



Regional Conference
on **Social Development**
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, 3–5 October 2023

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

Santiago, 3–5 October 2023



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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The fifth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago from 3 to 5 October 2023 in conjunction with the fifteenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, by virtue of a joint declaration signed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in October 2014 with the aim of fostering synergies.

Attendance¹

2. Representatives of the following member States of ECLAC participated in the meeting: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Türkiye.

3. Attending from the Secretariat of the United Nations were representatives of the Economic and Social Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the resident coordinator system.

4. The following entities of the United Nations system were also represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

5. Also in attendance were representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations: Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO).

6. Panellists and members of non-governmental organizations and the academic sector also participated.

Election of Presiding Officers

7. The Conference elected the following Presiding Officers:

Chair: Chile

Vice-Chairs: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama.

¹ For the complete list of participants, see annex 3.

B. AGENDA

8. The Conference adopted the following agenda:
 1. Election of Presiding Officers.
 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
 3. Report by the Chair on the activities carried out since the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
 4. Presentation of the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development*.
 5. Review of the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development*.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening session

9. At the opening session, statements were made by José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC; Samantha Marshall, Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda; Javiera Toro, Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile; and Linda Maguire, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP.

10. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC recalled the objectives underlying the establishment of the Regional Conference and said that achieving them and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda was a monumental task for the region, which had appeared to be suffering from low growth even before the impact of the crises began to be felt in 2020. To break out of the low-growth trap, it was critical to redouble efforts and scale up productive development policies, including by focusing on sectors that could drive faster, sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth. The tools required to boost and guide growth were to be found in productive development policies. Growth was not an end in itself, nor was just any type of growth the objective. What was essential, however, was an environment of higher and steadier growth to achieve the major transformations demanded by development models and to stimulate labour markets, create decent jobs, reduce poverty, informality and inequality, fund social policies and strengthen institutional frameworks.

11. With their wide-ranging mandates, ministries of social development and equivalent entities played a pivotal role in designing and implementing social policies and major efforts to coordinate tasks that were critical for countries, while also working towards the achievement of the SDGs, in particular the targets related to providing access to and ensuring social protection and extending coverage. A comprehensive approach in which growth, productive development and labour market policies were coordinated with social

policies would be key to enabling those bodies to achieve their objectives. In the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, countries recognized that consolidated and resilient institutional frameworks for social policy were needed to ensure that public policies helped to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. Strengthening social institutional frameworks was paramount for responding both to historical gaps and needs that had accrued over time and to shocks and impacts that posed challenges to and often worsened countries' social situations. Effective governance supported better decision-making processes and made participation feasible. The establishment and governance of institutional frameworks for social policy were both important aspects of enhancing resilience and advancing in combating poverty and reducing inequality.

12. The Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda emphasized the importance of collaboration and collective determination for addressing the complex issues hindering social progress in Latin America and the Caribbean. The discussions held and solutions proposed at the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean should lead to tangible improvements in the lives of all citizens in the region. In that respect, the region had demonstrated its commitment to continue working on the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development despite not having been able to meet in person. Lessons had been learned from the repercussions of problems such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change on vulnerable populations and social development programmes. She called for unity in the shared mission of shaping a brighter future for Latin America and the Caribbean.

13. The Minister of Social Development and Family of Chile said that the session was an important one in a global and regional context of slow post-pandemic economic and social recovery. National social development policies and regional and bilateral international cooperation on social issues must both be improved in the region. Structural inequalities upheld gaps in equal access to social goods, rendering it essential to defend the right to social protection and implement people-centred social policies. Social protection systems faced many challenges and their capacity to adapt was tested by issues that included the consequences of the pandemic and climate change. In Chile, a redesign of poverty reduction policies was under way and a care system was being set up with a dual focus on persons in need of care and caregivers. While care mechanisms with a strong community focus were being strengthened and expanded, the support, care and assistance of the State was also sought. Facing the challenges ahead would require bearing in mind the multidimensional nature of poverty and safeguarding the relationship between the State and citizens. Chile reaffirmed its commitment to the region's social development.

14. The Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP said that the world was at the halfway mark towards 2030, a critical juncture that signalled the beginning of a new phase of the journey towards the achievement of the SDGs. It was a unique opportunity to review social contracts and forge new pathways for growth. Achieving equitable, sustainable and inclusive societies required profound structural reform, renewed commitment, revitalized action and stronger cooperation. Countries should learn from each other, share experiences and cooperate to move forward together, since successful practices could light the way for others to overcome similar challenges. Only by working together could a more equitable and sustainable future be built for all in the region. Effective governance and strong institutional frameworks were essential in a time of growing tensions. An integrated and collaborative approach would enable a better response to emerging multidimensional challenges and enhance the resilience of social protection in the region, where there was a need to design universal, inclusive and fiscally sustainable social protection systems that were conducive to growth. The world needed sound financial architecture that prioritized effective investment in the SDGs.

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

15. The report was presented by Samantha Marshall, Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda, the country serving as outgoing Chair of the Conference.

16. The Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda, in her capacity as outgoing Chair, presented the report on the activities carried out since the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held online in October 2021, and the report on the organization of the fifth session of the Conference, scheduled to take place in 2023. At the fourth session of the Conference, the document *Disasters and inequality in a protracted crisis: towards universal, comprehensive, resilient and sustainable social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean* had been presented, and Antigua and Barbuda had been elected as Chair. Since the fourth session, the Chair had led the implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, whose importance had been recognized at the fifth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. In 2022, the Chair had participated in two meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, workshops and seminars had been conducted, and the fifth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development had been held in September, as part of the fourteenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the outcome of which was the Declaration of Cuenca.

17. In preparation for the fifth session of the Regional Conference, online workshops had been held for the countries of the region on strengthening the institutional frameworks for social policy and social protection systems. In the months leading up to the fifth session, ECLAC had updated the information contained in the Observatory on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular with regard to institutional frameworks for social policy and non-contributory social protection policies. ECLAC had cooperated closely with the Government of Chile, the host country, in the organization of the fifth session of the Regional Conference, and had prepared the position document, which addressed the role of institutional frameworks for social policy and how to strengthen them.

Special statement on the road to the World Social Summit in 2025

18. The special statement was delivered by Paula Narváez, President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

19. The President of the Economic and Social Council said that the juncture was a critical one and forums for discussion, such as the session of the Conference, must become true instruments for progress in meeting the urgent needs of the region's inhabitants. She called for a meaningful, relevant and collaborative approach and international cooperation on the road to the World Social Summit in 2025. The lack of consistency between economic and social policies was another barrier to the long-term sustainability of gains in social development. The impressive progress previously made on several social indicators had slowed in recent years; a slowdown compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing series of crises that was a reminder that progress remained fragile and uneven. The importance of governance as a fundamental tool for achieving sustainable public policies must be reaffirmed.

20. With regard to gender equality, decisive action was needed to ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in public and political life and to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against them. The food security situation was alarming and there was little access to decent, formal work.

Ongoing overlapping crises that had hit the most vulnerable populations hardest had exacerbated inequalities within and between countries. Social protection systems must be resilient and capable of adapting to ongoing challenges (such as poverty, population ageing and the lack of social inclusion and of decent work), while continuing to fulfil existing commitments. Establishing social protection systems that were universal, comprehensive, adequate, sustainable and had a gender perspective would boost resilience in crises and provide a guaranteed basic income throughout people's lives. Lastly, it was critical to work on the care agenda and urgent human needs must be prioritized to improve policymaking and achieve sustainable development.

Presentation of the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development* (agenda item 4)

21. The document was presented by José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC.

22. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the current context reflected the economic and social repercussions of the pandemic, with cascading crises that had brought to light a region marked by low growth and notably weak labour market indicators, which had not regained pre-pandemic levels. As a result, poverty reduction had stalled after an initial period of post-pandemic recovery. The return to pre-pandemic poverty levels and the ability to address the economic emergency that caused by lockdowns and the full or partial shutdown of production could be attributed in part to States having implemented or stepped up emergency income transfer programmes.

23. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC said that in the current socioeconomic context, strengthening social institutional frameworks was essential for high-quality, effective, efficient, sustainable and participatory social policies, which required clear social authority, a robust organizational model and sufficient funding. He highlighted the four dimensions of the institutional framework for social policy: legal and regulatory, organizational, technical and operational, and financial. The region was characterized by a predominance of social affairs cabinets that fell under the authority of ministries of social development and were directly linked to the office of the president or vice-president; highly uneven coverage; records of good quality; social information systems hosted by social development ministries; and the widespread use of single windows. Monitoring and evaluation and financial sustainability were essential for strengthening social policies and social protection.

