

**NINTH COORDINATION MEETING ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Secretariat

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**ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION,  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>**

*Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

The programme of work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in the area of international migration is conducted through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) pursuant to resolution 615(XXXI) adopted in 2006 by the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development at its meeting held during the thirty-first session of ECLAC, in addition to following up on the mandate from the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government.

Activities under these mandates during 2010 included research; internal and external publications; training and technical assistance for the countries; and active cooperation with intergovernmental conferences, civil society organizations and academic and labour institutions by participating in a variety of seminars and meetings and organizing classes. Resolution 615(XXI) created an inter-institutional group coordinated by ECLAC to monitor topics related to international migration and development in the region. In 2010 this initiative was reaffirmed with agencies of the system and other regional organizations, seeking basic coordination for conducting inter-agency activities and for continuing the joint effort (such as with the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Organization of American States (OAS)).

Most of the activities benefited from the inter-agency effort and combined awareness-building, advocacy and training. In July 2010 ECLAC played an active role in the second Ibero-American Meeting on Migration and Development, held in San Salvador, submitting the framework paper “Impactos de la crisis económica en migración y desarrollo: respuestas de políticas y programas en Iberoamérica” (Impacts of the economic crisis on migration and development: policy and programme responses in Ibero-America).<sup>2</sup> As can be seen on the CELADE website ([www.eclac.cl/celade/migracion/](http://www.eclac.cl/celade/migracion/)), many documents on migration were published in 2010, including:

- “Impactos de la crisis económica en la migración y el desarrollo: respuestas de política y programas en Iberoamérica” (Impacts of the economic crisis on migration and development: policy and programme responses in Ibero-America), drafted as a general concept and discussion paper for the second Ibero-American Meeting on Migration and Development;
- “Inserción laboral y acceso a mecanismos de seguridad social de los migrantes en Iberoamérica” (Labour participation and access to social security mechanisms for migrants in Ibero-America), drafted under the ECLAC-SEGIB agreement, which examines the principal socio-demographic characteristics of Ibero-American migrants as potential direct and indirect beneficiaries of the Multilateral Ibero-American Social Security Agreement (ISSA);
- “Migración y salud en zonas fronterizas: informe comparativo sobre cinco fronteras seleccionadas” (Migration and health in border areas: comparative report on five selected border areas), prepared under the project on migration and health conducted by the United Nations Population Fund Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and CELADE to compare the rights status of the population moving in selected border areas in Latin America, focusing on health conditions and, especially, on sexual and reproductive health;

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/celade/noticias/noticias/9/40239/P40239.xml&xsl=/celade/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/celade/tpl/top-bottom\\_mig.xsl](http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/celade/noticias/noticias/9/40239/P40239.xml&xsl=/celade/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/celade/tpl/top-bottom_mig.xsl).

- “Los derechos concedidos: crisis económica mundial y migración internacional” (Rights surrendered: global economic crisis and international migration), published under the CELADE series on population and development to look at the background, opinions and ideas concerning the most recent global economic and financial crisis and its impacts on international migration of inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean.

ECLAC worked closely with OAS on implementing the Continuous Labour Migration Reporting System for the Americas (SICREMI) and on drafting the first report, scheduled for completion in 2011.

Invited by the Government of Mexico, CELADE actively participated in the fourth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in November 2010, both in the Days of Civil Society and in the Meeting of Governments, during which the head of CELADE made a statement at one of the open sessions.

For a one-year term starting in August 2010, ECLAC is coordinating the representation of the five regional commissions of the United Nations at the Global Migration Group. It has contributed to the drafting of the “Statement of the Global Migration Group on the human rights of migrants in irregular situation,” presented at the fourth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. In 2011 ECLAC will continue to support and actively participate in Global Migration Group activities and the Global Forum agenda.

The eleventh meeting of the Biarritz Forum “European Union - Latin America Relations: Where are we and where are we going?” was held in Biarritz, France, from 3 to 5 November 2010. The ECLAC Population Division prepared and presented one of the working papers for the meeting: “Latin America and Europe: international migration is the opportunity for integration, development and strengthening of human rights”.

