



XXVIII

Meeting of the Presiding Officers
of the Regional Council for Planning
of the Latin American and
Caribbean Institute for Economic
and Social Planning (ILPES)

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**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS
OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR PLANNING OF THE LATIN AMERICAN
AND CARIBBEAN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING (ILPES)**

Virtual meeting, 12 November 2020



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A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date of the meeting

1. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) held its twenty-eighth meeting in virtual format on 12 November 2020.

Attendance¹

2. Representatives of the following States members of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) of the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) participated in the meeting: Argentina, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of the following States members of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) also participated: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

B. AGENDA

4. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Review of progress with respect to the resolutions adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) held in Montevideo in 2019.
3. Preparations for the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES).
4. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

C. PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

Opening session

5. To open the meeting, statements were made by Raul García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and Isaac Alfie, Director, Office of Planning and Budget (OPP) of Uruguay, in his capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning.

¹ See the full list of participants in Annex 2.

6. The Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of ECLAC said that the crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic presented unprecedented challenges that underscored the relevance of the responses proposed in the area of planning for a transformative recovery that was equal and sustainable. It would also offer the opportunity to transform the development model to meet the aspirations for a better future, as expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some of the predicted effects of the crisis on the region were a contraction in GDP and an increase in poverty, inequality and unemployment, as well as lack of access to pensions and health systems and fragility of the welfare State, all of which would make it difficult to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The pandemic had found the countries in a context of slow growth and scarce fiscal resources. The leadership of the State in the recovery process was recognized; planning was the only strategy for redirecting State resources toward the emergency and identifying economic sectors that would be key to recovery.

7. At the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC a document had been introduced, *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability*² in which a major emphasis on sustainability as a response to the crisis had been proposed. In order to implement those proposals, agreements must be established, along with participation led by the State, for which planning was an essential tool, together with more regional integration and high-quality multilateralism. Planning offered the possibility of projecting future scenarios and coordinating their aspects at many levels of the territory in order to address the challenges of climate change. It would be necessary to plan in order to develop resilience, in full awareness of the risks, threats and structural gaps that remained and had been worsened by the crisis and their different effects in urban and rural areas. Planning was necessary because it had to do with the technical and political process of collectively building an inclusive future, where the common good would once again have meaning.

8. The Director of the Office of Planning and Budget of Uruguay, in his capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning, extended a special welcome to the Central American countries, who were present despite having been affected by hurricanes. He drew attention to the opportunity for intergovernmental technical and policy dialogue offered by the Meeting in order to discuss the challenges of planning aimed at post-COVID-19 recovery and empowering the integrity and coherence of public policies to promote economic growth with greater levels of equality and sustainability (from a financial and social viewpoint). The challenges of 2030 remained in force. Sustainability involved a focus on the long-term causes of problems, not on symptoms that could be relieved through cash transfers. Both aspects were essential, but transfers were a palliative and not a long-term solution. It was necessary to enhance the participation of civil society and strengthen the capacity of governments in all areas of planning and public administration. Evaluation without self-indulgence was needed and would improve State response. It was essential to recognize strengths and weaknesses and to know the institutional foundation available to address problems. Mechanisms would be required to provide incentives for private investment, in a context of scarce liquidity, but in a region with great growth potential. The full implementation of strategic planning exercises would also be required and budget planning based on measured results rather than expenditures must be pursued, in order to improve public administration.

9. The Chief of ILPES, Cielo Morales, then reviewed the objectives and topics of the meeting and explained that the Institute team, together with the members of the Presiding Officers, had decided to hold three panels on relevant topics. During the second part of the day, ILPES would make its report to the members of the Regional Council for Planning and lastly, the agreements of the twenty-eighth meeting of the Presiding Officers would be considered.

² LC/SES.38/3-P/Rev.1.

10. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mario Cimoli, in his presentation on the role of planning in transformative recovery post-COVID-19, stressed that the need for planning with equality and sustainability was heightened when faced with a change of era arising from the crisis of multilateralism, new global challenges, a development agenda at risk, social unrest and persistent structural gaps in the region. The emergency and the need for recovery required greater financing, cooperation and planning. ECLAC had presented seven proposals to link the emergency with recovery and the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: i) 12 months of emergency basic income; ii) extension of deadlines and grace periods for credit to micro-, small and medium businesses; iii) a basic digital basket; iv) expansive tax and monetary policies, both conventional and unconventional; v) international solidarity, including debt relief for the Caribbean and interest payment relief for Central America, through the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE) and the extension of the initiative to suspend debt service; vi) recovery plans based on investment, employment and environmental sustainability; and vii) policy and tax agreements for universal, progressive and redistributive social protection.