24. Public spending allocated to social development ministries did not exceed 1.8% of GDP, and in 2021 had accounted for between 0.2% and 7.4% of all central government spending in the countries of the region. Enhancing the financial sustainability of non-contributory public spending was essential, and in that regard, social and fiscal compacts were needed. Failure to implement social policies came at a cost, especially in terms of the social and economic toll of a lack of progress on social investment. Non-contributory transfer programmes to eradicate poverty and extreme poverty were viable without the need for significant overhaul (approximately 0.1% to 0.2% of GDP would be required). Lastly, an important requirement for inclusive social development was enhanced coordination, with a solid and well-designed social policy institutional framework that could provide the necessary structure for effective governance through the regulation of spaces for negotiation, citizen participation, accountability, transparency, and financial sustainability decision-making. Effective governance also strengthened institutional frameworks for social policy as it established trust in and the legitimacy of social policy pathways.

25. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC remarked that the legal and regulatory foundations of institutional frameworks for social policy must be consolidated to advance in the establishment of a rights-based approach and improve the efficiency and financial sustainability of social policies, in particular for social protection systems, which required strategic and forward-looking planning with a long-term perspective. He highlighted the importance of strengthening information systems, which provided conclusive data for evidence-based decision-making and were vital for monitoring and evaluation processes. Studying the socioeconomic costs of persistent gaps was also important, to compare the cost of implementing social programmes with the cost of not doing so. Moving forward with social and fiscal compacts would strengthen social policy institutional frameworks and social protection systems. To achieve this, growth, productive development and labour market policies must be coordinated with social policies. Institutional frameworks for social policy should be sufficiently robust to limit discretionary action and sufficiently flexible to deal with new challenges. Governance in decision-making was essential for the viability and sustainability of inclusive social development policies, and financial sustainability could be enhanced to strengthen institutional frameworks for social policy capable of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality. Lastly, it was essential for the region's voice to be heard at the World Social Summit in 2025, and the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was a unique forum to achieve that objective.

26. In the discussion that followed, the Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda said that one of States' main tasks was to facilitate access to social services, ensuring that monitoring and reporting was possible and including civil society organizations in decision-making processes. They must also strengthen the participatory approach by involving and working with the potential beneficiaries of policies in a context in which countries worked cooperatively, as recommended by the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Monitoring and evaluation gaps in the Caribbean were driving efforts to improve data-gathering.

27. The Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile said that progress in social protection called for institutions to be strengthened, in particular with regard to the regulatory framework for non-contributory social protection and designs to prioritize specific populations, in a comprehensive approach with inter-agency and multisectoral coordination, including at the local level. Emergency responses must be timely and the focus should be on rebuilding. Among other factors, she mentioned the single window and a social data and registration system that would support appropriate decision-making in design, monitoring and evaluation processes, so that targeting criteria would go hand in hand with a rights-based approach. She also emphasized the importance of providing high-quality public and private services and the need to develop a national care system in Chile.

28. In the ensuing statements, the representative of Brazil said that institutional frameworks for social policy and protection systems were becoming weaker in his country. Food insecurity had reached levels not seen in decades, and poverty and extreme poverty had risen. Regional forums provided an opportunity to share progress and incentivize the development of new public policies and studies on the socioeconomic costs of allowing gaps to persist. Countries should support and advocate for a compact against hunger and poverty, for example through debt-for-development swaps. Small producer and entrepreneurial sectors should be strengthened by providing training for populations that had been overlooked. Sectoral programmes had been developed in his country in the areas of housing, technology, health, education and care. Lastly, he conveyed his country's offer to host the sixth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

29. The representative of Honduras said that it was important to strengthen institutional frameworks for social policy, in particular in the context of monitoring and evaluation for post-pandemic programmes, and also to maintain transparency with the population and donors. His country was interested in obtaining information on the experiences of other countries in developing non-contributory pension systems. The representative of Panama noted the challenges relating to social policy design, monitoring, and evaluation and the need for sufficient funding that was sustained over time, supported by broad social compacts in which social protection was linked with economic development, infrastructure and production systems. Her country had adopted a rights-based approach to social policy and progress had been made in reducing monetary and multidimensional poverty. Plan Colmena, a network to promote local leadership in territorial efforts to achieve the SDGs, was an example of that.

Presentation of the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing Towards Inclusive Social Development* (agenda item 5)

30. Five panel discussions were held on issues identified as priorities in *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing Towards Inclusive Social Development* and in the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development.

Panel 1 – Rethinking the social compact, with inclusion and equity: financing of universal social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean

31. The panel was moderated by Almudena Fernández, Chief Economist for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP, and the panellists included Linda Maguire, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP; Jose Avendaño, Deputy Minister for Social and Institutional Planning in the Ministry of People’s Power for Planning of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Francisca Gallegos Jara, Undersecretary for Social Services of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile; Irma Yolanda Núñez, Coordinator of Social Affairs of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Cabinet Operations of El Salvador; and Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC.

32. The Chief Economist for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP introduced the panellists and invited them to discuss ways in which, amid rising poverty in the region, progress could be made towards more sustainable funding for social protection systems.

33. The Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP said that the double trap of high inequality and low productivity, overlapping crises, and the change in the risk structure of the population meant that social protection systems should be evaluated and updated. That would necessitate a shift from fragmented social protection systems towards a universal model, which required broad grassroots support for the financial architecture for sustainable development. It was also key to acknowledge the value of social protection policies and programmes and the commitment of the governments of the region to their implementation.

34. The Deputy Minister for Social and Institutional Planning in the Ministry of People’s Power for Planning of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that redesigning the social compact would entail rethinking the concept of rule of law, recognizing that social needs were a right rather than a commodity. In addition to the three pillars of sustainable development, territory was an important factor in social policy. Interconnected administrative records were key for social policymaking and sectoral coordination was a challenge. On the financing front, there were three significant challenges: increasing tax collection, efficient management of resources and policy sustainability in the context of the economic and financial blockade affecting his country.

35. The Undersecretary for Social Services of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile said that it was a challenge to transition from fragmented programmes to a social protection floor with a territory-based perspective and with integrated management systems. Transparency of the system was imperative, as was the need to ensure that citizens understood programme objectives, which would help to manage what they expected from the State. The process required a social compact that made sense to people and in which social cohesion was essential to establishing social peace. Using the establishment of a national care system as an example, she said that dialogue with citizens was important to show that they drove demand. Lastly, she noted that recognizing the value of care was an important aspect of sustainable funding for social protection systems.

36. The Coordinator of Social Affairs of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Cabinet Operations of El Salvador said that expanding coverage of social programmes and policies in her country was difficult owing to fiscal constraints and dispersed and fragmented funding. The cost of failing to implement social policies was high and it was important to have a governing body for all social policies and to focus on overcoming inequality in order to boost productivity. There was also a need to improve care policies that facilitated women's entry in the labour market and implement measures aimed at rural areas.

37. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC said that stronger social protection systems were needed to tackle high poverty rates. Regarding the related challenges, it was crucial to acknowledge that social protection systems were increasingly called upon to deal with emerging issues linked to disasters and technological change. The response to the COVID-19 emergency had shown that it was possible to mobilize more resources. It was important to implement non-contributory social protection policies, which would help to eradicate extreme poverty, but for that, a fiscal compact was prerequisite. In that regard, non-contributory transfers had proved to be one of the main tools available to social development ministries, which meant that progress should be made in developing them and securing their financial sustainability.

38. In the ensuing statements, the representative of the Dominican Republic said that the problem of social security was not addressed as such, since governments considered it less of a priority than the work of ministries of the interior or economy, leading to resource allocation disadvantages. To encourage social investment, strategies should focus on showcasing the quality of policies and their impacts on vulnerable populations.

39. The Deputy Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean of UN-Women said that care was a key pillar of social protection and noted that progress had been made in the care policies of social development ministries. It was essential to adopt an intersectoral policy approach and to foster dialogue with citizens on the social and political agenda to ensure that policies were properly designed and implemented.

40. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC concluded the panel noting that unrealized social transformations were the most costly and that there was an urgent need for broader social compacts in order to establish universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection. Just as UNESCO, PAHO and culture ministries had set a budget target for education, health, and culture, respectively, as a percentage of GDP, a target was also needed for non-contributory social protection in order to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean could serve as a springboard for progress in that regard.

Panel 2 – The mandates and structure of ministries of social development: building the capacities of institutional frameworks for social policy

41. The moderator of the panel was Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer at ECLAC, and the panellists were Wellington Dias, Minister for Social Development and Assistance, Family Affairs and the Fight against Hunger of Brazil; Yorleni León Marchena, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica; Kirk Humphrey, Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs of Barbados; and Carolina González, Undersecretary of International Affairs and Federal Cooperation of the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina.