Also noteworthy are activities carried out in 2010 under the United Nations Development Account project “Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impact,” in its second year of implementation, coordinated by ECLAC in conjunction with the other regional commissions. For example, six regional workshops were conducted. Two were organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok (April and September 2010); two by the Economic Commission for Europe, one in Bishkek (February 2010) and one in Istanbul, Turkey (December 2010); one by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut (July 2010); and one by ECLAC in Santiago (September 2010). The conclusions from these workshops are available on the project website.<sup>3</sup> A summary of some of the conclusions of the workshop organized by ECLAC is provided below.

**Workshop on strengthening national capacities in international migration management with the theme “Looking towards the future: new trends, issues and approaches”**

The workshop was held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 7 to 9 September 2010. The principal objective of the workshop was to help increase the skills and capacities of those responsible for designing policies and programmes on international migration, in order to incorporate this issue in national development strategies in a practical way, maximizing the gains and minimizing the negative impacts. The findings from the diagnostic studies conducted under the project were reported. These studies examined the domestic regulatory situation in several countries and highlighted emerging issues

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<sup>3</sup> [www.cepal.org/cgi-bin/getprod.asp?xml=/celade/noticias/paginas/2/38752/P38752.xml&xsl=/celade/tpl/p18f.xsl&base=/celade/tpl/top-bottom\\_dam.xsl](http://www.cepal.org/cgi-bin/getprod.asp?xml=/celade/noticias/paginas/2/38752/P38752.xml&xsl=/celade/tpl/p18f.xsl&base=/celade/tpl/top-bottom_dam.xsl).

concerning international migration in the region. Participants included delegates from Governments of countries of the region involved in the project (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador and Mexico), specialists on migration issues and experts and researchers from several countries working on this issue, along with representatives of international agencies.<sup>4</sup>

### *Workshop topics*

Discussion took place in a plenary session, including eight working sessions and two round tables. The working sessions were on the following topics:

1. Focus on international migration in Latin America and the Caribbean
2. New and emerging trends in international migration in Ecuador and Colombia
3. New and emerging trends in Latin American migration to the United States
4. New and emerging trends in Latin American migration to Spain
5. Legal, institutional and political framework on international migration in Argentina, Chile and Ecuador
6. Legal, institutional and political framework on international migration in Central America and El Salvador
7. Legal, institutional and political framework on international migration in Mexico
8. Legal, institutional and political framework governing international migration: other approaches

The round tables were on the themes “*Quo Vadis?*” (new and emerging trends in international migration in the region) and “What can be done to support migrants?” (legal, institutional and political framework on international migration).<sup>5</sup>

### *Studies submitted*

The studies presented at the workshop centred on two major thematic areas: the new dynamic in international migration in the region, and the status of the regulatory and policy framework seeking to respond to, guide, manage and govern that dynamic. Countries were selected because they exhibited new trends in migrant flows and their concerns and contributions, and in how they dealt with the issue of migration, as case studies of both good practice and unmet needs.<sup>6</sup>

A study by Daniela Vono examined migration in Spain, which ranked second after the United States as an extraregional destination for Latin Americans, and in Colombia and Ecuador, where a large share of the population has emigrated. Vono stressed, among other things, that despite the lack of consistent data for analysing the migration of Latin Americans in these three countries, many migrants from Colombia and Ecuador were in situations of vulnerability. And there had been significant changes in Spain since migrant inflows from Latin America peaked: the flows had diversified not only on the basis of origin but in demographic characteristics as well. By contrast, labour participation had varied little. Latin Americans were still concentrated at the lowest levels of the occupation scale, with slight signs of a shift towards better jobs. The author posed the question of what would happen to Latin American immigrants in Spain, where, despite the economic crisis, immigrants would continue to look for

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<sup>4</sup>International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), Organization of American States (OAS), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The consultants engaged to conduct the studies also attended.

<sup>5</sup> Audio and video versions of the presentations given by speakers are available on the ECLAC website: <http://media.eclac.cl/presentaciones/conferencias2010/migracion/index.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> The studies were designed and supervised by Jorge Martínez Pizarro and Leandro Reboiras Finardi, with the collaboration of Magdalena Soffia Contrucci and Antonia Mardones Marshall.

alternatives enabling them to stay instead of returning. The author noted that being able to stay depended a good deal on the ability to weather labour market fluctuations and, in the case of undocumented migrants, the potential increase in targeted xenophobic treatment by some political circles.

