ELEVENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York, 21-22 February 2013

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

1 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, human rights and development involves essentially the preparation of technical proposals which are intended to serve as inputs for the design of national policies, programmes and laws designed to capitalize on the benefits of international migration and reduce its adverse effects at both the regional and the subregional level. This programme is conducted through the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – Population Division of ECLAC, pursuant mainly to resolution 615 (XXXI), adopted in 2006 by the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development. CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC also follows up on mandates from the Ibero-American summits of heads of State and Government and collaborates with the Organization of American States (OAS), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), other regional integration processes and several national public, civil society and academic institutions.

Activities carried out under these mandates in 2012 included research into the social consequences of migration and future cooperation agendas, identification of situations of vulnerability for migrants (for example, for women and indigenous peoples) and economic implications (in particular, the impacts of remittances), the preparation of specialized regional publications that draw on censuses and surveys; the provision of training and technical assistance to countries in the region; support for intergovernmental meetings, conferences and seminars; and technical cooperation with civil society organizations and academic and labour institutions.

In general, CELADE-Population Division’s activities have benefited from the work of the inter-agency group created by resolution 615 (XXXI) and coordinated by ECLAC to monitor issues relating to international migration and development in the region. In 2012, this initiative was once again found to be a valuable mechanism for coordinating inter-agency activities and pursuing joint efforts with the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), among other agencies.

In 2012, ECLAC published a major document on migration entitled “International migration from a regional and interregional perspective”. This publication summarizes the main outcomes of the United Nations Development Account project “Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impact”. The project was executed by the regional commissions and the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, under the coordination of ECLAC.¹

In 2012 ECLAC took part in intergovernmental and regional meetings and conferences in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, and carried out training and technical assistance and cooperation activities with public and academic institutions in the
respective countries; the Commission also worked with civil-society organizations, participating in a variety of seminars, meetings and specialized courses, relating to migration and poverty, human rights and specific indicators. From 19 to 20 August, ECLAC representatives attended the first CELAC meeting on migration, held in Comayagua, Honduras, and, from 4 to 6 November, participated in a forum held in Santiago within the framework of the twelfth South-American Conference on Migration (CSM).

ECLAC continued to provide a regional perspective in the discussions within the Global Migration Group and provided technical inputs for the Group’s documents. Some member agencies participated in the final meeting of the United Nations Development Account project on international migration, which was organized by ECLAC and held at United Nations Headquarters in April 2012.  

All these activities have enabled ECLAC to collect ideas and proposals relating to migration and development, which it has reformulated from a regional perspective of dialogue and cooperation. Thus, in 2013, a regional meeting of experts on migration will be held in preparation for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, and these issues will be addressed at the first Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, scheduled to be held in August in Montevideo.

**Final meeting of the United Nations Development Account project “Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impact”**

The final meeting of the United Nations Development Account project on 'Strengthening National Capacities to deal with International migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impact' took place at United Nations Headquarters, as a side event to the forty-fifth Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development. The main objective of the meeting was to present the findings of the project, which are incorporated in the final document, entitled “International migration from a regional and interregional perspective”. This document has been published on the project website.

The side event was organized by CELADE-Population Division of ECLAC in coordination with the other four regional commissions and the Regional Commissions New York Office. The meeting was attended by representatives of different agencies in the United Nations System, and other international organizations as well as by national delegations to the United Nations.
Written by ECLAC with support from other regional commissions and the United Nations Population Division, the final document represents the regional commissions’ contribution to the discussions on the global agenda relating to international migration. It summarizes the main outcomes of the project, and favours a pro-active approach. The topics covered range from intraregional movements, return migration, irregular migration, forced population movements and asylum-seeking to temporary migration, skilled migration, remittance flows and the presence of diasporas in receiving countries. The document is intended as an input –from a regional and interregional perspective– to the process leading to the 2013 United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the Global Forum on International Migration and Development, and –as previously mentioned– to the activities carried out by the Global Migration Group. The outcomes of the event also contributed to different forums and debates on international migration, human rights and development.

The lessons learned and main conclusions drawn from the project, which are clearly related with the overall theme of the second High-Level Dialogue and its four round tables, are summarized below:

- The project demonstrated the need to strengthen institutional collaboration at the national and regional levels in order to produce and analyse migration statistics and better inform the policymaking process.