42. The Senior Social Affairs Officer at ECLAC, in his capacity as moderator, briefly introduced the topic and invited panellists to deliver their statements focusing on three guiding questions: how to address frequent gaps between the mandates and responsibilities of ministries of social development and their institutional capacities; strategies for investing in human resources, skills and technology to achieve desired results and strengthen the capacities of social development ministries; and how to achieve the suitable balance between human and technological capabilities to ensure institutional resilience and minimize the divide between official mandates and the challenges of a changing economic and social context.

43. The Minister for Social Development and Assistance, Family Affairs and the Fight against Hunger of Brazil emphasized that for social development institutions to achieve maximum efficiency, institutional frameworks must be strengthened. Technology, intersectoral cooperation and interoperability were all important. Complex systems meant that ongoing investments were needed in technology and that human and technological resources must be in place to provide appropriate care. Social investment was paramount, as it was intrinsically linked with both economic growth and environmental and institutional sustainability. Lastly, he underscored the urgency of reaching a common position by 2025 in order to strengthen and expand the capacity to provide care in all countries, as since failure to act came at a much higher cost.

44. The Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica said that a forward-looking approach was needed to address the gaps in the social sector and that projecting and anticipating future needs was essential for adjusting sectoral functions and objectives and responding in a timely manner to emerging demands. The lack of specialists in critical areas, such as cybersecurity and data governance, was a concern that should be addressed, along with the lack of human and technological resources. In order to optimize limited resources, a thorough review was needed of the relevance of the measures taken by social sector institutions. To that end, data were essential, as they provided a solid foundation for implementing changes to institutional frameworks. Balancing demands with institutional capabilities was key, and without an appropriate road map and reliable projections of future demand, it would be almost impossible to implement the necessary changes.

45. The Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs of Barbados said that building a closer relationship between the Caribbean and Latin America was critical to enable knowledge and experiences to be shared through cooperation in order to address people's needs in a timely manner. He also emphasized the importance of having sufficient data to make decisions. The programmes implemented in his country included PULSE, which offered a digital window for participants in the social programmes of various organizations, and One Family, which sought to strengthen social capital through cooperation between families. In closing, he conveyed his country's offer to host the sixteenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

46. The Undersecretary of International Affairs and Federal Cooperation of the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina emphasized the need to re-evaluate the mandates of social development ministries, taking into account challenges such as climate change and migration. She noted the importance of regulations and using technology in decision-making and in the implementation of social programmes and mentioned her country's experience in inter-agency cooperation. For sustainability through time, institutional frameworks should be supported by legal regulations and by robust data collection and management capacities that enabled government work and cooperation with social stakeholders and international organizations. The Inter-ministerial Board for Care Policies was one example of successful inter-agency cooperation in her country.

47. In the ensuing statements, the Director-General for Social Targeting and Information of the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Peru said that coordination between the national and local levels was critical, since people interacted with programmes in their local areas. In his country, there was a vice-ministry responsible for coordination between stakeholders with specific issues, as well as results-based budgeting programmes, performance incentives and municipal seals of recognition. The Technical Director of the Cabinet for Social Policy of the Dominican Republic said that public policy and the institutional frameworks that governed it should always be people-centred and designed for cross-sectoral coordination. The General Director of the Sectoral Vice-Presidency for Social and Territorial Socialism of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that social care had been strengthened since 2003 through social services help desks focussing on health, education and nutrition. These experiences had been shared with other countries of the region and had subsequently been expanded to the housing and social protection sectors, among others. In that regard, interministerial coordination had been key.

Panel 3 – Interlinked institutional frameworks for social policy: opportunities and challenges of the single window

48. The moderator of the panel was Carlos Maldonado, Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC, and the panellists were Samantha Marshall, Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda; Marisol Merquel, Chair of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies of Argentina; Julio Paredes, Deputy Minister for Administration and Finance in the Ministry of Social Development of Guatemala; Sally Ann García Taylor, Deputy Director General for Ending Extreme Poverty of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity of Colombia; Diego Monsalve, Deputy Minister of Economic Inclusion of Ecuador; and Marcela Browne of Fundación SES.

49. The Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC introduced the topic and invited panellists to deliver their statements focusing on the guiding questions of how to coordinate the work of social development ministries and other government bodies, their degree of autonomy and formality, and their performance; the main characteristics of the single window in each country, obstacles that they had faced in adapting social programmes, the role of digital technologies in their operation, and their modalities.

50. The Minister of State within the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Social Transformation and the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda said that social protection legislation in her country had been updated in 2020 and that the social protection system included 30 programmes for education, health, social needs and housing subsidies. The Social Protection Commission was composed of representatives from several ministries, other government bodies and civil society. The challenges that it faced included the quality of records, data collection, improving the organization and systematization of budgets and monitoring spending. She recognized the value of the single window, which allowed for better coordination of services

and for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and rationalizing budgets, spending and social registries. In addition, she said that in the light of the special circumstances of each country, South-South cooperation was essential.

51. The Chair of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies of Argentina said that institutional frameworks and coordination were pivotal for the implementation of inclusive agendas focused on human dignity. The National Council had been designated as the governing body for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda in her country, and the National Inter-agency Commission for Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs had been established. It was composed of technical and political bodies and counterparts involved in the priority themes of the 2030 Agenda, under the coordination of the National Council. The role of those bodies depended on their political and institutional remit, which was determined by the Ministries Act, and based on which they assumed responsibility for the achievement of the Goals and conducted their technical work and allocated budgetary resources. To fully gauge the situation of the population, it was critical to have social databases and registries, and there were two main ones in Argentina: the National Tax and Social Security Identification System (SINTYS) and the Social Programme Information, Evaluation and Monitoring System (SIEMPRO).

52. The Deputy Minister for Administration and Finance in the Ministry of Social Development of Guatemala stressed that the single window could play a critical role in streamlining processes and improving the social panorama, in particular in light of the wide variety of social needs. In response to the pandemic crisis and the needs that it had elicited, Guatemala had implemented a seven-phase social registry plan, which had included gathering data, identifying households that met the requirements for receiving allowances and developing pilot plans. The process had also included identifying local leaders, generating a risk matrix based on consultations with communities, and updating digital maps using satellite imagery for targeting efforts. The process had enabled the collection of data and improved targeting of programmes, which had benefited 20,000 households.

53. The Deputy Director General for Ending Extreme Poverty of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity of Colombia said that meetings like the Regional Conference presented a valuable opportunity to exchange experiences and prompt dialogue between countries to fine-tune policy proposals and share lessons learned on social registries and single windows as one-stop shops for social protection programmes and services. In Colombia, hybrid strategies were being used, with in-person and online access. The challenges included the need to close the digital connectivity and access divides, scale up local policies to the regional level and strengthen the territorial and intersectoral approach. She also mentioned the importance of integration and cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular in a post-pandemic and post-crisis context. An equity committee had been established, a forum convened and led by the President of the Republic, to ensure horizontal cooperation between ministries and other government entities and develop strategies to reduce poverty and other inequalities that limited social inclusion and productivity.

54. The Deputy Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion of Ecuador said that there were three ways for recipients of social services to access the single window: in person, over the phone or through the digital platform. The recently implemented platform allowed people to receive information and notifications and also to ask questions and raise concerns. He said that 82.5% of recipients contacted the Ministry in person, 16.6% via call centres and 0.9% online. As an example, of 62,000 families with children eligible to receive vouchers under the "Childhood with a Future" programme set up to combat child malnourishment, 21,000 had been contacted through the single window. One of the main challenges in that regard was to shorten response times and streamline the verification and quality control mechanisms for the services

provided. The objective of the Government of Ecuador was to implement a comprehensive system that encompassed all State institutions and allowed any government office to act as a single window connected to the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion.

55. The representative of Fundación SES said that it was paramount to involve civil society in conversations on improving social protection systems. In the context of the single window initiative, diverse families and persons must be included, through a gender-sensitive approach and taking into account the different situations and needs of the population, such as single-parent families, adolescent mothers, persons with a disability, migrants and those living with HIV. She drew attention to the importance of adequate budgets for bringing about change in social protection systems and the intention to allocate a percentage of GDP for that purpose. The universal child benefit in Argentina had been well managed and the lessons learned should be shared by stakeholders and decision-makers, government and parliamentary officials and members of the academic sector. Lastly, she said that the establishment of an initiative similar to “Academia ODS 4 - EDUCA Mesoamérica” would be welcome for Goal 1.

56. In the ensuing discussion, the Deputy Minister for Social and Institutional Planning in the Ministry of People’s Power for Planning of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that it was critical consider how to obtain the information needed to guide social policies, and mentioned VenApp, an application through which citizens could communicate with each other and government agencies for requests relating to water, gas and pension services, among other topics. In an effort to build the social fabric, a portal had also been developed for communities to express their needs. The Undersecretary for Social Services of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile highlighted the importance of single windows, noting that from a rights perspective, easy access to entitlements should be ensured. Access could be provided through an online portal or at a physical facility, depending on the context, and the commitment to the use of a unique identifier and the protection of personal data must always be maintained.