Another study, prepared by Corina Courtis, examined achievements and challenges for migration regulations and initiatives in Argentina, Chile and Ecuador. Courtis noted that in Argentina, the issue of migration had been –and continued to be– mainly one of immigration, although refuge and emigration were increasingly relevant. After twenty years of restrictive migration regulations, Argentina had settled its “debt to democracy” concerning immigration by adopting normative instruments and measures for dealing with migration and protecting refugees and victims of human trafficking. But by mid-2010 only the migration act had been passed, thus limiting, in practice, the protection of rights. In Chile, concern over emigration was growing, and immigration was slowly making its way onto the policy agenda. In 2008, a presidential instructive on national migration policy in Chile sought to ground that policy in the principal international human rights instruments ratified by Chile. However, the principles governing the management of migration were regulated by an executive decree issued illegitimately during the Pinochet dictatorship. Courtis noted that, in Ecuador, concern over emigration had led to the inclusion of human mobility as a core issue on the policy agenda. The constitutional reform was an important step in that it mainstreamed the human mobility issue under a rights-based approach in line with international treaties ratified by the country. Despite an integrated migration policy seeking to encompass immigration, refuge, transit, internal displacement and trafficking in migrants, there were unresolved migration issues in Ecuador.

Alejandro Canales presented an examination of the history, issues and lessons learned concerning the regulatory situation and migrant rights policy initiatives in Mexico. His study covered international treaties ratified by Mexico and how they aligned with domestic legislation, as well as plans, programmes, projects and actions on the issue of migration –emigration and immigration alike. Canales held that while Mexico’s policies on migration had sought to protect human rights, there were many problems that, rather than falling in the regulatory sphere, had more to do with the responsibility of the State in the face of the abuse and crimes suffered by migrants within its territory at the hands of criminal organizations and, according to complaints, of Mexican State agents. In this regard, Canales identified cross-border security requirements of the North American integration process as a core issue. He also noted the considerable erosion of the ability of the Mexican State to put an end to the activities of the criminal groups that currently controlled and, actually, managed the corridors through which the flows of undocumented migrants passed. This issue did not have a regulatory solution, and its ramifications went beyond migration itself. But it was the principal challenge that the Mexican authorities must address regarding migration.

In another paper, Alejandro Canales presented a study on three areas in which immigrants from Latin America had made contributions to the United States, seeking to reframe the discourse on the relationship between migration and development. That discourse had centred on the impact of remittances. Evidence provided by the author showed that these contributions fell into three categories. First was the contribution to demographic reproduction. Maintaining demographic growth filled the active-age population vacuum and offset the declining birth rate in the United States. Second was the contribution to economic reproduction, by helping to grow the workforce and expand GDP, and, particularly, by contributing to the economic growth of the United States. And third was the contribution to social reproduction, related to the insertion of Latin American immigrants in activities and occupations that were essential for the social reproduction of the population of the United States. Canales emphatically stated that the society of the United States should be open to the possibility of becoming not only a multicultural society but also one in which the current mix of social and ethnic majorities and minorities could change radically, because the country’s current and future social reproduction depended on it. The author identified how and where migration played a role in social reproduction.

Marcela Ferrer explained the institutional arrangements for managing international migration in El Salvador (although the report covered Costa Rica and the Caribbean Community as well), including the regulatory situation and policy initiatives, programmes, projects and actions targeting migrants. Reversing the migratory pattern, deepening ties with the diaspora and developing mechanisms for protecting immigrants were major challenges facing El Salvador. The consultant's report also stressed that Costa Rica needed to meet the needs of immigrants, especially from Nicaragua, and to monitor the impacts of legislation that was supposed to achieve full integration of immigrants and to respect, protect and guarantee their human rights. The members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) shared the concern about emigration. The exchange of emigrants among them was intense, and migrant vulnerability was a major issue. The opportunities and challenges of return migration was another consideration. The author showed that in all of the countries reviewed, and particularly in the countries of the Caribbean, developing information systems on international migration was a priority.

Last, round-table discussions reflected the opinions and reflections shared by guest speakers at the seminar from several countries in Latin America, the United States and Spain. These are found in the proceedings of the meeting.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [www.cepal.org/celade/agenda/3/40193/InformeRelatoriaSeminarioTaller.pdf](http://www.cepal.org/celade/agenda/3/40193/InformeRelatoriaSeminarioTaller.pdf).