11. Growth with equality and sustainability required planning and coordination. ECLAC had thus proposed further promotion of sustainability through investment in seven dynamic sectors: i) transformation of the energy matrix based on renewable energies; ii) sustainable mobility in urban areas; iii) a digital revolution for sustainability; iv) the health-care manufacturing industry; v) the bioeconomy; vi) a circular economy; and vii) sustainable tourism. A transformative recovery required broad leadership, with the citizens at the centre, and a new form of public administration that would help to establish transformative agreements and promote collaboration.

12. In the ensuing discussion, the Director of Investment Programming of the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Panama, Jose Agustín Espino, said that the presentation had reaffirmed the role of planning and territorialization which had been lost in past decades. In the countries of the region, removing planning from State functions in order to make room for market action had resulted in such scourges as drug trafficking, which corrupted society, the economy and political life. Sustainable development should give much more weight to justice, because corruption had eroded confidence in the State and contributed to the loss of internal capacity, which had an effect on the difficulties the countries faced in meeting the challenges of the pandemic, natural disasters and other crises. Recalling that the countries of the region were marginalized in the global context, he stated that Latin America should position itself, for example, through the establishment of a regional scientific research centre in order to face challenges like those presented by the pandemic.

13. The Chair of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Strategic Planning (CEPLAN) of Peru, Javier Abugattás, said that the integration of economic, social and environmental aspects into public policy would require a major effort, and that the capacity for management, knowledge, innovation and realism needed to produce it had not been developed in the region. In Peru, agreements had been reached through a consensus-building mechanism on the protection of life in specific cultural and geographical contexts, including the Amazon, the Andes, the coast and the ocean. When arriving in these localities, the authorities perceived a need to adapt policy to multicultural realities; much progress was still needed in that process. He noted the lack of good public policy based on the knowledge of local realities; the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development of Latin America and the Caribbean could improve its communication in that area.

14. The Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, Wayne Henry, emphasized the importance of planning with regard to the current high levels of uncertainty. Planning allowed the State to project a broad range of scenarios in the light of multiple factors, such as informality and inequality, which had been exacerbated by the pandemic. Restrictions on the movement of persons in order to control the

pandemic had a major effect on tourism, and had hit the economies of the Caribbean hard. This subregion was highly vulnerable to climate change and the climate agenda was extremely relevant. As for the digital agenda, he said that the Caribbean experienced many problems with connectivity, which, in the context of the pandemic, affected education and many students were being left behind. He underscored the importance of land use planning and the work of the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development for Latin America and the Caribbean, drawing attention to the differences between the two subregions and within the Caribbean. Many Caribbean countries were experiencing credit exclusions and some were seeking debt relief, while others opted to return to fiscal consolidation through macroeconomic reforms and debt reduction, which was the case for Barbados and Jamaica. However, there were some countries whose per capita income disqualified them for that option.

15. The Director of Planning for the Office of the President of Nicaragua, Juan Carlos Sánchez, said that planning should be linked to economic, social, cultural, environmental and political rights, leading to a better quality of life for the people. Planning was essential, but it could be observed that ministries planned in isolation: ministries of finance dealt with economic matters, and those for social development with social policy. The global nature of planning should be achieved through linking the bodies dedicated to it with different perspectives. He referred to the experience of the National Council for Planning, Investment, Budget and Cooperation in his country, which had achieved good results through systematic planning. Different structural bodies had been coupled together, such as the national social welfare system and the national production, consumption and commerce system. He suggested investigating the best models of coordination and planning systems, with a holistic vision that would address social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. Lastly, he emphasized the importance of applying policies while taking into account cultural aspects of countries, reiterating that cultural matters and leadership were fundamental.

16. The Vice-minister for General Economic and Social Coordination for the Technical Secretariat of Planning of Paraguay, Digno Ibarra, underlined the importance of a culture of planning. His country had not escaped the economic and social conditions in the region and the shocks of the pandemic. There was a general lack of resources, and in the light of such scarcity there was no room for error. The forum provided by ILPES allowed for sharing the experiences of other countries, unifying methods and flattening the learning curve. Lastly, he welcomed the technical support provided by the Institute in the review of the National Development Plan to bring it in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the establishment of a public policy inventory and its publication on the Web, the involvement of all institutions in knowledge and implementation of the Plan and territorialization of plans and policies.

17. The Secretary for Territorial Planning and Coordination of Public Works of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Works and Housing of Argentina, Mariana Kossoy, said that territorialization was a priority that had resulted in the establishment of that Ministry, a process very much in keeping with ILPES proposals. Policies should respect the particular characteristics and needs of each territory. She also drew attention to the plan to set up 24 alternative capitals so that the national cabinet could travel to the regions and thus balance the urban system. Lastly, she noted that territorialization and territorial balance should be a cross-cutting aspect of all policies.

Panel 1 – Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean: planning for a resilient recovery in the post-COVID-19 context

18. The panel was moderated by Diane Quarless, Chief, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, with the participation of Gloria Joseph, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning, Resilience and Sustainable Development, Telecommunications and Broadcasting of Dominica, Wayne Henry, Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, and Kari Grenade, Chair

of the Technical Working Group on the National Sustainable Development Plan 2035, Macroeconomic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Physical Development of Grenada.

19. The Chief of ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean welcomed the ongoing collaboration between that office and ILPES, as well as the ECLAC initiative “Caribbean first”. She noted the unprecedented challenges facing that subregion, exacerbated by the pandemic, which included inequality, difficulty in access to educational services, food insecurity, gender inequality, poverty, rising unemployment and the challenges of debt service. National development plans should define transformative strategies to advance the 2030 Agenda, while analysing national circumstances and priority targets, taking into account that those countries were highly indebted and their economies were small and vulnerable. Policy responses should be holistic and have the participation of development actors within a resilient planning framework. As guidance to the panel, she asked speakers to refer to the ways in which the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs had brought results in responding to the emergency and how they believed that they would assist in recovery and transformation post-COVID-19, as well as whether or not it would be appropriate to revise the SDG targets or their ambitions under the new pandemic and post-pandemic scenario.

20. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning, Resilience and Sustainable Development, Telecommunications and Broadcasting of Dominica said that her country, as a small island developing State, faced major challenges in achieving the SDGs in a context of limited technical capacity for policy implementation, the constant fight against socioeconomic shocks often caused by climate change and natural disasters, various national agendas competing among themselves and the need for skills to form alliances among different actors in order to achieve the goals. The post-COVID-19 recovery would be crucial for the survival of small island developing States, and emphasis must be placed on food security, employment and means of subsistence, social security, the economy, infrastructure, private sector participation and strengthening of the social protection network. In order to meet those challenges, a new direction in national and regional planning was required, with an emphasis on disaster risk management through the objectives of adaptation and mitigation. She stressed a people-centred approach to planning. The ambitions of the SDGs must be revised, but it must be made clear that the SDGs were the way to respond to the crisis, and therefore the context must be reviewed and reflected in planning. The availability of resources must be reviewed, priority given to targets reordered and strategic alliances sought through global cooperation (as stated in SDG 17) along with consideration of the time frame for the 2030 Agenda and its viability. In the future crisis would be the norm, and therefore it must be determined whether the SDGs would respond to that new reality. That should be one of the central objectives of planning.

21. With regard to the impact of the pandemic on planning, she maintained that there was a long road ahead to ensure policies that would offer satisfactory protection from the worst threats to communities and businesses. It would be necessary to revise the SDGs in a context where shocks and crises would be the new normal. The SDGs required an enormous allocation of resources and the new context made an urgent review necessary in order to contrast those requirements with reality. As for SDG 17, the imbalance between greenhouse gas emitters and those mainly affected by climate change must be urgently addressed, with an enhanced focus on solidarity: the Caribbean countries could not meet those challenges without support from the international community. Lastly, she noted the need for greater inclusion of disaster risk management in planning.

22. The Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica said that Vision 2030 was the first long-term national plan by his country, elaborated with the participation of many actors, and it was being made concrete through medium-term socioeconomic policy frameworks. Agenda 2030, with which the Vision 2030 plan coordinated, had provided a common language and facilitated the harmonization of national priorities with international and regional priorities and those of development cooperation agencies

and the private sector. It had also made it possible to strengthen implementation of interventions such as the response to COVID-19, leading to the development of a relevant and timely public development policy, and to accelerate digitalization, expand social development systems and improve the social contract, access to information and basic public and private goods and services in the context of promotion of health, monitoring of illness and training and development of human capital.

23. As for the revision of targets, progress should be made towards the transformation of the economy and value chains in response to the pandemic. It would be necessary to introduce into the plans changes that he believed would be permanent, with clear implications for the goals. His country had begun to revise its plan, goals and targets, including institutional adjustments and other aspects that would affect the achievement of the development goals, and also considering the opportunities that could arise from the changes brought about by the pandemic. Such critical factors as technology, adaptability and multisectoral approaches to meet development challenges had been identified.

24. With regard to the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs allowed for harmonization of national priorities with those of national, regional and international partners, including the private sector. Thus, the development of a platform for response to COVID-19 had served as a mechanism to harmonize international development cooperation. Likewise, the management system for international cooperation had facilitated monitoring of programmes to move toward the achievement of the SDGs and the Vision 2030 plan. In adapting the priorities in those instruments to the new landscape, the COVID-19 crisis had posed enormous challenges in achieving development, demonstrating the interdependence among the various dimensions of sustainable development. The public health crisis had had serious economic, social and environmental consequences, revealing the vulnerabilities and inequalities existing within and among countries. In addition to developing recovery plans, the government had revised the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the Vision 2030 plan, on the basis of data and the evaluation of the institutional arrangements in effect. It thus attempted to incorporate into the process the needs arising since the beginning of the crisis, evaluating local capacities and opportunities to adapt and redefine targets. As priority areas, the focus had been on goals in the areas of health, digitalization, education, innovation and social security and protection, among others, as well as strengthening the means of implementation and institutional arrangements for their oversight.