Panel 4 – Integrated information systems for decision-making: from social records to evaluation

57. The panel was moderated by Claudia Robles, Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC, and the participants were Paula Poblete, Undersecretary for Social Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile; Leticia Bartholo, Secretary for Evaluation, Information Management and the Unified Register of Brazil; José Nabor Cruz Marcelo, Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) of Mexico; Van Elder Espinal, Technical Director of the Cabinet for Social Policy of the Dominican Republic; and Bill Jonathan Flores, General Coordinator of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Cabinet Operations of El Salvador.

58. The Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC, introducing the topic, invited the panellists to deliver their statements focusing on the guiding questions on the challenges of the pandemic with regard to the interoperability of social information systems and how to address them; the quality of the information available for designing, implementing and evaluating social protection entitlements, their interoperability, and the institutions and stakeholders participating; and the importance of having a specific institutional framework to support the implementation of recipient registries, regulate or set guidelines for evaluation and monitoring and for their use in adjusting targets, improving programme design and implementation processes, and improving budget management.

59. The Undersecretary for Social Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile said that the Social Household Registry was part of the Social Information Registry, and that having a unique identifier for each person (the national unique identifier, assigned on birth certificates) was essential as it facilitated interoperability for information systems and administrative records. The

coverage of the Social Household Registry grew to 86% of the population following the pandemic, as registration was one of the requirements for accessing certain benefits. That facilitated a snapshot of households and enabled improvements in programme design, coordination and complementarity. That type of registry, which integrated information from multiple sources, was critical for developing a socioeconomic characterization of individuals and households. The Registry also provided relevant inputs for the allocation phase of programmes, influencing the determination of benefit amounts. To improve the updating of registries, progress was still needed in the area of institutional interoperability. It was difficult to collect information on people in informal situations and to detect sudden drops in income during emergencies. Lastly, she said that single windows brought the government closer to citizens, gathering information in a central location and thereby simplifying administrative procedures and eliminating the need to submit the same documentation more than once.

60. The Secretary for Evaluation, Information Management and the Unified Register of Brazil said that although her country was faced with extreme challenges related to the fragility of its institutions, a unique register in which 42 million people were enrolled had enabled a reasonably good response to the impacts of the pandemic. A social policy monitoring and evaluation unit had been in place for nearly 20 years, as part of the budget process. The goal was to set up an integrated social information system that would feed into the management system and whose indicators would be monitored across all areas of social policy. More skilled people were needed, which had motivated the establishment of a post-graduate programme implemented together with the academic sector to train managers working in public sector jobs on the public policy cycle, including budget-related topics. Providing online access to social services through a single window was an essential strategy, but it should be provided as a complement to physical offices to serve the digitally excluded. A unique register observatory was set to be launched, which would make it possible to identify the characteristics of the most vulnerable population segments.

61. The Executive Secretary of CONEVAL of Mexico said that the institution had been established 18 years earlier and that its two main functions were to measure the multiple dimensions of poverty at the federal, state and municipal levels and to evaluate the design, processes and impact of social programmes. One barrier to gaining a fuller picture of households was consolidating the information gathered by the various levels of government, incorporating the indicators used to monitor and track subnational progress. Training in monitoring methodologies was needed, in particular in rural areas, and access should be expanded by using technology and designing an appropriate digital policy so that no population would be left behind, including Indigenous Peoples.

62. The Technical Director of the Cabinet for Social Policy of the Dominican Republic said that the economic crisis of 2003 had led to the development of the Unified Beneficiaries System (SIUBEN), which covered 45% of households and had enabled more accurate estimates to be obtained, for example on the impact of the pandemic. Data interoperability was being encouraged between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health and the study units of the monitoring and evaluation system, using a unique identifier (the identity and voting card) that linked those data with the contributory part of the social protection system. A single window that could be accessed either online or in person provided coverage for the entire country. The refusal of many institutions to share data presented a barrier for interoperability, and there was a need to establish data handling regulations and clarify institutional roles for secure data handling and management. All the information collected was stored in a State data centre. Policies needed to be designed to withstand election cycles and to prevent changes of government that affected public policy continuity from destroying the pathways forged.

63. The General Coordinator of the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Cabinet Operations of El Salvador said that social registers, in addition to enabling needs to be identified, supported

coordination between different government institutions and provided important input for social policy design decisions. The challenges faced related to the need to incorporate data from the urban municipalities where most of the marginalized population was concentrated, the absence of a unique personal identifier (although work was under way to establish one from birth), strengthening monitoring and evaluation to overcome gaps in coverage, the consolidation of an integrated social information system, the use of technology to improve data interoperability, and designing policy-based regulatory frameworks to strengthen institutional frameworks. A strong social register would allow for better use of State resources and it was important to strengthen South-South cooperation in order to share experiences in that regard. Technology must be used to improve interoperability and efficiency, which required political decisions and independent institutional frameworks.

64. In the ensuing statements, the Director-General for Social Targeting and Information of the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Peru said that there was a need to improve the use of information gathered, through regulatory frameworks that enabled access to administrative records, and to collect data, in particular on the most vulnerable population groups. Learning from the experiences of other countries was important, as was having a regional support network that could foster improvements in policy sustainability. The Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion of Costa Rica proposed that a regional network on social registers be established, to share experiences, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and indicators and to improve process agility and consolidate systems. She also expressed her country's interest in serving as one of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

65. The Deputy Director General for Ending Extreme Poverty of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity of Colombia said that cooperation between the countries of the region was important, as were the concerns about data governance, in light of the vulnerability of governments to computer hacking. To improve the existing registers, trust needed to be built regarding the ways in which data would be used, which could be done through legislation.

66. The Executive Director of social support group Abrazarte emphasized the importance of advancing in the implementation of good practices and of discussing solidarity-based social development.

67. The representative of UNICEF in Chile said that children were overrepresented in populations living in poverty and multidimensional poverty in all countries of the region, adding that investing in children yielded the highest returns.

Panel 5 – Institutional frameworks for social policy, strategic governance and cooperation in times of cascading crises

68. The panel was moderated by Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC and the panellists were María Inés Castillo, Minister of Social Development of Panama; José Carlos Cardona, Secretary of Social Development of Honduras; Laís Abramo, National Secretary for Care and Family, Ministry of Social Development and Assistance, Family Affairs and the Fight against Hunger of Brazil; Yasna Provoste, Senator, former Minister of Planning and Cooperation and former Minister of Education of Chile; Javier Paulini, Director-General for Social Targeting and Information of the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Peru; and Linda Maguire, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP.

69. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC introduced the topic and invited the panellists to speak about ways in which regional dialogue and experience-sharing could be leveraged to consolidate the institutional capacities of ministries of social development and optimize subregional forums

and cooperation to strengthen and prioritize ministry mandates from the inside; ways in which those forums could be enlivened to build governance that focused on transparency, accountability and empirical evidence; and how to respond to internal and external stakeholder resistance.

70. The Minister of Social Development of Panama said that in order to build institutional capacity, a regional cooperation road map must be created, and national, regional and local agreements that promoted cooperation and coordination for social development should be leveraged, including through the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. She called for a joint response to irregular migration and for ministries of social development to protect the rights of displaced persons. Governance and high-quality disaggregated data that enabled progress to be tracked were essential for strengthening institutional frameworks for social policy, as was transparent management of accountability. It was a challenge to encourage new perspectives while ensuring the participation of citizens, in particular traditionally marginalized persons, using technology and strengthening engagement in community development. Intersectoral coordination was also important for the development of strong institutional frameworks for social policy that could support policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. ECLAC could provide support for dialogue with finance ministries. Her country was willing to serve as one of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference.

71. The Secretary of Social Development of Honduras said that the great challenge for his country was to establish governance that could serve those living in poverty and to organize the cooperation bodies in that area. Two major programmes had been implemented aimed at vulnerable groups. Poverty data had been updated, which had enabled a better understanding of the situation, response mechanisms and how to cooperate. Cabinet coordination had been key for organizing social programmes and improving coordination. Optimizing resource use had also been crucial, without instituting new taxes, and with international loans paying a key role. The country's greatest challenges included migration, in a context of climate change that demanded stronger institutional capacities to reduce vulnerability so that people would not be forced to migrate, and financing for social protection policies, viewed as an investment rather than an expense. Not only did efficiently addressing environmental and social vulnerability reduce poverty, but it also generated assets. Lastly, he said that addressing the vulnerability of children and implementing support strategies was a challenge, in particular in the context of post-pandemic difficulties for schoolchildren, mainly related to food insecurity.

