

CONCEPT NOTE SIDE-EVENT

Adaptation and resilience to climate change and populations in situation of vulnerability

Challenges and Opportunities

Climate change accentuates pre-existing development problems, such as inadequate infrastructure and occupation of areas at risk in the territories. Similarly, it is projected that the economic impacts will exacerbate inequalities and deepen poverty and the most vulnerable populations will be the ones who will most suffer from this, compromising even more their livelihoods and sources of employment, food security, access to ecosystem services, among others. In this regard, ECLAC has stated that climate change presents double burden of inequality: while higher income economic strata contribute more proportionally to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, lower income strata are more vulnerable to the impacts of these emissions. For Latin America and the Caribbean, sustainable and inclusive adaptation to these impacts is unavoidable and requires timely public responses on investment, design of programmes and regulations. Extreme weather events and their associated damage and losses shows that it is a present emergency, not for the future.

The responses regarding the reduction of GHG emissions and the transition to sustainable and low emission economies are also a matter of concern from a social point of view, as solutions can be inclusive or aggravate pre-existing exclusions. For instance, solutions such as a those related to improve public mobility, housing, and social and “green” productive infrastructure and the recognition of ecosystem services are opportunities for the improvement of the standard of living of a significant number of persons. On the contrary, by limiting the function of the most disadvantaged to the absorption of the atmosphere or by having technological solutions that are excluding them, this could create one or more dimensions of poverty. Therefore, the paths chosen for both adaptation and the transition to sustainable and low-emission economies are not socially neutral and their discussion and potential consequences are an unavoidable part of the public debate.

Objectives

This side-event of the Third Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean aims to explore how the climate emergency can impact social protection systems and vulnerable populations in Latin America and the Caribbean and what are the different responses and options that could bring benefits between environmental sustainability and inclusive social development, with special reference to the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 25) that will take place in Santiago, Chile, in December 2019.

Methodology and questions:

The event includes a 20-minute opening session on adaptation and resilience to climate change and vulnerable populations, followed by a 20-minute presentation on the process of the COP 25 by the host country, and then a panel discussion. In the panel discussion, in which PowerPoint presentations should not be used, each panelist will have 10 minutes to intervene based on the guiding questions asked by the moderator and 2 additional minutes for comments.

The questions that will guide the discussions are:

1. What are the estimated impacts (social, economic and environmental) of climate change that could affect the populations in situation of poverty and vulnerability in the region and the exercise of their rights?
2. What instruments and processes are required to strengthen the analysis of this risk within social protection systems?
3. What innovations are being implemented in social protection systems or could be developed for integrating risk and responses to climate change (reduction of vulnerability, adaptation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) in order to provide services to this population. For example, monetary transfers that encourage sustainable adaptation in infrastructure and “green” and resilient social housing, as well as options that could universalize these social protection systems?
4. How to activate greater articulation between policies responses to climate change and policies aimed at inclusive social development, including the social protection system, health services and education, among others?

Date and place:

The side-event will be held on Wednesday 2 October 2019 between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the main room of the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations in Mexico City, within the framework of the Third session of the Conference on Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean of ECLAC.

Participation:

The event is aimed at representatives of governments, civil society organisations and the general public of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Limited places available.

Language:

Spanish and English (with interpretation).

Preliminary programme

17:00 - 17:20	Welcome remarks and introduction by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, ECLAC Welcome and comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jean-Pierre Bou, Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union to Mexico• Anna Terrón, Director, International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP)
17:20 - 17:40	“COP25: linkages between the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development”, Sebastián Sichel Ramírez, Minister of Social Development and Family, Chile
17:40 - 18:30	Panel on challenges related to climate change and options of responses from social protection systems. Interventions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adrián Fernández, Executive Director, Climate Initiative of Mexico.• Samantha Marshall, Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, Youth and Gender Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda• Cynthia Y. Forde, Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Barbados• Rodolfo Godínez Rosales, Head of the Coordinating Unit of International Affairs, Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico
18:30 - 18:50	Questions and answers
18:50 - 19:00	Closing remarks by an ECLAC representative

Moderator: Julie Lennox, Head of the Agricultural Development Unit and Focal Point for Climate Change, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico.