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**REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Virtual meeting, 26–28 October 2021

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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was held virtually from 26–28 October 2021 in conjunction with the XIII Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, by virtue of a joint declaration signed by ECLAC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in October 2014 with the aim of fostering synergies.

Attendance¹

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Uruguay.

3. The following associate members of ECLAC were also represented: Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

4. Attending from the United Nations Secretariat were Resident Coordinators and representatives of the Development Coordination Office (DCO) and of Offices of the Resident Coordinators.

5. The following entities of the United Nations system were also represented: World Bank, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Volunteers.

6. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations, cooperation agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia and other sectors also attended the session.

¹ For the complete list of participants, see annex 4.

Election of Presiding Officers

7. The Conference elected the following Presiding Officers:

Chair: Antigua and Barbuda

Vice-Chairs: Bahamas,
Barbados
Costa Rica
Chile
Dominica
Paraguay
Uruguay

B. AGENDA

8. The Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of Presiding Officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Report by the Chair on the activities carried out since the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Presentation of the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean*.
5. Rethinking social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean.
6. Review of the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean*.
7. Other matters.
8. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening session

9. At the opening session, statements were made by Dean Jonas, Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda; Javier May, Secretary of Welfare of Mexico; Luis Felipe López-Calva, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

10. The Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda, in his capacity as Chair of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, said the Conference was a chance to assess progress on social protection and to share knowledge and ideas. The world was still gripped by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic's unprecedented effects, so thinking needed to be proactive and innovative. Otherwise, barriers such as sustainable financing and climate change would continue to hinder inclusive development and resilience to exogenous shocks. COVID-19 should not halt long-term visions and goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could guide strategic planning and implementation. In the Caribbean, many islands were focused on a few sectors to drive economies, and the frequency of natural disasters created a perpetual cycle of building back and rising debt. Although more developed countries were often major contributors to environmental degradation and climate change, it was the region that felt the effects. At the global level, rising inflation would affect social protection systems and vulnerable groups, so efforts were needed to rein in poverty levels and financial strain, through increased strategic trade and cohesive economic activities among countries. It was vital that the region develop policies and interventions for marginalized and vulnerable groups, including in relation to mental health and disabilities. The region also needed to continue to work towards gender equality. In closing, he urged the participants to use the Conference to reinvigorate the collective drive towards an inclusive and equal society.

11. The Secretary of Welfare of Mexico said that since the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2019, when the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development had been adopted, the Conference had done outstanding work that had helped to consolidate the region's stance as one committed to equality, poverty eradication, sustainable development and cooperation between governments and peoples. During Mexico's term as Chair of the Regional Conference, two important things had been achieved: increase in the visibility of the regional agenda and inclusion of priority issues that concerned everyone in the face of the urgent conditions imposed by the pandemic. Reflecting on the immediate future and the common challenges facing the countries of the region, he said that in light of the complex panorama and new conditions, it was necessary to review the regional development agenda, propose new public policies (with significant social investment) and take into account the cost of disasters and human tragedies. The focus should be on public policies for sustainable social protection that included agile methods for rebuilding territories, leaving no one behind and no one outside. He also said that after the enormous challenges in 2020, it was time to take coordinated action to curb inequalities and drive growth from the bottom. He underscored the importance of fostering a new vision and methodology for measuring poverty that was more multidimensional and people-centred, creating new indicators to more accurately measure the reality and encouraging a humanistic vision of development. In closing, he said that the agenda agreed in September 2019 could be improved and that the Conference had confirmed its value over the years and provided an opportunity for reflection in a challenging regional and global context.

12. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the UNDP said that the prevailing global situation was characterized by increased uncertainty, with two key elements: climate change and new diseases. The pandemic had been one of the most impactful in human history, and had hit Latin America and the Caribbean the hardest, in terms of health and the economy. The uncertainty relating to unforeseen events, current events and extreme events needed to be managed, because it impacted peoples' everyday lives. In that regard, the SDGs were more important than ever. For 30 years, UNDP had tried to shape how development was thought about globally, through instruments such as reports and multidimensional poverty indices. One of the best public policy instruments to reduce uncertainty, manage risk, and protect people was social protection. In concluding, he said there was a need to rethink the social contract in region, with a new approach to social protection that was universal, fiscally sustainable and growth-friendly.

13. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that in the last two years the region had had to mourn a large number of deaths and infections owing to COVID-19 and that, while vaccines had been good news, there had also been marked inequality in access to them and unacceptable differences between the global North and the global South, which had led to a call to promote international cooperation mechanisms to accelerate the vaccination process. The pandemic had become a multidimensional disaster: what had begun as a health crisis had rapidly transformed into an economic and social crisis of major proportions, the worst in 100 years. Geological and hydrometeorological disasters, as well as the effects of climate change, were also a central concern for the region because of the enormous uncertainty they generated. Added to this was a fiscal crisis that had to be tackled by putting people's rights and social inclusion first, overcoming the old formulas of austerity as a means of reactivation. She underscored the need for progress in reducing both vulnerabilities and the population's exposure to the effects of disasters, containing the deepening of the cross-cutting structural inequalities that characterized the region. The increasing recurrence and intensity of disasters and the multidimensionality of their impacts in the region had heightened the need to move towards a comprehensive approach that not only addressed disasters, but also emphasized the role of prevention. The Caribbean subregion was vulnerable to disasters and their systemic impacts, and the Conference was an ideal space to amplify the voice of the Caribbean, with its specificities, challenges and lessons learned.

14. The Executive Secretary also said that in the past two decades, proposals had been developed that had highlighted the importance of social protection systems in dealing with emergencies triggered by disasters. A transformative recovery with equality and sustainability that allowed challenges to be met by seizing opportunities required public policy decisions in the area of social protection to ensure income security to achieve basic levels of well-being, with food and nutrition security and access to education and health for the entire population. She also underscored the need to ensure access to quality basic services (water, sanitation, electricity and Internet connection), as well as the need for innovative investment proposals to achieve universal care and decent housing for all, social inclusion and decent work. Those initiatives would make it possible to advance in achieving the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and would generate important synergies with economic growth and care for the environment. The region had to continue striving for a robust social institutional framework, financial sustainability of social protection systems, regional integration and international cooperation. It was also necessary to emphasize the role of multilateralism and the use of the various regional integration instruments to improve the response, especially in cross-border spaces or among small island developing States. COVID-19 had brought to the fore the importance of developing inclusive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems that would leave no one behind and provide the tools to best cope with the impacts of different phenomena, with foresight and responsiveness. Finally, she said that it was imperative to implement new social and fiscal compacts that would help to strengthen universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems.

Report by the Chair on the activities carried out since the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 3)

15. The report was presented by Javier May, Secretary of Welfare of Mexico (by video), who recalled the adoption of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development at the third session of the Conference. In order to follow up on the implementation of the Agenda, working groups had been set up to address social protection systems, social and labour inclusion policies, and regional cooperation and integration. Meetings had been held to share how the ministries of social development were dealing with the pandemic and its effects on the most vulnerable populations, and it had been concluded that their work should focus on older persons, persons with disabilities, children and adolescents, indigenous peoples and persons living in poverty, in order to guarantee them health care, food and psychosocial support. He mentioned the presentation of the Social Development and COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean portal and the website of the Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean virtual community, as well as the holding of meetings to follow up to the implementation of the Agenda, on the issues of social protection, identification of vulnerable groups in the context of the pandemic, social information systems and social and solidarity economy, among others. There would be no development if the poorest people were left behind and ministries of social development had to implement rights-based policies and to foster the welfare state.

Presentation of the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* (agenda item 4)

16. In her presentation of the document, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC highlighted the link between social protection systems and disaster risk management policies and said that the health crisis showed the vulnerability of the population and countries' policy response and adaptation capacity, while providing an opportunity to link those policies and strengthen the resilience of people and institutions to get back on track towards achieving the SDGs. The region faced the paradox of an economic recovery from the decline in 2020, but with little genuine growth, informality and unemployment, which meant that States had to continue providing support, along with transformative recovery strategies, with an emphasis on investment with equality and sustainability. There was need of a universal social protection perspective with a rights-based approach that was sensitive to differences and encompassed a comprehensive care system with new social and fiscal compacts to ensure the financial sustainability of universal social protection and strengthen intraregional cooperation, which was essential for eliminating global asymmetries in the face of weakened multilateralism. She mentioned five lessons from the pandemic that the document addressed: (i) the global health disaster exposed structural inequalities in the region; (ii) government responses in light of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development had been swift, but insufficient; (iii) the health crisis had been exacerbated by disasters and climate change; (iv) there was an urgent need for universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems amid a constant and growing threat to well-being and (v) addressing disasters and building resilience in the Caribbean meant tackling a multidimensional crisis and addressing global asymmetries.

17. The Executive Secretary highlighted the frequency and magnitude of disasters in the Caribbean along with the fact that the region was the hardest hit by the pandemic and faced great inequality in the vaccination process. She emphasized that interregional cooperation was urgent. Latin America and the Caribbean was the most indebted region in the world with the highest external debt service, while global wealth was increasing. At the same time, the region emitted fewer greenhouse gases, but was more affected by their consequences. The pandemic had set back progress towards the SDGs, although social policies had partially mitigated its impact. It was important to maintain support to contain falling incomes for the middle- income strata and rising inequality. A public policy was needed to link social protection with

disaster management. To that end, she proposed an approach based on instruments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement. Social protection had to be considered part of a comprehensive system of policies to address disasters with investment over time, for preparedness, prevention, mitigation and adaptation, strengthening social and institutional resilience. In order to move towards a care society with universal social protection, it was necessary to guarantee income, ensure policies for dual inclusion (social and labour) and a basic emergency income, universalize basic public services, including a basic digital basket, and access to housing, with public and private care systems. Social institutions, international cooperation between ministries of social development and their incorporation into national disaster management systems, professionalization of teams and the sharing of experiences had to be strengthened. She also underscored the importance of long-term social compacts and fiscal compacts to ensure financial sustainability, because social unrest was an indicator of the unviability of the prevailing development model.

18. Rodrigo Abdala Dartigues, Chief of the Development Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Secretariat of Welfare of Mexico, said that with disasters on the rise and in the midst of the pandemic, the presentation of the document was timely as disasters had affected the global economy and threatened access to development, poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities. Among the measures implemented by governments, he highlighted those aimed at guaranteeing income and food, as well as access to basic services. He also mentioned transfers, which had helped to boost consumption, revive the economy and protect households. He underscored the benefits of international cooperation in strengthening capacities for foresight, repair and resilience, leaving no one behind. He concluded by stressing the importance of continuing to strengthen South-South cooperation.

19. Dean Jonas, Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda, said that the pandemic would continue to have multidimensional effects and that intersectionality underpinned increasing poverty and inequality. Social protection therefore had to be inclusive and use different means to ensure the well-being of all people. Climate change and disasters had exacerbated the effects of the pandemic in the Caribbean, and strengthened risk management plans and systems were required to keep basic services operational and respond to the needs of the population. In view of the weakness of social protection systems, cohesion and synergies between the various sectors needed to be increased and financial sustainability ensured. He referred to the classification of the countries of the region as middle-income countries, which made them ineligible for various sources of financing. His country supported the view that there was a need for universal, solidarity-based and sustainable social protection systems and to move towards greater economic, social and institutional resilience. Finally, he underscored the importance of incorporating mental health services into social protection systems and said that the culture of privilege had to end in order to adopt a blueprint for a culture of equality that would allow equitable development.

20. In the ensuing discussion, Calae Phillipe, Director of the Department of Gender and Family Affairs of the Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development of the Bahamas, said that there was no one-size-fits-all solution in terms of an economic strategy to respond to the crisis and that elements such as countries' population size therefore had to be considered. Regarding the classification of the countries of the region as middle-income countries, she said that beyond the impact of disasters, it was impossible to maintain support for the population without access to international financing in the context of the pandemic.

21. Raúl Antonio Espinal Fiallos, Ministerial Adviser of the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Honduras, said that it was not only the size of the territory that determined the impact of disasters, but also the fact that countries were multicultural and that meant it was necessary to develop strategic plans that factored in the differences within countries, with a focus on vulnerable groups.

22. Juan Luis Bermúdez, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica, noted that although disasters had negatively affected social development indicators, they had resulted in a strengthening of social protection systems at an unprecedented pace. He stressed the importance of risk management and social protection systems as determinants of disaster impact, and said that data analysis systems had made it possible to identify populations that were often excluded from targeting paradigms. Because of disasters, families had lost the development achieved over generations and their debt had increased. Finally, he noted that it was key to highlight the structural adjustment programmes that the countries of the region should adopt through a progressive social investment exercise.

23. Virginia Marlen García, Director General of the National Institute of Social Security of Cuba, expressed her country's agreement with the points made in the document presented and stressed that Cuba was in an area exposed to hurricanes for a period of six months a year, so the social security system had to guarantee coverage and sustainability. She mentioned the existence of a social security pension that could be collected electronically and reached more than 1.6 million beneficiaries.

24. Rosario del Pilar Díaz Garavito, Executive Director of The Millennials Movement, highlighted the importance of including a multigenerational approach in the responses designed to meet challenges, ensuring quality education with a gender focus for children, adolescents and young people.

25. Finally, Ruth Spencer, focal point for the Caribbean of the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the 2030 Agenda and the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development, stressed the importance of reinforcing the functioning and participation of civil society organizations, as that strengthened democracy. In the face of the severe ongoing crisis, it was key to think innovatively and strengthen governance, putting forward development models and social protection systems that enhanced the rights of those who were vulnerable and marginalized, such as LGBTIQ+ persons and people living with HIV. Disasters were the result of a model of overexploitation of resources that affected environmental sustainability. She underscored the urgent need for countries to ensure quality public services and to move towards universal and sustainable social protection systems in line with the 2030 Agenda, to advocate for public policies that encompassed care, social inclusion and social protection at all stages of the life cycle, to strengthen policies that ensured decent and safe work, and to recognize civil society as a key actor in development, strengthening mechanisms for dialogue and inclusion in decision-making processes on social protection and environmental issues.

26. With regard to the classification of the countries of the region as middle-income countries, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the Commission, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was developing a vulnerability index and that work was under way with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to replace per capita GDP as a development indicator since it did not adequately reflect the vulnerability of countries, particularly those of the Caribbean. The new index would take into account countries' size and insularity.

Review of the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* (agenda item 6)

27. Four panel discussions were held, and addressed priority issues included in the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* and in the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development.

Panel 1 – Social protection in the midst of disaster in the Caribbean: building resilience to address multidimensional crises

28. Panel 1 was moderated by Diane Quarless, Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, and the panellists were: Orlando Brewster, Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Youth, Housing and Informal Human Settlement of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Adis King, Minister of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors' Security, and Dominicans with Disabilities of Dominica, Pierre Ricot Odney, Director of Studies and Programming Unit, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST) of Haiti, Regis Chapman, Country Director and Representative, World Food Programme Multi-Country Office for the English-speaking and Dutch Caribbean, and Elizabeth Riley, Representative of the Caribbean Disasters Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

29. In introducing the panel, the Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda, in his capacity as Chair of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, welcomed the participants and said that the increasing recurrence and intensity of disasters and the multidimensionality of their impacts in the Caribbean subregion had heightened the need to move towards a comprehensive approach that also emphasized the role of protection. The analyses and proposals contained in the position paper were an invitation to the region's governments to adopt the institutional reforms needed to establish universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems which, in conjunction with disaster management systems, would make it possible to put adequate preparedness policies in place for future extreme events and to support a rapid, lasting and sustainable recovery. The panel would reflect on the role of social protection systems in the situation of crisis within crisis and the challenges in the face of the greater recurrence and severity of disasters, in order to advance in the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality, leaving no one behind in the Caribbean.

30. The Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, moderator of the panel, said that COVID-19 had widened the fissures of inequality in the Caribbean and exposed the weaknesses in the subregion's social safety nets. Given the profound impact of multidimensional crises on the welfare of the Caribbean people, strengthened social protection systems had emerged as an increasing imperative in policymaking and debate, and government strategies, policies and investment should move towards a double resilience approach at the community and institutional levels. Disaster risk reduction would need to become an integral element of social protection systems and strategies for resilient recovery and development in the Caribbean. The panel would share their experiences and consider how reforming existing mechanisms for integrated response could enable the transition to a more sustainable system resilient to future shocks and explore how best to advance a more inclusive protection agenda.

31. The Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Youth, Housing and Informal Human Settlement of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines said that his Ministry's most critical mandate was social protection for the vulnerable in a country beset by myriad crises in the last two years. With the COVID-19 crisis compounded by the eruption of La Soufrière and the damage caused by Hurricane Elsa, legislation had been adopted to provide medical, education and other forms of assistance. National policies and programmes adopted included a monthly cash transfer for COVID-19 patients, housing for citizens forced to relocate or whose homes had been destroyed, and financial aid for those lacking stable incomes. International organizations and donor agencies had provided much-needed support, but challenges remained, especially ensuring the sustainability of assistance post-disaster. The establishment of a contingency fund and parliament approval of a supplementary budget were part of efforts to return to normal. Finally, He welcomed UNICEF assistance in the area of client empowerment and underscored the importance of psychosocial support post-disaster.

32. The Minister of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors' Security, and Dominicans with Disabilities of Dominica said her government continued to build resilience and sustainability amidst the ongoing pandemic, just four years after Hurricane Maria, one of the strongest in history. In the hurricane's immediate aftermath, the government had nonetheless set a goal to become the world's first climate-resilient nation and developed a number of strategies and plans to translate that vision. The instruments developed in the country were committed to social protection programming with observable impacts on gender equality, poverty reduction, livelihood restoration, food security, education and health. Social protection programmes had to incorporate climate and other risk considerations. Dominica had limited financial resources and data analysis, which in turn restricted the implementation of social programmes and response activities. The government continued to be very open to partnerships with regional and international agencies.

33. The Director of the Studies and Programming Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour of Haiti said that his country was highly exposed to shocks and listed some of the major natural disasters it had experienced in recent years. Since the earthquake in 2010, the government had worked to establish multisectoral structures comprising a group of ministries led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and with the participation of other institutions to intervene in the event of natural disasters. Whereas in 2010 there had been no system in place to generate data, there was now a national information system that collected household data through a questionnaire and an algorithm to determine vulnerability to disasters. The scores produced determined the national vulnerability index. Financing the social protection system was a big challenge in Haiti and a proposal had been made to establish a fund for that purpose. It was important for the different countries of the Caribbean to share experiences and determine the best mechanisms to develop social protection systems adapted to the reality of each country.

34. The Country Director and Representative of the World Food Programme Multi-Country Office for the English-speaking and Dutch Caribbean said that there was increasing interest and experience in social protection in the subregion. Pre-pandemic systems were characterized by low coverage, low values and limited administrative and operational capacity, as conflicting priorities had taken precedence. Governments had turned to social protection to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and the challenges of onboarding of recipients, targeting and verification, and delivery of cash assistance became opportunities to strengthen social protection systems. Some countries had digitalized processes and adopted open-source tools and data visualization methods but strengthening the information management systems underpinning social protection and establishing social registries remained a priority. Further investment in digital data collection and payment tools was critical to strengthen the everyday functioning of social protection systems and scale up disaster response capacity. Vulnerability analysis and targeting were other emerging priorities. With high debt levels and limited fiscal space worsened by COVID-19, social protection systems had to broaden their objectives to include resilience-building. Incorporating food security and shock response, including disaster risk finance strategies and linking of parametric insurance to disbursement, would enhance systems' economic and financial stability. Funds had to be channelled to cohesive and inclusive social protection systems; without investment, the impacts of sudden onset emergencies or long-haul crises such as the pandemic would continue to erode the subregion's development gains. Analysis of how to link disaster risk finance instruments to social protection systems had progressed, but relevant national authorities had to ensure that administrative and legal frameworks were in place for the efficient disbursement of funds. He then highlighted the need to formalize arrangements for access to and sharing of loss and damage data, to emphasize the role of risk transfer and retention in the use of social protection in emergency response and disaster management, and to raise awareness on the financial tools available to manage risks.

35. The Executive Director of the Caribbean Disasters Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) said that Caribbean States were affected by disasters increasing in number and in the extent of damages and losses. Additionally, the complexity of disasters —happening concurrently or sequentially, with the first hazard likely to worsen the impact of the second— changed the socioeconomic profile of populations. A 2020 IDB study showed that the share of households earning less than minimum wage had more than doubled in the first six weeks of the pandemic alone. She referred to three main challenges to social protection. First, traditional institutional arrangements in CDEMA participating States were ill-suited to an integrated approach to disaster management and social protection. Second, social protection planning parameters no longer matched post-disaster needs: populations deemed vulnerable before a disaster were not the only ones that national systems had to support, as other groups slipped below the poverty line in its aftermath. Third, social protection systems were not built to handle situations requiring mobilization of resources for extended periods. She identified four key areas going forward. The integration of social protection and disaster risk had to be rethought from a strategic policy perspective; social protection had already been identified as a critical pillar in the subregion’s Comprehensive Disaster Management Framework and Community Resilience Framework. Opportunities offered by existing partnerships and emerging entities, such as the forthcoming Caribbean Resilient Recovery Facility, had to be leveraged while ensuring coordination between external support and national actions. Given the many uncertainties regarding climate change and related hazards, agility and flexibility would be essential to ensure social protection systems responded adequately post-disaster and to rethink how social protection factored into preparedness, particularly for pockets of populations without the capacity to execute preparedness guidelines. Lastly, the disaster risk financing conversation had to include appropriate financing of populations’ social protection requirements. Referring to the contingency fund mentioned by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, she looked forward to an explicit statement on the role such funds could play and intergovernmental discussion of a policy position on the use of payouts from entities such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

36. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Colombia, citing cash transfer and other assistance programmes implemented in her country after Hurricane Iota, asked the panellists how their governments worked with stakeholders, such as transport companies, to mobilize aid and deliver donations in the immediate aftermath of disasters. The Minister of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors’ Security, and Dominicans with Disabilities of Dominica said that transport was indeed a major challenge and seaworthy boats had been used to deliver aid to hard-to-reach locations or transfer patients. Barbadian security forces had also delivered food supplies. In terms of financial assistance, Dominica had established a disaster fund, having learned from past disasters, and funding had also been received from the World Food Programme (WFP). She said that disaster plans should identify which partners could provide specific types of assistance and underscored the value of cooperation and good neighbourly relations. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda said that the coping capacity of different population groups varied widely and social protection mechanisms had to take that into account. It should not be assumed, therefore, that all vulnerable groups needed the same support. Data collection and evidence-based interventions were important, given the evolving and intersecting nature of hazards, for understanding the challenges faced and support needed.

37. In closing, the moderator highlighted some key takeaways of the session, including the need for a stronger link between disaster risk management and social protection, the importance of forecasting and preparation of contingency plans, the need for greater integration and cooperation arrangements between institutions providing support and member States, the importance of data and finding ways to strengthen data at the local and national levels as well as across the region, and finally the need to equip governments to support social protection strategies in a protracted crisis.

Panel 2: Proposals for a transformative, resilient and inclusive recovery led by ministries of social development

38. Panel 2 was moderated by Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer of the Social Development Division of ECLAC, and the panellists were: Dina Boluarte Zegarra, Vice-President and Minister of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru, Martín Lema, Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, Luiz Antonio Galvão, Deputy Minister and Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Citizenship of Brazil, Axel Renato Palma Ramos, Vice-Minister of Policy, Planning and Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development of Guatemala, Raúl Salazar, Chief of the Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean of United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and Mariya Aleksandrova, Senior Researcher of the German Development Institute (GDI).

39. The Senior Social Affairs Officer of the Social Development Division of ECLAC, in his capacity as moderator, stressed that, amid the effects of the pandemic, the aim was to foster a transformative recovery and strengthen social policies consistent with universal social protection systems that were sensitive to the differences between populations and territories and that were comprehensive and resilient. Such systems should prepare the population to respond autonomously and adapt to disaster situations, should be coordinated, consider a life-cycle vision and be socially, politically and financially sustainable. He underscored the importance of including a forward-looking perspective in those policies and mentioned various proposals: income protection with emergency transfers and other mechanisms; focus on food and nutrition security; access to quality housing and basic services, including a basic digital basket, and advances in the care society. It was necessary to strengthen dual inclusion (social and labour) and to invest in social infrastructure.

40. The Vice-President and Minister of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive and coordinated system of social protection for the vulnerable, mentioned various strategies implemented by the Ministry and said there was an urgent need to expand them to guarantee a universal minimum and specific measures for the most vulnerable groups. It was crucial to broaden the scope of the Ministry's work, which focused on the poor and extremely poor. Notable measures included the National Programme of Direct Support for the Poorest (*Juntos*), the “Pension 65” National Solidarity Assistance Programme and the Yanapay voucher. In the medium term, it would be key to lay the foundations for a new intersectoral social contract that prioritized human development, sustainability, equity and access to quality public services. There was a need to review priorities and develop a new generation of policies to respond to old and new challenges. An integrated public sector response was required to equip poor and vulnerable households with assets and tools to cope with income loss and food insecurity in the framework of a social contract that placed emphasis on human development, sustainability and equality in a cross-cutting manner. In that regard, she stressed the urgency of strengthening family farming initiatives and complementary measures such as the “*Mankachay Perú*” (*Mi Ollita Perú*)” community kitchens. It was essential to promote economic inclusion, and intersectoral and multidimensional coordinated social protection policies and programmes that would increase incomes and strengthen the resilience of families and individuals, with a life-cycle approach.

41. The Minister of Social Development of Uruguay stressed that the measures implemented had been evaluated positively, as the available resources had been allocated on the basis of previous measurements and projections. Support in terms of food and family allowances for socially and economically vulnerable people had been maintained, and innovations had been incorporated in the provision of emergency food baskets for those who were not included in the social benefits registers, among other measures. In 2022, resources would be allocated to early childhood, with an expansion in the number of care centres and strengthening of the care system so that people could go out to work. There were also plans to accumulate family allowances and labour income from formal employment, which would increase the purchasing

power of people in vulnerable situations, without excluding persons above a certain income threshold from family allowances. Finally, he noted that in 2022 it would be necessary to mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic, within a framework of inter-agency strengthening and coordination, as well as regional collaboration and cooperation.

42. The Deputy Minister and Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Citizenship of Brazil said that more than 69 million people in his country had been quickly provided with cash transfers to overcome the income crisis. An emergency law had been passed to make an initial direct transfer, creating the Auxílio Brasil programme that targeted the population living in poverty and extreme poverty, which had been simplified by establishing benefits for three categories of individuals or families. Those in vulnerable conditions could benefit from other policies relating to labour inclusion and productivity, as well as from incentives for entrepreneurship through access to microloans and training or financial education courses for the creation of their own business, and micro-entrepreneurship programmes had been implemented in rural areas, providing incentives for family agricultural production. Finally, he said that policies to encourage formal work through training courses and skills training had been strengthened.

43. The Vice-Minister of Policy, Planning and Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development of Guatemala said that his country had acted quickly to implement mitigation measures targeting the most vulnerable population. Under the *Bono Social* programme, households living in poverty and extreme poverty or meeting certain requirements received conditional transfers and food baskets had been provided. He also said that health and education grants had been provided, in line with the World Bank's recommendations on co-responsibility in regular health checks for children. In 2019, the Cabinet for Social Development had been established to coordinate the inter-agency implementation of a comprehensive social protection system aimed at improving people's quality of life. The *K'atun: Our Guatemala 2032* National Development Plan contained a set of national priorities and goals against which social programmes should be aligned, and in that context work on various issues was being carried out through thematic round tables. The country had also been working on comprehensive disaster risk management and participating in some regional disaster risk management programmes. Lastly, he said that a disaster prevention fund had been established.

44. The Chief of the Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean of United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) said that social protection instruments had been useful in increasing household resilience, providing a safety net and cushioning the loss of assets. Programmes must reach those who, while not poor, were vulnerable and recent ECLAC studies had shown that a significant proportion of the population was falling back into poverty in the wake of disasters. It was possible to adapt mechanisms to reduce the number of people falling back into poverty by defining, in addition to the poverty line, vulnerability lines as a criterion for resource allocation and programme design. Redefinition of the notion of "natural" disaster was needed, as risk was a social construct combining hazard, exposure and personal and social vulnerability. He underlined that social protection systems increased the capacity of institutions and populations to lower vulnerability to complex, interconnected and simultaneous hazards. That would require an institutional framework that approached risk from a preventive, cross-sectoral and whole-of-government perspective. Lastly, he welcomed the fact that the document presented linked disaster risk reduction systems and social development to an overall development agenda.

45. The Senior Researcher at the German Development Institute (GDI) highlighted some key elements for improving coherence between climate change and social protection policies, in line with the 2030 Agenda: (i) political recognition of the importance of the link between climate change issues and social protection responses and policies; (ii) the integration of long-term policies and vision to address the changing climate with a view to reducing environmental damage, and (iii) involving various stakeholders

with local and adaptive approaches in national and international decision-making processes regarding climate risks, the dynamic and complex nature of which called for institutions with adaptive capacity. With the spectre of climate change, social protection must involve policies, planning, risk evaluation and financing for the implementation of programmes. Instruments and funding modalities were required so that the necessary levels of risk management and prevention actions could be taken for the implementation of urgent modalities for emergency response or recovery. She suggested that the report could mention the need for countries to consider adapting the financial architecture, supplementing social protection measures with available funds and aligning goals with national strategies.

46. In the ensuing discussion, Cynthia Forde, Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs of Barbados, said that the debt burdens of many countries of the region limited governments' capacity to face shocks and build resilience and it was vital to rebuild with appropriate infrastructure plans, while striving to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable. It was essential to expand and modernize social protection agencies, develop more infrastructure, share databases and apply a holistic approach to design means of meeting needs without duplication. Lastly, she emphasized the usefulness of having a one-stop shop that provided social services and reached those most in need.

47. Ruth Spencer, focal point for the Caribbean of the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the 2030 Agenda and the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development, explained that churches played a key role in education in her country and asked the Minister of Uruguay to provide information on the conditions of early childhood education in his country. He said that the government's approach to education was secular, engaging in dialogue with educational institutions and coordinating with other public and civil society organizations and institutions, to provide grants for social and educational integration or support for families without easy access to preschools.

48. Vanesa Wainstein, Special Advisor to the Minister for International Affairs and Relations in the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina, said that contributory and non-contributory entitlements had been maintained or expanded in her country, financed by a one-off wealth tax and higher tax receipts. Efforts were focused on technological transition and promoting the circular and popular economy in 4,000 neighbourhoods. She also mentioned the *Potenciar Trabajo* programme, which transformed social plans into salaried and registered work with productive inclusion and training for people in precarious employment or unemployed persons with a view to increasing resilience, among other objectives.

49. Lastly, Claudia Martínez, Coordinator for Partnerships and International Cooperation of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity of Colombia, pointed out that the current meeting was being held shortly after the presentation of the report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence of the United States, which showed that 11 countries, among which ranked Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, were particularly vulnerable to climate change. She added that there was an urgent need to strengthen institutions, South-South cooperation and public-private partnerships for technical and financial cooperation to implement the necessary policies, combat corruption and improve information systems to respond to natural disasters in a timely manner.

Panel 3: Rethinking social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean, session led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

50. The panel was moderated by Georgiana Braga Orillard, Resident Representative of UNDP in El Salvador. Luis Felipe López-Calva, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP, delivered an opening statement. The panellists were Santiago Levy, Senior Fellow with the Global Economy and Development Program at the Brookings Institution; Delma Thomas, Minister for Social

Development, Housing and Community Empowerment of Grenada; María Inés Castillo, Minister of Social Development of Panama; Carmen Marín, Minister in the Management Unit of the Office of the President and General Coordinator of the Social Cabinet of Paraguay; Jesús Otamendiz Campos, Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security of Cuba; Pablo Sanguinetti, Vice President of Knowledge of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); and Marina Walter, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

51. The Resident Representative of UNDP in El Salvador said that there was a need to overhaul social protection to make it more effective and for a renewed social contract, against the backdrop of immediate and urgent needs. The SDGs would serve as a compass for achieving universal social protection. Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)—from technology start-ups to street vendors, all of which fell into the same category, but had very different characteristics—must be taken into account in the redesign of social protection systems. Lastly, she stressed the importance of a human approach to closing gaps in social protection systems.

52. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP said that Latin America had been hardest hit by COVID-19 and the region was far from having its entire population vaccinated. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that informality would increase, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. The region was trapped in a vicious circle of high inequality, low growth and low productivity. A new social contract was therefore necessary, in which social protection systems were seen as fair, sustainable and universal; they must become a springboard for a virtuous circle, for tackling issues such as productivity and inequality, which undermined the social contract and generated mistrust. The objective was to leave no one behind. In closing, he noted that the increasing frequency of disasters meant that they should be considered in social protection systems from a systemic approach based on the aforementioned social contract.

53. The Senior Fellow with the Global Economy and Development Program at Brookings Institution said that it was time to redesign social protection given that, despite its expansion, there were high levels of poverty and inequality and slow growth, due to stagnating productivity. He offered several insights into how social protection played a role in that regard. First, social protection policies were ineffective, as most workers moved between formal and informal jobs; in the region, non-contributory social protection was tied to informal employment and workers moving to formal employment lost their entitlements. While transfer programmes had helped to reduce poverty, they created informality and poverty traps. Second, social protection policies could weaken productivity and growth, as contributory social security, along with wages and other benefits, were a barrier to formal employment. Third, the strategy for socially inclusive growth in the region encompassed macroeconomic policies for stabilization, market policies for growth, human capital policies for innovation, and social protection policies for inclusion. Fourth, increasing social protection spending was unlikely to increase growth and productivity; there was a need to consider more universal social protection—regardless of a worker's formal or informal status—that was more effective, fiscally sustainable and conducive to overall growth. Fifth, the region was the slowest-growing and most unequal in the world and a change of strategy was urgently needed. The aim was to increase social protection coverage and spending, which could start with reforms in pensions, health or conditional transfers. A clear objective was essential. It was time to rethink social protection with a comprehensive vision.

54. The Minister for Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment of Grenada said that the pandemic should be seized as an opportunity to reflect on how to reformulate social protection. Social protection was undergoing change in Grenada and the government was pursuing a system to leave no one behind, with policies on youth, gender and family support, older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as care, psychosocial support, housing, domestic violence, education and empowerment.

Grenada had provided direct transfers to the most vulnerable households and developed a system identifying households with the most needs on the basis of housing conditions, access to services, and environmental, labour, demographic and health conditions.

55. The Minister of Social Development of Panama said that social protection should provide support to citizens in times of crisis and that in her country the non-contributory dimension focused on the vulnerable population through transfer and support programmes under a system linking social protection to production processes and growth. Differences related to age, geographical area, development and infrastructure must be taken into account in rethinking a comprehensive and inclusive social protection system, for which coordination between all programmes and sectors in a particular context was required. Social protection systems served to stabilize the economy, which had been evident during the emergency caused by the pandemic. One of the lessons learned was that the response must be comprehensive and coherent, so that everyone has access to minimally acceptable goods and services, and must address all dimensions of vulnerability. Major challenges included early childhood policies, environmental protection and caring for communities, technology use and the need to improve current information systems.

56. The Minister in the Management Unit of the Office of the President and General Coordinator of the Social Cabinet of Paraguay said it was necessary to rethink social protection. In the last two decades, Paraguay had seen a 50% reduction in poverty and an increase in the middle class, but structural challenges remained, with 65% of workers in the informal sector and a large share of employment concentrated in micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The demographic structure offered some scope for reflecting on changes in social protection. Policies had been expanded to include vulnerable workers, but there was a large proportion of self-employed workers, for whom participation in the contributory social protection system was not compulsory and who were not covered. She argued that political consensus was required for changes to be sustainable and that in re-examining social protection systems, consideration should be given to labour market structure, the level of productivity of jobs, new forms of work, such as those taking place on digital platforms, and the volatility of incomes.

57. The Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security of Cuba said that his country's civil defence system protected the entire population in the event of disasters and linked local government, communities and organizations. Referring to the pandemic, he said that despite the blockade, Cuba had administered three doses of the vaccine to more than 80% of its population and was currently vaccinating children. Decent work and social protection programmes were being implemented, and the country had established its first Social and Labour Observatory, which aimed to monitor social protection conditions with a view to proposing policies to include the entire population and reduce gaps.

58. The Vice President of Knowledge of the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) described some characteristics of social protection systems prior to the pandemic: they included income transfers, pensions and health care; social spending was increasing, but varied greatly from country to country; coverage reached only a few, as informality excluded some people from contributory social protection; cash transfer programmes increased incentives for informality; and pension systems lacked financial sustainability, with payments below the poverty line. The many changes that had been made during the health emergency included the increase in system coverage and amounts, accounting for almost 1.8% of GDP; the significant efforts to identify the families in need of support; and the introduction of electronic payment methods. He noted that the idea in rethinking social protection system was not to create a completely universal system, but one that guaranteed well-being, was fiscally sustainable and that did not encourage informality. Better data were needed so that the amounts provided to informal workers could be adjusted and thus avoid creating incentives for them to remain in the informal sector [Author: please confirm interpretation]. The challenge was to maintain an inclusive system with sustained long-term growth, and social protection systems must be reconciled with that challenge.

59. The Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten said that social protection was a complementary disaster management tool to be used in crises such as the pandemic and it was crucial to seize the opportunity to reformulate and expand comprehensive social protection. An effective social protection system worked best when it was adapted in terms of security. Increased social protection coverage during the pandemic had ensured that more vulnerable people were able to receive support, and in the fiscally strapped Caribbean countries, health, employment and food security packages had been necessary. He added that to address the COVID-19 crisis, the Caribbean must build resilience by managing fiscal risk and that long-term initiatives were imperative for planning. Policies should be designed to reduce fiscal stress and increase security through inclusive social protection systems. Lastly, he said that in order to build resilience on a permanent basis, the fiscal space must be clarified prior to crises.

60. Commenting next, Guadalupe Landeros, General Director of the Life Insurance Programme for Female Heads of Households of the Secretariat of Welfare of Mexico, stressed the need to think about progressive and fair tax collection. She said that social protection should be sustainable in the long term, comprehensive and universal, with basic floors in education, health and other services, and that a fair income and employment must be guaranteed for all, as that was key to reducing inequality and poverty. In Mexico, there had been targeted action on the challenge of identifying the causes of poverty and inequality, as well as on designing social protection programmes that functioned in a coordinated manner, lowering the retirement age, implementing a universal pension with inflation-adjusted amounts, creating a programme for children with disabilities with working mothers, including those from indigenous families, the provision of direct transfers to families and advance payments under existing programmes, mainstreaming gender equality and combating discrimination [Author: please confirm change]. Lastly, she underscored the importance of strengthening ties among the countries of the region to work together in redesigning social protection systems.

61. Alejandra Corao, Acting Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), said that LGBTI persons were often excluded from social protection systems, with some exceptions such as Colombia and Argentina, where measures to protect them had been implemented. She said that leaving no one behind meant including LGBTI persons among those who should be taken into consideration in the reformulation of social security systems.

Panel 4: Opportunities and challenges for institutions towards a universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection system

62. The panel was moderated by Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC and the panellists were Juan Luis Bermúdez, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica; Karla Rubilar, Minister of Social Development and Family of Chile; Karl Samuda, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica; Diego Sánchez-Ancochea, Head of the Oxford Department of International Development of the University of Oxford; Vinícius Pinheiro, Regional Director, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Labour Organization (ILO); and Jarbas Barbosa, Assistant Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

63. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC said that the pandemic had made it necessary to rethink social protection systems with a view to implementing resilient social policies that took the probability of occurrence of disasters and risks into account. Social protection was a central part of sustainable development, which was a combination of economic growth, environmental stewardship and inclusive social development, and which was impossible without investment in social protection. Disasters and the pandemic were an opportunity to push the boundaries of the possible and further strengthen the

institutional and financial sustainability of social protection, in both contributory and non-contributory components. The increased frequency of disasters, climate change and the COVID-19 crisis have shown that it is imperative to rethink social protection and its provisions to continuously ensure the well-being of the population and those most affected by them, promoting universal, comprehensive and sustainable systems. As argued in the document presented, social protection systems must be dually resilient, with regard to both people and institutions.

64. The Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica said that the response to emergencies or disasters required hierarchy in chains of command without compromising the comprehensiveness and intersectorality of social institutions. In his country, the institutional framework operated via an order of command mobilizing the social sector, under the umbrella of the National Risk Management System, which had designed the emergency response in collaboration with cooperating entities, universities and other stakeholders. The chain of command must have the requisite flexibility to respond to the population's needs and to preserve life, health, shelter and private property and maintain social peace. Challenges existed in terms of information channels and systems and risk management during the emergency, as well as the need to establish protocols, document findings and report thereon to ensure accountability. From a prevention standpoint, social protection systems must shape national and risk management plans ahead of disasters. It was vital to prepare systems to provide the continuity of services required by populations during a disaster, and to have plans in place and managed with flexible financial sources so as to ensure budgetary continuity.

65. The Minister of Social Development and Family of Chile underscored the importance of facilitating regional spaces for sharing ideas and experiences on the challenges of moving towards a social protection system guaranteed for all. She outlined three key developments in Chile: the Social Protection Network, a one-stop shop bringing together all State social benefits through a network of institutions; the implementation of the Emergency Family Income, which had already provided assistance to more than 16.5 million people; and the application of new classification tools, notably the Emergency Basic Record (FIBE), which were essential for a coordinated response, in partnership with civil society, to the crises caused by natural disasters. She expressed her country's interest in joining the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In conclusion, she said that it was essential to strengthen the social protection network through the lens of economic and employment recovery and the co-responsibility of care, with a focus on older persons and homeless persons, moving forward in learning how to build a better future, and reflecting on a system for regional collaboration in health emergencies.

66. The Minister of Labour and Social Security of Jamaica said that his country was striving to implement a social protection system that was in line with the Vision 2030 Jamaica plan, with a view to protecting the most vulnerable population and address the severe problems caused by the pandemic. That effort was taking place against a backdrop of low growth and the implementation of creative policies to overcome public debt and provide the fiscal space for development projects with sustainable inclusive social protection, making good use of resources and promoting formal employment. He emphasized the need to expand social security coverage and sustain emergency management over time, promoting public-private partnerships. He noted that adequate social protection was lacking in Jamaica and that one lesson from the pandemic was the high degree of interconnectedness and interdependence that existed between all.

67. The Head of the Oxford Department of International Development of the University of Oxford noted three lessons learned from the pandemic that reinforced the need to consider universal social policies. First, distinguishing between types of workers was complex, because the separation between formal and informal was blurred and because part of the middle class was struggling. Therefore, what was needed was

a single system that could respond to shocks, not a non-contributory system for informal workers and a contributory one for the rest. Second, programmes that excluded some or relied solely on private systems were not an option, as social cohesion must be preserved, and a universal health system was key in that regard. Third, coordination among public policies (employment and social policies) was important, as they were part of the same issue. He said that continuous and sustained change towards universalism was needed and that the major threat for the region was the narrative of austerity for the sake of fast-tracking orthodox macroeconomic stability, compounded by a questioning of the efficiency of the State, which was at odds with recent events. He expressed concern that the expansion of social policy had not been accompanied by a public revenue policy, reflecting a lack of awareness of the window of opportunity to reform tax systems by making them more progressive.

68. The Regional Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of ILO said that informality was a compensatory mechanism for migrants or people who lost their jobs, but with the pandemic it had coincided with confinement policies, which had caused the withdrawal from the labour market, in particular by women, and had hampered response capacity. He spoke of the increase in emergency assistance and withdrawals from individually funded pension accounts, which would have future repercussions, and said that governments would have to make a special contribution to the minimum required components. Informality had been the hallmark of the response that had protected millions of people, without which poverty would have risen further. Looking ahead, it would be difficult to terminate the emergency packages that had enabled economies to function, as that would have major political implications, making it necessary to explore how they could be linked to the contributory system. Lastly, he said that an employment-based and people-centred recovery was needed.