72. The National Secretary for Care and Family in the Ministry for Social Development and Assistance, Family Affairs and the Fight against Hunger of Brazil said that it was paramount to take decisive action to address poverty and inequality, which were expressed not only in terms of income but also class, gender, ethnic and racial identity, territory, life cycle and migration. The support of United Nations entities and of various intergovernmental organizations from the region had been critical in the development of the national care policy of Brazil, as had dialogue between various government sectors, since it had included components under the purview of several ministries. Intersectoral cooperation, horizontal and vertical coordination, dialogue with the legislative branch, the participation of society and impact assessments were all needed for the legitimacy of State policies. Since a legal foundation was needed, dialogue with legislators and the composition of congress played a key role. In her country, before the bill was designed, significant work had been done to coordinate all sectors in a context of citizen participation, to ensure that people understood the implications of a care system. The arguments and associated data had been important in communicating the objectives and expected results, which was why forums for discussion such as the current session were very important for gaining an awareness of what was happening in the other countries of the region.

73. The Senator, former Minister of Planning and Cooperation and former Minister of Education of Chile said that institutional frameworks were the foundation of governance for sustainable development. They secured democracy and enabled permanent civilizational progress regardless of government cycles. Rights-based social policies were the bedrock of societal progress and it was essential to have graduated social protection systems that could ensure people's well-being in a variety of contexts. To that end, social and fiscal agreements should be established with medium- and long-term goals, acknowledging that investment would be ongoing and financial sustainability was required. Ensuring well-being should not depend on economic growth. Instead, active social policies were needed along with strong institutional frameworks that could build upon political results, against a backdrop of social cohesion. Institutions should be backed by authority and legitimized by citizen-led outcomes. There was a need for strong social development ministries that engaged with other sectors and with citizens, and funding should be guaranteed for social programmes, which should be subject to monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, she said that international cooperation was essential as a source of financial and technical support and that it enabled best practices to be shared.

74. The Director-General for Social Targeting and Information of the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Peru reiterated that a regional network for social registries should be established that would allow for more frequent exchange of ideas among directors. With regard to strengthening institutional frameworks, it was key for regional and local governments to use the same social policy guidelines as national governments. His ministry therefore supported coordination and provided stimulus payments to municipalities that made a stronger contribution to policy implementation. It was also key to identify value chains and sectoral contributions to the achievement of goals, including with regard to reducing child undernutrition. That could not have been achieved without a discussion in the media to enable the population to understand the desired message.

75. The Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP said that a transition was under way that could leverage productivity and the development of the countries of the region, but that policies were needed to guide those changes. Moving beyond emergency responses and taking a medium- and long-term approach would be important to lock in progress. She recognized the value of opportunities for discussion such as those offered by the Conference, as they brought to light the successes and pending issues with respect to the commitments made. With challenges that transcended borders, such as climate change, artificial intelligence and human mobility, coordinated action was needed at the regional and global levels, institutionalized through forums for discussion such as the current session. She emphasized the notable progress made with regard to care and the availability of data and stressed the need to establish mechanisms that could combat misinformation, which undermined social cohesion. To that end, the participation of the most vulnerable groups must be guaranteed and social agreements must be secured.

76. In the ensuing statements, the Technical Director of the Cabinet for Social Policy of the Dominican Republic said that social issues were at the heart of democracy, the objective of all public policies was social and ministries of social development were therefore vitally important. The Deputy Director General for Ending Extreme Poverty of the Administrative Department for Social Prosperity of Colombia said that in her country, a review was being conducted of the functioning of social institutional frameworks. Considering the social inequality matrix and intersectionality was key in that regard, but not all State entities were aware of them or knew how to apply them. Along with the institutional adaptation required, progress was also being made in establishing a ministry of equality in Colombia, but there was a need to acknowledge and build on the advances already achieved.

77. The Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean of UN-Women noted the political will to coordinate care systems that had arisen in response to the care crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. She also proposed that a panel on care be included during the next session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 7)

78. The member States of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the resolution contained in annex 1 to the present report.

79. A civil society representative read the declaration contained in annex 2.

80. Juan Somavía, former ambassador of Chile to the United Nations and member of the Foreign Policy Commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, highlighted the experience and commitment with which the social development issues had been addressed at the session. The same conviction of the importance of the topic had prompted the proposal in 1992 to convene a World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995, at which it had been stated that social issues were of political importance and should be accorded the same weight as economic ones. It must now be argued that social issues were a priority, since all policy was social policy. ECLAC would coordinate all the regional commissions of the United Nations from 2024 onward and had a unique opportunity, with the experience it had accumulated, to put forward that proposal in the other regions and play a driving role in that regard. In closing, he reiterated his appreciation for the spirit and commitment with which the issues at hand had been addressed.

Closing session

81. In the closing session, statements were delivered by Javiera Toro, Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile; Linda Maguire, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP; and Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC.

82. The Minister of Social Development and Family Affairs of Chile expressed her satisfaction with the conclusion of the session. Common challenges had been identified in strengthening institutional frameworks for social policy. In that regard, she mentioned international collaboration, intersectoral coordination, national and subnational public policy coordination, social information systems and single windows, economic sustainability, adaptive capacity, the emerging challenges posed by climate change, and the need to ensure that policies were comprehensive and progress was being achieved towards universalization in order to provide an adequate response to the range of vulnerabilities confronting the peoples of the region. She welcomed the recognition of the importance of care in countries' agendas. It was also imperative to focus on the relationship between social protection systems and development strategies. Countries must adopt innovative strategies to address the challenges that had already been identified and be open to the participation of civil society organizations. Against a backdrop of multiple crises and the weakening of social compacts, trust between people and institutions could not be taken for granted, but instead must be constantly rebuilt. Lastly, she welcomed the adoption of the agreements and said that the Chair would work to strengthen the positions set out therein in the lead-up to the 2025 World Social Summit.

83. The Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP said that the session had provided an opportunity for discussion on the challenges that countries were facing in a context of uncertainty, and she mentioned five messages from the session. First, to advance towards universality, a transition must be made from fragmented programmes to progressive guarantees over the life cycle, which

required the mandates of social development ministries to be strengthened and redesigned and their management skills to be enhanced. Second, information systems were essential for the targeting and effectiveness of social policies, since, in their absence, it was difficult to reach vulnerable populations, achieve results and evaluate the impact of policies. Third, the cost of inaction was very high. In a context in which progress on certain indicators was being reversed, more of the same was not enough and the engagement of the business sector and relevant civil society stakeholders was needed. Fourth, social protection systems should be capable of anticipating shocks in order to protect vulnerable populations and respond to emergencies in a timely manner. Fifth, it was impossible to progress towards more inclusive social protection systems without more funding. New social compacts were needed, along with efficient resource management, to ensure financial sustainability.

84. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC thanked the social development authorities and civil society organizations in attendance for their contributions and the thoughts they had shared. The session was part of a road map for action. The Secretary-General, in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*, called for a reinvigorated multilateralism and proposed that consideration be given to holding a World Social Summit in 2025. The fifth session of the Regional Conference was part of the lead-up to the Summit, and it showed that the Regional Conference was well-positioned to convey the region's voice at that event. Social development could not be achieved by the efforts of the social sector alone. It was important to look beyond the Conference and bring more stakeholders on board to fulfil the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. The fifth session had focused on the third axis of the Agenda, a strengthened social institutional framework. Only through stronger institutional frameworks could clear pathways towards inclusive social development be forged, and that meant establishing a public spending standard in the region. Studies were needed to create a narrative that could support the establishment of the standards required. After pledging that ECLAC would support the work of the Presiding Officers, he thanked Barbados and Brazil for their offers to host the next sessions of the Conference.

Annex 1

RESOLUTION 5(V)

At its fifth session, held in Santiago from 3 to 5 October 2023, the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,

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, where appropriate, 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, 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 various 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,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 77/188 of 15 December 2022, by which it notes the proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” to convene a world social summit in 2025, to be discussed and agreed upon by Member States, including its modalities, title, objectives, scope and possible outcomes, and emphasizing that the possible summit’s outcome should have a social development approach and give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,

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 significantly 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 the structural inequalities that persist in their multiple dimensions (class, gender, ethnicity and race, territory and age) in our societies, 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 and triangular cooperation mechanisms for development, inclusion and social protection, thereby helping to strengthen multilateralism in the social sphere,

Recalling the importance accorded by member countries of the Regional Conference on Social Development, at its fourth session, to 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,

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,

Having reviewed the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development*,²

1. *Welcomes* the document *Institutional Frameworks for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Central Element in Advancing towards Inclusive Social Development* prepared by the secretariat, and requests the secretariat to disseminate it widely and encourage its discussion and analysis;

2. *Recognizes* the importance of institutional frameworks for social policy and governance of decision-making in social policies, which enable the implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, with a view to achieving the objectives of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

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;

4. *Also reaffirms* the importance of putting people and their rights at the heart of development, safeguarding the progress the region has achieved regarding inclusive social development as a result of appropriate social investment to finance policies and strengthen social protection systems consistent with the changes in the structure of risks to which individuals are exposed, and preventing setbacks as a result of the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cascading crises affecting the region and the world;

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 Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, and their commitment to eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities in their multiple dimensions and addressing gaps in access to well-being in the region;

¹ LC/MDS.4/3.