- The cooperation and dialogue between the regional commissions proved extremely productive and rewarding, thanks to the capabilities, experience and knowledge of each commission in the field of international migration. The discussions between the commissions were very enriching, since each of them was able to present its specific experience but also learn from the others. Despite regional differences, common concerns were recognized and best practices identified.

- The success of the project may be attributed to the cooperation networks and synergies created with the leading actors in migration work, namely, Governments, civil society organizations, research centres, academic institutions, regional networks and international organizations. The effort of joint reflection, debate and work among United Nations agencies in multilateral contexts such as the Global Migration Group, the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and the Global Forum on International Migration should be strengthened and emulated in the future.

- In order to give continuity and support for the products and good practices generated by the development of the project, sustained effort should be made: (a) to build on the synergies created among stakeholders in the field of migration; (b) to enhance interregional coordination and cooperation; (c) to foster common work among the regional commissions and between the latter and the agencies of the United Nations
system dedicated to migration topics; (d) to strengthen the regional and subregional networks generated under the project; (e) to mainstream migration into national development agendas; (f) to improve data and information sources (traditional and non-traditional); and (g) to advocate the human rights of migrants in regional and multiregional forums on migration.

This document is available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, and has been distributed among project stakeholders, such as governmental institutions, civil society organizations, academia and international organizations. In Latin American and Caribbean region, it was also distributed (in English and Spanish) at the Meeting of the ECLAC Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development (Quito, July 2012). The English, French and Arabic versions were distributed by the Economic Commission for Africa at the Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Mauritius, on 21 and 22 November 2012.

Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union

In the framework of the activities of CELAC, ECLAC collaborated actively with the Government of Chile (Pro-Tempore Chair of CELAC) on the preparation of inputs for a first statistical compendium on international migration between CELAC countries and the countries of the European Union. This compendium was presented by the Government of Chile at the first Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union, held in Santiago, on 25 and 26 January 2013. The document describes migration exchanges and the characteristics of migrants in both regions, particularly between 2000 and 2010. It also presents an analysis of various initiatives for dialogue between the two regions and proposals made as part of the European Union’s overall approach along with those recently adopted by CELAC, which represent its member countries’ common position on intra- and extraregional migration.

The compendium refers to an idea, previously suggested by ECLAC, which reflects the countries’ thinking and which the Summit also endorses: Beyond the current situation, the global financial and economic crisis which erupted in recent years is an opportunity to reconsider the Europe-Latin America and Caribbean migration agenda and to alert Governments to the need for heightened vigilance in order to protect migrant workers and their families. Particular attention should be paid to the vulnerability of migrants and to the need to guarantee their rights in order to prevent labour protectionism and the tightening of restrictions on migration, which are already very strict and sometimes inhuman.

Point 38 of the Santiago Declaration of the first CELAC Summit concludes by identifying efforts in favour of migrants, which will involve all States with a view to taking
advantage of opportunities arising from international migration: “Welcome the holding of the First Meeting on Migrations of CELAC, held on 20 and 21 August 2012 in Comayagua, Republic of Honduras, and highlight the recommendations emanated from this event, which set the foundations to develop in that regional forum a CELAC strategy on migrations that is based on the perspective of migrant persons as subjects of rights and articulates a common position of our region with respect to the dialogue processes in other regional and global forums;” “Highlight the drafting of the First Statistical Digest on Migrations between CELAC and the European Union, which is a contribution to better understand the migratory flows between regions.” (http://www.gob.cl/media/2013/01/Declaraci%C3%B3n-de-Santiago.pdf). Similar ideas are expressed in article 30 of the Santiago Declaration of the first CELAC-EU Summit (http://www.gob.cl/cumbres/celac-noticias-ue/2013/01/27/declaracion-de-santiago.htm).

**Other contributions: Social Panorama of Latin America**

The Social Panorama of Latin America is a publication prepared each year by the Social Development Division and the Statistics Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). For the 2012 edition of this publication, CELADE – Population Division of ECLAC contributed a section on caregiving in Latin-America and the Caribbean, with emphasis on the impact of international migration on the care sector in Latin America.

__________________________

**NOTES**

1 See www.eclac.cl/celade/migracion/

2 International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The consultants engaged to conduct the studies also attended.

3 http://www.cepal.org/celade/DAmigration.asp

44 Primer compendio estadístico sobre migraciones entre CELAC y UE, 2012, CELAC, OIM, Gobierno de Chile, Diálogo estructurado CELAC-UE sobre migraciones.