69. The Assistant Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) shared some lessons for improving the speed and effectiveness of the response capacity. They included the need to regain lost ground in primary health, improve access and coverage, embrace the innovations of telemedicine and teleconsultations, and restore the leadership of health ministries in monitoring population health; formulate and implement evidence-based policies to promote health at the subnational and national levels, allocate resources and enact legislation to strengthen institutional mechanisms; ensure universal and free access to public health; revert to an approach of comprehensive and integrated health care, prevention and rehabilitation, and measures to address the determinants of health; maintain essential services during emergencies and the response capacity of the network ranging from primary care to specialised services; increase public spending to 6% of GDP and implement a change in detection, warning and response systems in health. Strengthened governance mechanisms were required to ensure equitable access to vaccines and other products (such as the COVAX Facility), and to enhance World Health Organization (WHO) governance in discussions on a new agreement on global governance mechanisms. Lastly, he said that preparedness and response procedures must be changed to deal with future pandemics, as the COVID-19 pandemic had shown that no country was prepared, and stressed that there would be no sustainable economic recovery without health.

70. In the statements that followed, the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica said that social protection systems had been designed in the twentieth century with people living in poverty and extreme poverty in mind, but the pandemic had shown that failing to guarantee social protection for the rest of the population was a major risk. Although unconditional cash transfers had been granted, because informal workers were not visible in the data system, it had become necessary to expand social programmes and care systems. He noted the implementation of self-managed information systems, in which digitalization had played a key role. Lastly, he said that it was essential to take the guarantee of rights one step further by including social and public health integration in policies on education, digital transformation and reskilling, while also focusing on universalism and social cohesion.

71. Vanesa Wainstein, Special Advisor to the Minister for International Affairs and Relations in the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina, said that her country was harmonizing the work of the Ministries of Health, Labour and Education. She highlighted various programmes, such as the Food Card, which allowed recipients of social assistance to work in various sectors without forfeiting their entitlements, including recipients in rural areas. The objective was to improve employment and generate new productive proposals through full social inclusion, which would allow them to afford a basic food basket. She also highlighted a programme to encourage green employment, targeting stakeholders in the popular economy, which sought to strengthen the circular economy and covered wages, equipment, health and safety, prevention and training in sustainable processes.

72. Antonio Manzi, National Director of Data Transfer and Analysis of the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay, spoke of some programmes implemented in his country and the concern regarding the inclusion of informal sector workers. Thanks to an agreement with Banco República and a mobile application (app), an emergency basket had been provided. Users could apply online or via the app, and if they met the criteria, they received a voucher that could be used in shops. Anyone registered as receiving an income or in a State system was eligible, and there was also a system whereby those who could not otherwise be reached could collect a food basket in person.

73. The Regional Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of ILO cited three lessons learned from the pandemic. First, he said that no one would be protected until everyone was protected and that many governments had regretted not having unemployment insurance or stronger social protection systems that could be expanded. Second, it was not a question of resources but of political will, since resources had been mobilized when necessary. Last, he said that informality was a social comorbidity that exacerbated the impact of the pandemic. Around 70% of new jobs would be informal and it must be reiterated that formal employment, not just any employment, was central.

74. The Assistant Director of PAHO said that the social safety net could enhance the effectiveness of public health measures to protect against the pandemic, but that in Latin America there had been sustained plateaus of high numbers of COVID-19 cases and informality had rendered public health measures less effective. The case detection and response capacity of health systems needed to be strengthened, not only with national resources, but also through global mechanisms for assessing early warning, disaster prevention, and response capacity, mobilizing the necessary resources for each country. Lastly, he noted that while the pandemic was more under control, a return to 2019 was not an option, and it was urgent to incorporate new strategies to make health systems more effective, with enhanced primary health care.

75. The Head of the Oxford Department of International Development of the University of Oxford said that the policy agenda could not be separated from the social agenda. The pandemic had shown how to support the middle class while supporting poorer groups, especially in times of crisis. Responding to a question regarding recent protests over tax reform in Colombia, he underscored the importance of linking the debate on revenues with expenditures, to raise awareness that taxation was necessary for the expansion of social policy. He said that protests should not be seen as a threat to the public sector, but rather as a space to engage with citizens to make it clear that it was a gradual process, to be taken one step at a time. He concluded by saying that it was a collective task, and he highlighted the important role of academia in policy formulation.

Other matters (agenda item 7)

76. There being no other matters to consider, the Chair moved to the next agenda item.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 8)

77. The member States of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the resolution, which appears in annex 1 to this report.

Closing session

78. In the closing session, statements were made by Dean Jonas, Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda; Luis Felipe López-Calva, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP; and Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

79. In his closing remarks, the Minister of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development and the Blue Economy of Antigua and Barbuda, in his capacity as Chair of the Regional Conference, said that during the enlightening meetings, several commonalities had been identified in the design of public policies to strengthen social protection and disaster risk management systems. The varying coping capacities of vulnerable groups must be addressed through a targeted and integrated approach to policy design and formulation, which required enhanced coordination and mobilization of institutional resources for universal, comprehensive and resilient systems. It was paramount to consider the multidimensional, intersecting and long-term nature of natural hazards and exogenous shocks and their implications. The countries of the region must equip the less fortunate not just with survival tools, but empower them, removing the overdependence on social protection entities, to break the cycle of poverty and economic hardship. Given the region's fiscal and economic problems, navigating the fiscal space and increasing resources to enhance social protection and disaster risk management systems was imperative to move forward with the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. Careful planning, budget allocations, and creative and innovative social investment would thus be required. Under his country's chairship, work would continue on an inclusive social development framework in line with the 2030 Agenda, focusing on the priority areas of data collection and harmonization; low-vulnerability and low-cost housing; enhanced social protection systems; mental health and psychosocial support; persons with disabilities; and unemployment benefits.

80. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP thanked the Chair for his leadership and the Executive Secretary of ECLAC for the continued trust and partnership in co-organization of the Conference. The rich dialogue and experience shared had paved the way for potential solutions, important conclusions and commitments. The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis had increased uncertainty, but countries must not lose sight of the aspirational vision of the 2030 Agenda, in which social development was embedded. Latin America and the Caribbean must ensure that the hazards which so heavily affected it did not become disasters. He recalled that the instruments and collective commitments discussed had a specific goal: to protect the most vulnerable from shocks, including macroeconomic volatility. UNDP had long focused on the challenge of effective governance and a renewed social contract with the requisite new policies, engagement and coalitions to make that feasible. As noted in the 2021 Regional Human Development Report, which highlighted the links between high inequality and low productivity, recovery was not possible without sustainable growth that provided the space to pursue development goals and create fiscally sustainable and cost-friendly instruments. As the development agency with largest global and regional presence globally, UNDP would continue to work with its partners to provide locally tailored solutions with global quality content. Countries could count on the Organization, which would continue working closely with ECLAC, to follow up the work of the Conference.

81. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC noted the significant overlap between the paper presented by the Commission and the comments made by the delegations. She referred to the challenge of implementing administrative records to make up for the lack of social registers in some countries, enabling the compilation of lists of recipients that would help to expand social coverage. Delegations had agreed that recent disasters in the region, particularly associated with COVID-19, had illustrated the need to place universal social protection at the centre of national disaster risk management strategies. That followed directly from the idea that disasters were not natural, but derived from a social construction of risk, brought about through a combination of hazards, exposure and, not least, vulnerability. It had been agreed that ministries and social development secretariats should be more actively involved in climate change policies. It was important to recognize that disasters were structural elements, not extraordinary circumstances, as they affected economies and jeopardized progress towards achieving the SDGs. Social protection systems must adapt and protect populations before, during and after crises, and cover vulnerable persons who were not poor, but who could fall into poverty in the wake of disasters. A multisectoral institutional approach was needed to move beyond risk management based on post-disaster response. Sustainability and resilience (social and institutional) were also central elements for dealing with disasters with an approach based on prevention and adaptation, not just response. She referred to the need for the countries of the region to bolster the linkages between non-contributory social protection and stronger social and labor inclusion, with differentiated arrangements for urban and rural areas, as well as the fact that information systems were crucial for effective emergency response. Moving towards a transformative recovery with equity and sustainability, which put decent work and social investment at the centre, was the requisite path to sustainable development. At the same time, there was an urgent need to invest in infrastructure to move towards a care society, which would increase employment in the short term, facilitate access to care services in the medium term, and boost child development and educational and productive capacities in the long term. That underscored the need to coordinate policies for dual social and labour market inclusion. Social and fiscal compacts were the bedrock of policies and addressing global asymmetries was a regional challenge.