² LC/CDS.5/3.

7. *Requests* that Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean provide technical assistance for the formation of working groups endorsed by the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean or its Presiding Officers and to existing working groups, on specific issues and in specific policy areas identified by the countries, in order to advance transformative recovery and make further progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in their localization and ongoing monitoring and the implementation of measures to accelerate the achievement of the Goals, promoting experience-sharing, the construction of common agendas, the participation of and dialogue with civil society organizations, including those of women, young people, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, the Afrodescendent population, and persons with disabilities, as well as the private sector, trade union organizations and academia;

8. *Requests* the Chair of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote the establishment of a regional working group on social registers under the aegis of the Presiding Officers of the Conference, to enable the sharing of good practices regarding levels of coverage, interoperability and governance of data, skills training in the area, and quality and use of information, in collaboration with other relevant international organizations;

9. *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;

10. *Stresses* the importance of taking determined steps to strengthen the four dimensions of the institutional framework for social policy —legal and regulatory, organizational, technical and operational, and financial— in order to have high-quality public policies that are effective, efficient, transparent and sustainable, and calls on the countries to work decisively and collaboratively to that end;

11. *Requests* the secretariat to undertake a more in-depth analysis of and identify policy alternatives and financing standards to develop a strong institutional framework for social policy and effective governance of decision-making in social policies, and to strengthen social protection systems by making progress regarding the universality, comprehensiveness, sustainability and resilience thereof in the region;

12. *Also requests* the secretariat to prepare a draft road map and a document to be considered at the sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in 2024, which will allow the region's voice to be heard at the World Social Summit to be held in 2025;

13. *Urges* 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, 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;

14. *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, and in particular, recognizes the value of the analyses and information consolidated in the Institutional Framework Database for Social Policy in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Database of Non-contributory Social Protection Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean;

15. *Also thanks* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and its Social Development Division, as well as the United Nations Development Programme, for the joint organization of the fifth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the XV Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and requests the Commission to convene the sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024;

16. *Welcomes* the offer of the Government of Barbados to host the XVI Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the United Nations Development Programme, and the sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

17. *Also welcomes* the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the sixth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2025;

18. *Commends* the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for its contribution to the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in its capacity as Chair of the Conference;

19. *Conveys its thanks* to the Government and people of Chile for the excellent organization of the fifth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex 2

**CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT
DECLARACIÓN DE LA SOCIEDAD CIVIL**



**Mecanismo de Participación
de la Sociedad Civil de América
Latina y el Caribe para el
Desarrollo Sostenible - MeSCALC**

**QUINTA REUNIÓN DE LA CONFERENCIA REGIONAL SOBRE DESARROLLO SOCIAL
DE AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE – CEPAL**

2 de octubre de 2023–Santiago de Chile

**Declaración del Mecanismo de Participación de la Sociedad Civil de América Latina y el Caribe
para el Desarrollo Sostenible**

A los gobiernos de nuestra Latinoamérica y el Caribe, desde la sociedad civil les decimos, que si queremos repensar el contrato social en la región, es urgente que garanticen la inclusión y la equidad basadas en la financiación de sistemas de protección social integrales y universales.

El respeto a la soberanía de nuestros pueblos implica diseñar alternativas viables para el desendeudamiento, el aporte solidario y comprometido de las grandes fortunas a partir de sistemas fiscales progresivos y justos; así como el control para evitar la evasión y elusión fiscal y la supresión medidas coercitivas unilaterales que condicionen a los países de la región.

Entendemos que el fortalecimiento de la institucionalidad de los organismos a cargo de los sistemas de protección social y desarrollo social, se basan en un nuevo pacto social, que se dará si cumplen de forma efectiva los compromisos asumidos, si facilitan el acceso a la información, si gestionan políticas de manera transparente y garantizan los derechos fundamentales de las personas en situación de mayor vulnerabilidad socioeconómica.

El fortalecimiento y gobernabilidad de las instituciones requiere espacios reales de participación de la sociedad civil organizada en la toma de decisiones. Así lo especifican la Convención para la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (1979), la Declaración y Plataforma de Acción de Beijing (1995), la Convención de los Derechos del NNyA (1989), la Convención Interamericana sobre la Protección de los Derechos Humanos de las Personas Mayores (2015), el Acuerdo de Escazú (2018), la Convención sobre los Derechos de las personas con discapacidad (2008), el Programa de acción de la Conferencia Internacional sobre Población y Desarrollo (1994) y el Consenso de Montevideo sobre

Población y Desarrollo (2013), la Declaración y el Programa de Acción de Durban (2001); la Declaración de Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas (2007), el Convenio 169 de la OIT sobre pueblos indígenas y tribales (1989) y la Convención Iberoamericana de Derechos de los Jóvenes (2005).

La crisis generada por la pandemia de COVID-19 exacerbó los problemas económicos y sociales preexistentes. De acuerdo a las cifras del Banco Mundial, entre 2019 y 2021 la pobreza se incrementó del 24% al 26.5% y las perspectivas de crecimiento disminuyeron este 2023 hasta el 1.4% general¹. Esto resalta la urgencia de políticas que fomenten la inclusión y la equidad, poniendo en el centro la erradicación de todas las formas de violencias, discriminación y opresión contra las mujeres, niñez, adolescencia, personas mayores, juventudes, personas migrantes, refugiadas y en movilidad, defensoras de derechos y de territorios, comunidad LGBTIQ+, trabajadoras sexuales, personas con discapacidad, personas viviendo con VIH-SIDA y poblaciones históricamente violentadas y postergadas como los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes.

La región enfrenta el aumento de la pobreza, desigualdades estructurales y la privatización de los derechos como la educación y la salud.

Esto requiere el aceleramiento inmediato de la Agenda 2030 a partir de acciones concretas y políticas interseccionales, tal como lo señalamos en la Cumbre de los ODS y durante la Asamblea General de la ONU.

Hacemos un llamado urgente a fortalecer el trabajo decente y la protección social en respuesta a la crisis laboral y económica, que es consecuencia directa de la concentración de la riqueza en pocas manos en los países de Latinoamérica y el Caribe.

En los últimos cuatro años esto se agravó por la pandemia del COVID 19 y no mejoró en tiempos post pandémicos.

Lo anterior se evidencia en las tasas de desempleo (7,9%)² y de creciente informalidad laboral, que aumentó del 56,7% en 2019 al 63,4% en 2021³ traducido esto en que 1 de cada 2 trabajadores y trabajadoras en América Latina y el Caribe se desempeñan en la informalidad⁴, con trabajos inestables y sin beneficios sociales o criminalizados como el ejercicio del trabajo sexual. Esta realidad afecta las vidas de millones de personas en nuestros países, pero de forma diferencial a las juventudes y a las mujeres en toda su diversidad, sobre todo a aquéllas que sostienen hogares monomarentales, porque las desigualdades de género incrementan las condiciones de vulnerabilidad económica y social, agrava la crisis de los cuidados y las violencias. La situación mencionada, resulta alarmante en el marco del envejecimiento demográfico, pues debilita las garantías de previsión social para las próximas generaciones.

Proponemos un compromiso de los ministerios y secretarías del trabajo con el cooperativismo y con las economías sociales, junto con políticas de protección social para evitar el crecimiento del desempleo.

Asimismo, demandamos que los gobiernos apoyen directamente a las y los pequeños productores, las pequeñas y medianas empresas y distintos actores vinculados a la economía social y solidaria.

¹ (<https://www.bancomundial.org/es/region/lac/overview#:~:text=En%20cuanto%20a%20la%20pobreza,7%2C9%20%25%20en%202022>).

² https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_854766/lang--es/index.htm.

³ ibidem 1.

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_836198/lang--es/index.htm.

Urge la revisión del estatus y de los mandatos actuales de los ministerios y secretarías de Desarrollo y Bienestar Social, de Educación y de Salud en la región, de manera que sean eficientes y de calidad.

Durante la reciente *Cumbre para un Nuevo Pacto Mundial de Financiación* y en la iniciativa *Financiación en Común*, este año se insistió en la necesidad de aumentar la inversión. Los pueblos requerimos de cantidad y calidad, como se expresa en la declaración conjunta de la sociedad civil dirigida a los bancos públicos de desarrollo, firmada por más de 100 organizaciones sociales de más de 50 países. Los apoyos directos y asistencias que los gobiernos otorgan son insuficientes para el bienestar integral y la vida independiente; por tanto resulta necesario que los Estados asuman el compromiso consensuado de costear el porcentaje del PIB y del gasto público que se requiere para eliminar la pobreza (ODS1) y sus mencionadas intersecciones.

