Agency for International Cooperation and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Norway, in the areas of women's economic autonomy, gender-based indicators and vocational education and training for gender equality. Specifically, in the cases of Germany and Norway, ECLAC has cooperated consistently in the areas dealing with social protection systems, social expenditure procedures and social policy evaluations. Cooperation initiatives have continued to be strengthened with all three partners in additional areas, including the governance of natural resources (extractives); energy complementarity and integration; energy sustainability scenarios for 2030 at both the national and regional levels; the water-energy nexus; and the prospects for the development of the hydrocarbon industry in the region.

## VI. Concluding remarks

37. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals provide a frame of reference around which development policies and regional and international cooperation can be connected. Policies must be implemented in a coordinated manner in order to attain the Goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda. Given the comprehensive nature of the Goals, instruments must be consistent with one another and must leverage complementarities between efforts towards the different Goals and minimize trade-offs in the event of conflict or inconsistency.

38. ECLAC has proposed a comprehensive analytical framework for the region geared towards placing equality at the centre of sustainable development and advocating for an environmental big push as a coordinated response to development challenges, combining environmental, productive and social development policies. The environmental big push, in the tradition of development theory, recognizes the disruptive effects of technology on societies and the negative externalities generated by climate change and environmental destruction at both the national and global levels. Underlying the proposal is the idea of harnessing leaps in knowledge to forge a different sort of development in which new production and consumption patterns dovetail with a brand of social policy that embraces equality as a driver of capacities and innovation, a stabilizer of democracy and a fundamental pillar of development. This sustainable development strategy opens a space for investment and innovations in, and dissemination of, new technologies that would reduce the income and capacity gap between central and peripheral countries, with political and economic benefits for both groups of countries.

39. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda requires a rethink of international cooperation for development and the provision of global and regional public goods. Public goods should create a stable environment for international trade and finance and strengthen the diffusion of technology by avoiding the polarization of capacities (domestic and external productivity gaps). They should also promote employment and income distribution within countries and between central and peripheral countries, in the light of the negative impacts of inequality on peace and political stability. ECLAC considers that the alternative to the form taken by globalization since the 1990s is not unilateralism or policies to close off economies, but a new multilateralism capable of strengthening democracy and correcting asymmetries.

40. Meanwhile, cooperation in international governance is weakening. Today's tensions and the trend towards unilateralism is the opposite of what is required to achieve sustainable development. Major progress had been made with regard to climate change and environmental stewardship, but this has slowed in the past two years. The reduction in inequality and poverty levels has also lost momentum in Latin America and the Caribbean. New global public goods are needed to diversify exports in developing economies and thereby expand their formal employment. Regional public goods can contribute significantly to the process of structural change. In Latin

America and the Caribbean, manufactures with a higher technological content account for a greater share of intraregional trade than trade with the rest of the world, especially in the case of South America. This scope for changing specialization patterns has not been fully explored. At the same time, regional agreements on migration, infrastructure, renewable energy and technology have shown great potential for positive impact and chart a course for future regional cooperation initiatives.

---