82. The State and civil society also played key roles in advancing a comprehensive, universal and sustainable model. She recalled some key points raised by member countries of the Conference: (i) the recognition of mental health as a problem affecting well-being, especially in the light of the confinement measures to counter COVID-19; (ii) the difficulties that the most vulnerable households faced in meeting their basic needs; (iii) the classification of middle- and high-income countries and their inability to access international funding and cooperation; (iv) the challenge of developing a vulnerability index in the region; (v) the capacity of social protection and emergency institutions at the local level, taking into account the specificities of the territories, was the key to disaster response. The increasing recurrence and intensity of disasters and the multidimensionality of their impacts in the region had heightened the need to move towards a comprehensive approach that not only addressed disasters, but also emphasized the role of prevention. Disasters were not the only obstacle to social inclusion in the region; rather, they were among a host of historical and new challenges that called for effective, efficient and sustainable social policies. COVID-19 had brought to the fore the importance of developing inclusive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems that would leave no one behind and provide people and institutions with the tools to best cope with the impacts of different phenomena, with foresight and responsiveness. The lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic could turn the crisis into a window of opportunity for aligning policies to achieve the SDGs, leaving no one behind. In that context, the paper presented at the meeting was an invitation to decision makers to explore innovative social protection policy alternatives in the region. In closing, she said that it was simply not possible to continue doing the same thing and expect different results, and that, despite the extremely complex context, the implementation of the civilizational road map that the world had set itself in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was more necessary and imperative than ever.

Annex 1

RESOLUTION 4(IV)

At its fourth session, held in virtual format from 26 to 28 October 2021, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the chairship of Antigua and Barbuda,

Recalling resolution 682(XXXV) adopted at the thirty-fifth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in May 2014, in which the member States approved the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean as a subsidiary body of the Commission, as well as resolution 2014/32 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, by virtue of which the Council endorsed the establishment of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,

Bearing in mind the varying commitments made by the States of Latin America and the Caribbean concerning the complete fulfilment of human rights in the region, including the economic, social and cultural rights recognized globally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Millennium Declaration, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the endorsement by a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and in the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization, and in other regional instruments, such as the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Right, the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons,

Acknowledging the urgent threat that climate change represents for equitable access to social development, for poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities, as recognized in the Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Programming Framework 2014–2024, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement and the SIDs Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, and bearing in mind the vulnerability of the Caribbean region to a diversity of climate hazards or shocks, as well as the potential devastating impacts of climate change,

Noting that the heavy indebtedness and high debt servicing costs faced by Caribbean States compromise their financial capacity to invest meaningfully in inclusive social development initiatives,

Considering General Assembly resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), 74/274 of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, 74/306 of 11 September 2020 on the comprehensive and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 74/307 of 11 September 2020, on the united response against global health threats: combating COVID-19, 75/156 of 23 December 2020 on strengthening national and international rapid response to the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, and 75/157 of 23 December 2020 on women and girls and the response to COVID-19,

Recognizing the centrality of social development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its interdependence and linkages with economic and environmental development, and concurring that multilateralism and cooperation are central to the urgent common pursuit of a new model of development that will eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and reduce inequalities between and within countries, leaving no one behind, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets,

Reaffirming the instruments and agreements adopted at different intergovernmental forums on social development held in the region that emphasize the importance of promoting universal social protection, combating inequalities and eradicating poverty, including the resolution of the XII Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Commitments for Social Development adopted at the fourth meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Social Development of the Organization of American States and the Plan of Action of Guatemala 2019 adopted at their fourth meeting, the Intersectoral Regional Agenda on Social Protection and Productive Inclusion with Equity 2018–2030 of the Central American Social Integration Secretariat, and the Southern Common Market Strategic Plan for Social Action,

Reiterating the role played by the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a follow-up mechanism for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region and for establishing agreements on inclusive social development as a pillar of sustainable development,

Bearing in mind that resolution 2(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in October 2017, indicated that the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean is the ideal forum for combining efforts and building synergies between the different actors working on sustainable development for the regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with an approach that is centred on the social dimension and promotes South-South cooperation, and urged States to actively incorporate civil society in the preparation and discussion of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, in line with the multi-stakeholder approach enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in accordance with their normative and institutional frameworks,

Bearing in mind also that by resolution 3(III) adopted at the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in October 2019, the Regional Conference adopted and endorsed the proposals set forth in the regional agenda for inclusive social development, as a technical and political instrument that will enable progress towards the implementation of the social dimension of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the countries of the region, requested that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean provide technical assistance for the formation of working groups on issues and in policy areas identified by the countries, in order to promote experience-sharing, the construction of common agendas, the participation of and dialogue with civil society organizations, as well as the private sector, trade union organizations and academia, and urged the ministries of social development and equivalent entities in the countries to strengthen South-South cooperation mechanisms and triangulate development, inclusion and social protection, thereby helping to strengthen multilateralism in the social sphere,

Considering that the countries serving as Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, at their fourth meeting, held virtually, adopted the *Draft plan of work for implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development*,¹ and agreed to strengthen the development of the working groups regarding social inclusion and promote collaborative work and active participation by all the member countries of the Conference in the challenge of addressing the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,

¹ LC/MDS.4/3.

*Having examined the document Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean,*²

1. *Welcomes* the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean*, prepared by the secretariat, and requests the secretariat to disseminate it widely and encourage its discussion and analysis;

2. *Highlights* the importance of coordinating social protection systems with disaster risk management policies to strengthen the capacity for mitigation, prevention, response and adaptation and to advance in synergies that will improve the efficiency and resilience of institutions and the population;

3. *Reaffirms* its conviction that the sustained creation of productive employment and decent work, together with comprehensive, universal, sustainable and resilient social protection systems that make it possible to ensure access to quality education and health, housing and basic services, and care policies that ensure co-responsibility between the State and society and between women and men, are indispensable for a transformative recovery in the region;

4. *Also reaffirms* the importance of putting people and their rights at the heart of development, safeguarding the progress the region has achieved regarding social development and preventing setbacks as a result of the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;

5. *Reiterates* its conviction that multilateralism and cooperation are essential to making headway in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, including its social dimension, and that the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development contributes to this process, leaving no one behind;

6. *Acknowledges* the collaborative work and active participation of the member countries of the Conference in the implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, and their commitment to eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, addressing gaps in access to well-being and confronting the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic;

7. *Emphasizes* the contribution of civil society and other stakeholders to the process of discussing the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development and encourages their active participation in supporting its implementation and the monitoring of its progress in the countries and territories;

8. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to provide technical assistance to the working groups on specific issues and policy areas, in order to advance transformative recovery and further the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, through the exchange of experiences, the development of common agendas, and participation and dialogue with institutions, local government authorities and civil society organizations;

9. *Highlights* the importance of addressing, as a matter of priority, the multidimensional crisis facing Caribbean small island developing States as a result of the recurrence, scope and intensity of disasters and the problems of indebtedness and financing they face;

² LC/CDS.4/3.

10. *Reiterates* that States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

11. *Requests* the secretariat to analyse in greater depth the challenges and public policy alternatives in terms of making progress regarding the universality, comprehensiveness, sustainability and resilience of social protection systems, particularly in relation to the vulnerability of the middle-income sectors, labour informality and the new challenges in the labour market;

12. *Invites* the ministries of social development and equivalent entities in the countries to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms for development, inclusion and social protection, thereby helping to strengthen multilateralism in the social sphere, with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in keeping with the axes and lines of action of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development;

13. *Thanks* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for disseminating the Social Development Observatory and requests it to maintain and systematically update its analyses and databases on the basis of official data provided by the countries;

14. *Also thanks* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for organizing the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Social Development Division for preparing the corresponding documentation and the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean for its support in organizing the session;

15. *Thanks* the United Nations Development Programme for the joint organization of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the XIII Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

16. *Extends special recognition* to the Government of Mexico for its leadership as Chair of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America for the period 2019-2020 and its valuable contribution to its work;

17. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to convene the fifth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022;

18. *Conveys its thanks* to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for the excellent organization of the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex 2

CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION**Declaration from the Latin America and the Caribbean Civil Society to the IV Regional Conference on Social Development**25th October 2021**Building Consensus: to Universal Social Protection Systems to address disasters and Inequalities****The Context:**

The Civil Society from the region meeting in the Forum previous to the IV Regional Conference on Social Development agree on this Declaration focused on the challenges of Social Protection In front of disasters.

We are preoccupied by the increase of the amount, intensity and diversity of disasters in the region as well as the impact on the population. To this trend – since the recent years- now the COVID 19 pandemic add the devastating socioeconomic and sanitary effects. Today the region is in a critical moment, with great backwards and uncertainty, with important and recurrent disasters, socioeconomic crises and recession, sanitary and humanitarian crisis more deep since the last decades.

In this context, the Latin American and the Caribbean Mechanism of Civil Society Participation for Sustainable Development realized two preparatory meetings that culminate in this Forum to present their concerns and recommendations to Member States believing with the real participation of civil society , the deepen of democracy , the effective and institutionalized dialogue , the commitment and joint work are the way to rebuild without leaving anyone behind.