Los sistemas de protección y de desarrollo social también deben velar por el pleno acceso de los derechos sexuales y derechos reproductivos, la educación sexual integral, los servicios de aborto seguro y todos los métodos anticonceptivos.

Estos derechos siguen encontrando barreras en todos los países de la región, lo que impacta de forma grave y mortal en las comunidades, especialmente en las vidas de las niñas, adolescentes y mujeres en toda su diversidad. Se deben fortalecer las políticas de cuidados, la prevención de abusos y la afectación integral en la vida de las niñas obligadas a gestar o parir.

Nuestra región registra la segunda tasa más alta de embarazos adolescentes del mundo y el 18% de todos los nacimientos provienen de mujeres menores de 20 años de edad, siendo la mortalidad materna a esa edad la tercera causa de muerte⁵.

A su vez, 1 de cada 4 niñas en América Latina y el Caribe es forzada a una unión antes de los 18 años y es la única región del mundo donde los matrimonios infantiles no disminuyen (UNFPA)⁶.

La crisis humanitaria emergente y cada vez más preocupante es la de personas migrantes, refugiadas y en movilidad⁷. La movilidad humana es un derecho humano y la migración puede ser un motor para el desarrollo social y económico de nuestras sociedades. Las políticas gubernamentales son represivas y restrictivas contra las personas migrantes y desplazadas, los gobiernos refuerzan los controles en las fronteras, aplican deportaciones masivas, separan familias y realizan detenciones arbitrarias. A la hora de los derechos, ninguna persona es ilegal. Por tanto instamos a garantizarlos derechos económicos, políticos, sociales y culturales, a todas las personas, sin ningún tipo de discriminación e independientemente de su situación migratoria.

Como sociedad civil nos ocupa la defensa de la democracia, el respeto a los derechos humanos y el fortalecimiento de la institucionalidad de los sistemas de protección social. Exigimos el relevamiento de información precisa y oportuna, basada en el conocimiento de los territorios y sus actores clave, tal es el

⁵ “La mortalidad materna en América Latina y el Caribe se ubica entre las tres primeras causas de muerte en las adolescentes entre 15 y 19 años. En las adolescentes menores de 15 años, el riesgo de morir por causas relacionadas con el embarazo es hasta tres veces más que en mujeres mayores de 20 años. En América Latina se cree que el número anual de abortos inseguros entre las adolescentes de 15 a 19 años, alcanza un número de 670 mil”. <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/temas/embarazo-en-adolescentes>.

⁶ UNFPA/ Matrimonio infantil y uniones tempranas en América Latina y el Caribe. <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/topics/matrimonio-infantil-y-uniones-tempranas-en-am%C3%A9rica-latina-y-el-caribe>.

⁷ Ver Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2023) “Migración en América Latina y el Caribe”. <https://blogs.iadb.org/conocimiento-abierto/es/migracion-america-latina/>.

caso de la urgente inclusión de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil a la hora de la toma de decisiones y prever el monitoreo de las políticas públicas.

La ausencia de justicia ambiental en nuestros países es causada por un modelo extractivista que genera depredación del ambiente en beneficio de intereses económicos privados y pone en riesgo a toda la humanidad.

Esto también genera desplazamiento de comunidades y aumenta los riesgos, como la trata de personas y otras formas de explotación y esclavitud moderna.

Exigimos la declaración de regiones y países libres de transgénicos, la transición a tecnologías limpias y accesibles, empleos verdes en igualdad de condiciones y la preservación de nuestros recursos naturales. Demandamos especial atención a las regiones que presentan condiciones más difíciles, como el Caribe y Centroamérica, que sufren las consecuencias de desastres naturales debido a la ausencia de políticas preventivas.

Finalmente, enfatizamos la importancia del desendeudamiento de los países, la justicia fiscal y la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo, imprescindibles en un momento de crisis financiera agravada por la pandemia, bajo el riesgo del incumplimiento de los ODS relacionados con la desigualdad. Un tema crucial es la insuficiencia de recursos económicos para garantizar el derecho a la educación, programas de protección y desarrollo social. Los países otorgan muy escasos recursos para estos programas tan fundamentales para las vidas de nuestras gentes. De allí que instamos a los Estados a cumplir con el compromiso asumido en el marco de la Declaración de Incheon (2015), respecto a la Asistencia Oficial para el Desarrollo (AOD).

La Sociedad Civil organizada llamamos a los gobiernos a la acción en base a evidencias robustas, para superar las dificultades y desafíos a nivel regional y nacionales relacionados con la crisis sanitaria haciendo efectivas las políticas adoptadas y comprometidas y tomando medidas concretas preventivas, penales, de protección y atención con el fortalecimiento de la institucionalidad involucrada, que contribuyan a asegurar el acceso efectivo y universal a los servicios fundamentales, especialmente para todas las víctimas y sobrevivientes de las diversas formas de violencia basada en género y prestando especial atención a quienes se ha dejado atrás y afuera.

Solo así podremos avanzar hacia un futuro más justo, inclusivo y sostenible para todas las personas en la región, en el marco de la Agenda 2030.

Courtesy translation provided by the secretariat

**FIFTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

2 October 2023, Santiago

***Declaration of the Civil Society Participation Mechanism of Latin America and the Caribbean
for Sustainable Development***

To the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean, we, as representatives of civil society, declare that in order to rethink the social contract in the region, inclusion and equity must be guaranteed through financing for comprehensive, universal social protection systems.

Respect for the sovereignty of our peoples means designing viable debt reduction alternatives and a commitment from the wealthy to paying their share, in solidarity, through progressive and fair tax systems, as well as oversight to prevent tax evasion and avoidance and lifting the unilateral coercive measures to which the countries of the region are subject.

We understand that a new social compact is the bedrock for strengthening the institutional frameworks of the organizations responsible for social protection systems and social development, which can be achieved if the commitments made are effectively fulfilled, access to information is facilitated, policies are managed with transparency and the basic human rights of the most socioeconomically marginalized groups are guaranteed.

Institutional strengthening and governance requires meaningful opportunities for the participation of civil society organizations in decision-making, as provided in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (2015), the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) (2018), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2013), the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989) and the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth (2005).

The crisis triggered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic worsened pre-existing economic and social problems. According to the World Bank, the region's poverty rate grew from 24% to 26.5% between 2019 and 2021, and the economic growth rate in 2023 is projected to be 1.4%.⁸ This highlights the urgent need for policies that foster inclusion and equity and centre around the eradication of all forms of violence, discrimination and oppression against women, children, adolescents, older persons, young persons, migrants, refugees and displaced persons, land and territory defenders, the LGBTIQ+ community, sex

⁸ See [online] <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/region/lac/overview#:~:text=En%20cuanto%20a%20la%20pobreza,7%2C9%20%25%20en%202022>.

workers, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS and historically marginalized and threatened populations such as Indigenous Peoples and persons of African descent.

The region is facing increasing poverty, structural inequalities and the privatization of services such as education and health care, which are rights.

This requires the immediate acceleration of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through concrete actions and intersectional policies, as we stated at the SDG Summit and the General Assembly of the United Nations.

We urgently call for decent work and stronger social protection in response to the labour and economic crisis, which is a direct consequence of the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The situation worsened over the past four years owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and has not improved in its aftermath.

This is evidenced by unemployment rates (7.9%)⁹ and increasing labour informality, which rose from 56.7% in 2019 to 62.4% in 2021,¹⁰ meaning that one in every two workers in Latin America and the Caribbean is employed in the informal market,¹¹ in a job with neither security nor social benefits or in work that is criminalized, such as sex work. This is the lived reality of millions of people in our countries, but it affects young people and women in all their diversity differently, in particular women who are the sole providers of household income, because gender inequalities heighten economic and social vulnerability and aggravate the care crisis and violence. The abovementioned situation is alarming in light of population ageing, which threatens the guarantee that social security benefits will be available for future generations.

We recommend that labour ministries and secretariats commit to cooperativism and social economies and to the implementation of social protection policies to prevent unemployment from rising.

Similarly, we demand that governments directly support small producers, small and medium-sized businesses and other stakeholders in the social and solidarity economy.

A review of the status and current mandates of the region's ministries and secretariats of development, social welfare, education and health is urgent to achieve efficiency and quality.

It was underscored at the recent Summit for a New Global Financing Pact and at the Finance in Common 2023 Summit that more investment is needed. Our peoples need more and better funding, as stated in the joint civil society declaration to public development banks, signed by more than 100 social organizations from more than 50 countries. The direct support and assistance provided by governments is not enough to sustain holistic well-being and independent living; States must therefore assume their agreed commitment to finance the percentage of GDP and public spending required to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and its intersectional manifestations.

⁹ See [online] https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_854766/lang--es/index.htm.

¹⁰ See [online] <https://www.bancomundial.org/es/region/lac/overview#:~:text=En%20cuanto%20a%20la%20pobreza,7%2C9%20%25%20en%202022.>

¹¹ See [online] https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_836198/lang--es/index.htm.

Social protection and development systems must also guarantee full access to sexual and reproductive rights, comprehensive sexuality education, safe abortion services and all contraceptive methods. Barriers to these rights remain in all the countries of the region, with serious and fatal repercussions for communities, and in particular for the lives of girls, adolescents and women in all their diversity. Policies for care, prevention of abuse and comprehensive support for all girls who are forced to remain pregnant or give birth must be strengthened.

Our region has the second-highest adolescent pregnancy rate in the world and women under the age of 20 account for 18% of all births, while maternity is the third leading cause of death for women in that age group.¹²

One in every four girls in Latin America and the Caribbean is forced to marry or enter into a civil union before the age of 18 and the region is the only one in the world where the child marriage rate is not falling (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)).¹³

Migrants, refugees and people on the move are part of an emerging humanitarian crisis of increasing concern.¹⁴ Mobility is a human right and migration can drive the social and economic development of our societies. Government policies repress and restrict migrants and displaced persons and governments enforce border controls, conduct mass deportations, separate families and conduct arbitrary detentions. From a rights perspective, no one is illegal. We therefore call for the fulfilment of the economic, political, social and cultural rights of all people, without any form of discrimination and irrespective of their migratory status.

We, as civil society representatives, are working for democracy to be upheld, human rights to be respected and the institutional frameworks of social protection systems to be strengthened. We demand that information be gathered in an accurate and timely manner, based on knowledge of territories and their key stakeholders, for example by including civil society organizations in decision-making, which is imperative, and by providing for public policy oversight.

The lack of environmental justice in our countries is the result of an extractivist model that encourages the plundering of the environment for the benefit of private economic interests and threatens all of humanity. This also displaces communities and places people at risk, including risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation and modern slavery.

We demand that regions and countries be declared free from genetic engineering, a transition to clean and affordable technologies, green jobs on an equal basis and the preservation of our natural resources. We demand a special focus on the regions facing the steepest challenges, such as the Caribbean and Central America, which are suffering the repercussions of natural disasters owing to the absence of preventative policies.

¹² Maternal mortality in Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the three leading causes of death among young women aged 15 to 19 years. Among girls younger than 15, the risk of death from pregnancy-related causes is up to three times higher than for women over 20. In Latin America, it is estimated that 670,000 young women aged 15–19 undergo an unsafe abortion each year. See [online] <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/temas/embarazo-en-adolescentes>.

¹³ A Profile of Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean, New York, (2019). See [online] <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/topics/matrimonio-infantil-y-uniones-tempranas-en-am%C3%A9rica-latina-y-el-caribe>.

¹⁴ Inter-American Development Bank (2023), "Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean". See [online] <https://blogs.iadb.org/conocimiento-abierto/es/migracion-america-latina/>.

In closing, we emphasize the need for debt reduction, fiscal justice and international cooperation for development, which are crucial in a time of financial crisis that has only been aggravated by the pandemic and threatens the achievement of the SDGs that relate to inequality. One critical issue is that funding levels are insufficient to guarantee the right to education and social protection programmes and development. The resources devoted by countries to these programmes that are so fundamental for the lives of our people are paltry. We therefore urge States to fulfil the official development assistance (ODA) commitments of the Incheon Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific (2015).

As civil society organizations, we call on governments to take action on the basis of hard evidence to overcome national and regional problems related to the health crisis by enacting policy as agreed and adopted to contribute to ensuring effective and universal access to basic services, and by taking concrete measures for prevention, punishment, protection and care and strengthening the related institutional frameworks, in particular for all victims and survivors of the various forms of gender-based violence, as well as by providing specialized care for those who have been left behind and marginalized.

Only in this way will it be possible to advance towards a more just, inclusive and sustainable future for all people in the region, underpinned by the 2030 Agenda.

Annex 3

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS¹⁵**

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¹⁵ 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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- Luis López, Jefe de Asuntos Internacionales, Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo;
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PERÚ/PERU

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B. Secretaría de las Naciones Unidas/ United Nations Secretariat

Consejo Económico y Social (ECOSOC)/Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- Paula Narváez, Presidenta, Representante Permanente de Chile ante las Naciones Unidas;

Coordinadores Residentes/Resident Coordinators

- María José Torres Macho, Coordinadora Residente del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas en Chile, email: torres8@un.org;

Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (ACNUR)/ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

- Francisca Gómez Lechaptois, Assistant Development Officer, Chile, email: gomezlec@unhcr.org;

**C. Sistema de las Naciones Unidas/
United Nations system**

Entidad de las Naciones Unidas para la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres (ONU-Mujeres)/United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

- Alison Vasconez, Oficial de Programas, email: alison.vasconez@unwomen.org;
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Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

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- Candy Fabio, Oficial de Protección Infantil, email: cfabiosalas@unicef.org;

**Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)/
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**

- Maya Takagi, Líder Regional de Programas;
- Agustín Zimmermann, Oficial Superior Regional de Asuntos Políticos y de Enlace;
- Jorge Meza, Oficial Superior de Políticas y Oficial Principal de Movilización de Recursos;

Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT)/International Labour Organization (ILO)

- Carmen Bueno, Especialista Principal en Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo, email: bueno@ilo.org;

Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

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Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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**D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales/
Intergovernmental organizations**

Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (CAF)/Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF)

- Patricio Scaff, Coordinador de las Relaciones Externas, email: pscaff@caf.com;

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)/Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Leticia Ortega, Gender Consultant, email: leticiaor@iadb.org;

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

- Rodrigo Márquez, Investigador, email: rodrigo.marquez@gmail.com;

**E. Panelistas/
Panellists**

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- Samantha Marshall, Ministra de Estado en el Ministerio de Salud, Bienestar, Transformación Social y Medio Ambiente de Antigua y Barbuda;
- Javiera Toro, Ministra de Desarrollo Social y Familia de Chile;
- Linda Maguire, Directora Regional Adjunta para América Latina y el Caribe del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD);
- Paula Narváez, Presidenta del Consejo Económico y Social (ECOSOC) de las Naciones Unidas;
- José Avendaño, Viceministro de Planificación Económica del Ministerio del Poder Popular de Planificación de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela;
- Francisca Gallegos Jara, Subsecretaria de Servicios Sociales del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia de Chile;
- Irma Yolanda Núñez, Coordinadora del Área Social del Despacho de la Comisionada Presidencial para Operaciones y Gabinete de Gobierno de El Salvador;
- Wellington Días, Ministro de Desarrollo y Asistencia Social, Familia y Lucha contra el Hambre del Brasil;
- Yorleni León Marchena, Ministra de Desarrollo Humano e Inclusión Social de Costa Rica;
- Kirk Humphrey, Ministro para el Empoderamiento de las Personas y Asuntos de Vejez de Barbados;
- Carolina González, Subsecretaria de Asuntos Internacionales y Cooperación Federal del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de la Argentina;
- Marisol Merquel, Presidenta del Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales de la Argentina;
- Julio Paredes, Viceministro Administrativo-Financiero del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Guatemala;
- Sally Ann García Taylor, Subdirectora General para la Superación de la Pobreza Extrema del Departamento Administrativo para la Prosperidad Social de Colombia;
- Diego Monsalve, Viceministro de Inclusión Económica del Ecuador;
- Marcela Browne, Fundación SES;
- Paula Poblete, Subsecretaria de Evaluación Social del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia de Chile;
- Leticia Bartholo, Secretaria de Evaluación, Gestión de la Información y Registro Único del Brasil;
- José Nabor Cruz Marcelo, Secretario Ejecutivo del Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL) de México;
- Van Elder Espinal, Director Técnico del Gabinete de Política Social de la República Dominicana;
- Bill Jonathan Flores, Coordinador General del Despacho de la Comisionada Presidencial para Operaciones y Gabinete de Gobierno de El Salvador;
- María Inés Castillo, Ministra de Desarrollo Social de Panamá;
- José Carlos Cardona, Secretario de Desarrollo Social de Honduras;

- Laís Abramo, Secretaria Nacional de Cuidados y Familia del Ministerio de Desarrollo y Asistencia Social, Familia y Lucha contra el Hambre del Brasil;
- Yasna Provoste, Senadora, ex Ministra de Planificación y Cooperación y de Educación de Chile;
- Javier Paulini, Director General de Focalización e Información Social del Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social del Perú;

F. Organizaciones no gubernamentales/ Non-governmental organizations

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