To address this multidimensional crisis - environmental, sanitary, socio-economical and of governance , its necessary to develop integral responses that mitigate and revert climate change that cause disasters, environment and social crises and built a universal , inclusive , sustainable , integral and with social justice social protection system altogether developing models focus on the creation of decent work , the inclusion and sustainability of the social and supportive economy and the implementation of mechanism to enhance rights particularly of those that are traditionally marginalized and the pandemic abandon them.

We claim those invisible became visible, they require a historic and urgent amendment allowing their plain participation as rights subjects, they are elderly people, women, indigenous, afro descendants, migrants and refugees, formal and informal workers, sex workers , and LGBTQI+ population, persons living with HIV, children and adolescents. It's also necessary to include human rights, environment and social defenders in order to eliminate their persecution and criminalization and in general to CSO that experienced the constrains of civic space to exercise their rights in democracy.

The development model and its challenges

The CS of LAC we agree in our debate about the climate disasters that affect the world and particularly our region, sometimes call "natural disasters while they are produce by the economic model based in the overexploitation of natural resources, the privatizations and the extreme interest in the economic benefit and the market over the peoples welfare, this are the opposite of the planet sustainability.

We are preoccupied on the recurrent concept of resilience that emphasize individual responsibility to adapt avoiding and decreasing the States responsibility to ensure an inclusive and sustainable development model, as well as universal quality public services of education, health, water and sanitation, energy, connectivity and care services provision.

It's urgent to strengthen the States in order they can bringing those universal of quality public services to all the population, and satisfy their basic needs and strengthen the community capacity When their houses and means of living are destroy.

The States must orient their policies to prevention measures including legislation that punish the environment degradation control with the CS participation as a condition of effective participation and involvement of populations. Public policies need to empower the crises and disasters victims as real stakeholders and rights subjects to rebuild their lives and projects.

WE oppose to all form of privatization of Social protection because they respond to their lucrative vision and imply the decrease of the rights. Most of this funds have big gains while they bring insufficient and poor quality services.

The call to "innovative mechanism "could cover up privatization forms and the participation of the international cooperation. In the region and specially in the Caribbean, there are many examples of the devastation produce by the international cooperation without accountability and any responsibility on the post disasters interventions.

We convene the States to adopt transitions policies to sustainable development models that respect the environment, avoiding fossil energy and recognizing the knowledge of indigenous people to care and protect the environment.

Proposals

To an inclusive, sustainable model with universal Social Protection

- It's necessary to advance to universal, integral, sustainable social protection systems bringing universal and in solidarity public services promoting prevention and disasters mitigation in a framework of transforming rehabilitation, in alignment with Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.
- The CSO have to protect their constituencies especially those more affected by the pandemic and neglected by governments, worsening with the constrains of civic space. We demand the respect of associations, expression and information to all persons and organizations and that as CSO we were recognized as development and democracy actors.

- We advocate for public policies promoting the economy of care as part of the production and social reproduction, housing access, social inclusion and decent work, the right to a healthy habitat, sovereignty alimentary, and social protection through all life since childhood till elderly, with an ethnic, gender, intersectional and intergenerational perspective.
- The governments should respect and fulfill the commitments they did related to climate change and they have also sign and agree to ESCAZU agreement
- Governments should promote social dialogue and collective negotiation mechanism for design, implementation and monitoring public policies and regional as well global policies, in order an Development Agenda centered in people and not economic interest .CS must claim and monitoring its achieving and be proactive in the requirement and bringing solutions.
- Governments must implement the platforms to facilitate the dialogue and participation of all people without any restrictions nor discriminations. Now COP26 will take place governments should review their commitments and incorporate CS in the design and find of joint solutions.
- adopt a global governance that creates a new funding to allow the countries in the region to address the emergencies, as x ex: Create a common fund with all contributions but those rich gives more than the poor; the alignment of SDG 16 with a more robust institutionalization. More resources are need to ensure this happens.
- Elaborate public policies to guarantee gender equality, human rights respect , intersectionality and inclusion of care policies , inclusive to all populations without living anyone behind.
- Strengthen the States by a fiscal redistribution to be able to respond to the challenges require by the context in order to adopt measures of universal and permanent social protection noy only in the emergencies, and not privatize them.
- Adopt policies to create decent work with all benefit and elimination of r=precarious work a characteristic of the region. Maintaining cash measures till emergencies needs remain but not perpetuate them.
- Regional agreements to recognize titles and certification titles for children at school age and or to allow professionals to actively participate as professionals or technicians in order to eliminate informal work and school abandon .
- Elimination of the technology for patents as vaccines and medical equipment distribution of technology in order everybody has access and all countries solve the health crisis with autonomy.
- Establish national systems of Social security based in principles of universality , solidarity , inclusion , no discrimination , integral public systems with redistribution.
- CSof LAC we will work to achieve all this proposals , we hope governments will be ready to reach the actual needs of our people. .

“Disasters and inequalities in a long crisis: to universal , integral , resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”

“

Annex 3

COMMUNICATION FROM COLOMBIA

Bogotá DC, 28 October 2021

Excellencies,
Office of the Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
Santiago, Chile

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution to be adopted at the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and I wish to respectfully inform you that the delegation of the Republic of Colombia can not support the content of paragraph 10 on unilateral coercive measures, the language of which is not consistent with the foreign policy or the international obligations of the Republic of Colombia.

Furthermore, this issue is unrelated to the matters discussed in the session.

We therefore request that it be deleted. Should it not be possible to accede to our request, we wish to dissociate ourselves from this paragraph.

The Directorate of Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew the assurances of its highest consideration.

Annex 4

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Los datos de esta lista son los suministrados por los participantes en el registro correspondiente que se habilitó para la reunión.

The information contained in this list is as supplied by the participants themselves, in the register provided for the meeting.

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Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)/Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)

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Fundación Internacional UE-ALC/EU-LAC International Foundation

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Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA)/Organization of American States (OAS)

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- Javier May, Secretario de Bienestar de México
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- Luis Felipe López-Calva, Director Regional para América Latina y el Caribe del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)
- Rodrigo Abdala Dartigues, Jefe de la Unidad de Planeación y Evaluación de Programas para el Desarrollo de la Secretaría de Bienestar de México
- Diane Quarless, Directora de la sede subregional de la CEPAL para el Caribe
- Orando Brewster, Ministro de Movilización Nacional, Desarrollo Social, Familia, Asuntos de Género, Juventud, Vivienda y Asentamientos Humanos Informales de San Vicente y las Granadinas
- Adis King, Ministra de Desarrollo y Empoderamiento Juvenil, Jóvenes en Riesgo, Asuntos de Género, Seguridad de Personas Mayores y Dominiqueses con Discapacidades de Dominica
- Pierre Ricot Odney, Director de Estudios de la Unidad de Programación del Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales y del Trabajo (MAST) de Haití
- Regis Chapman, Director para el País y Representante de la oficina multipaís para el Caribe de habla inglesa y neerlandesa del Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA)
- Elizabeth Riley, Representante del Organismo del Caribe para la Gestión de Emergencias en Casos de Desastre (CDEMA)
- Kurba-Marie Questelles, Especialista en Paz y Seguridad, Embajadora Coordinadora de la Región del Caribe de One Young World
- Rodrigo Martínez, Oficial Superior de Asuntos Sociales de la División de Desarrollo Social de la CEPAL
- Dina Boluarte Zegarra, Vicepresidenta y Ministra de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social del Perú
- Martín Lema, Ministro de Desarrollo Social del Uruguay
- Luiz Antonio Galvão, Viceministro de Ciudadanía del Brasil
- Axel Renato Palma Ramos, Viceministro de Política, Planificación y Evaluación del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Guatemala
- Raúl Salazar, Jefe de la Oficina Regional para las Américas y el Caribe de la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas para la Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres (UNDRR)
- Mariya Aleksandrova, Investigadora Superior del Instituto Alemán de Desarrollo (DIE)
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- Delma Thomas, Ministra de Desarrollo Social, Vivienda y Empoderamiento Comunitario de Granada
- María Inés Castillo de Sanmartín, Ministra de Desarrollo Social de Panamá

- Carmen Marín, Ministra de la Unidad de Gestión de la Presidencia y Coordinadora General del Gabinete Social del Paraguay
- Jesús Otamendiz, Viceministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social de Cuba
- Pablo Sanguinetti, Vicepresidente de Conocimiento del Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina (CAF)
- Marina Walter, Coordinadora Residente del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para Trinidad y Tabago, Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao y San Martín
- Alberto Arenas, Director de la División de Desarrollo Social de la CEPAL
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- Diego Sánchez-Ancochea, Director del Departamento de Desarrollo Internacional de la Universidad de Oxford
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Colegio de Profesionales en Ciencias de la Educación de Santa Cruz (COPECRUZ)

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