25. The Chair of the Technical Working Group of the National Sustainable Development Plan 2035 and Macroeconomic Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Physical Development of Grenada said that it was important to understand that there would not be a post-crisis situation, but rather that we must learn to live with new realities. The international community was facing many changes that would also provide opportunities to do better. One such change was the reshaping of economies to build back better, so as to rethink the way of living, acting and relating to one another, putting people at the centre of development. Given that opportunity, it would also be essential to rebuild the relationship of human beings to nature. COVID-19 coincided with already existing crises, such as the climate and economic crises, and the debt crisis in the case of the Caribbean. Therefore, planning must address the way to create future economies to overcome inequalities, improve educational systems and reinforce social protection networks.

26. The 2030 Agenda would be relevant in that scenario because it was the framework that highlighted those topics, allowing it to give shape to sustainable development and plan as a result. The 2030 Agenda was not perfect; there were various criticisms of the SDGs, but it was the only framework available and could be perfected. It should also be acknowledged that the targets had been ambitious before the pandemic, and since its arrival were even more so. That framework should be used to strengthen institutional arrangements. Another challenge was greater analysis of compromise solutions, since it was clear that some targets could contradict each other; continued analysis of systems would examine those interactions and

promote greater coherence among goals. In the end, it was people who suffered when policy coherence was lacking. Innovation would be an essential factor in addressing that and other problems.

27. Another aspect to be revised would be financing. Just as there were global funds for climate-related goals, similar funds would be needed for health, education and institutional strengthening through specialized technical bodies. In the area of territorialization, national voluntary reviews should become local voluntary reviews, in order to integrate the SDGs in communities, school curricula and other instruments. It was urgent to move from policy to action, changing the perspective from what would be done to what had been done. Countries should make their intentions concrete through action for sustainable development that would have tangible results. Planning should be holistic, coherent, meaningful and effective, and should go beyond the plan and involve all sectors. No institution or sector had all the solutions to challenges as great as those presented in achieving sustainable development, a field where vulnerabilities were multi-dimensional; the end result should be the well-being of people.

28. The Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas, Sharon Brennen-Haylock, shared a written statement noting that the reviews of the progress made in implementation of Agenda 2030 had shown its value, in particular given regional inequality and poverty indicators that remained at undesirable levels despite the progress countries had made. The pandemic had revealed the gaps, inequalities and vulnerabilities of the societies in the region. The crisis had forced a reconsideration of national budgets and the development goals. In many areas, work on the SDGs had helped to mitigate some of the worst effects of the crisis. Many small island developing States had been dealing with the beginning of the pandemic while they were working to rebuild after successive natural disasters and their financial effects and ran the risk of losing ground if they did not receive support from the international community. The vulnerability index thus took on great urgency. Those States were vulnerable to external crises and if they could not obtain financing under favourable conditions and other forms of development assistance, they were very likely to be left behind.

29. In addition, education as a whole required greater attention. Information technologies had proven to be a valuable tool for providing education and various services. It was necessary to continue down that road and take advantage of what those technologies had to offer. It was not possible to build back better in isolation; it must be done with the involvement of all, both civil society and the private sector. The voices of women and marginalized people must also be heard and taken into account; it was necessary to plan and measure. The Bahamas had taken a series of measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and promote a sustainable and durable recovery. An Economic Recovery Committee had been established, whose summary report included over 150 policy recommendations in order to stabilize, diversify and revitalize its economy, with emphasis on innovation, inclusion, recovery capacity, protection of the environment and the importance of technology for job creation in a post-pandemic setting.

30. The Vice-Minister for the Economy and Planning of Cuba, Mildrey Grandillo de la Torre, said that the pandemic had affected not only the health sector but also the economy and daily life, in terms of access to basic goods and services. Addressing those challenges had required a systemic focus that encompassed the economy, society and the environment, as stated in Agenda 2030. Progress in the country with respect to the various targets of the SDGs had helped to reduce the prevalence of mortality and disease through a flexible response. A strategy led by the Ministry of Public Health and the Civil Defense System had been implemented to contain the risk of introduction and spread of the pandemic. The prevention and control plan to deal with COVID-19 had involved all sectors and included over 200 measures which placed priority on protecting human life. The government had approved an economic and social strategy for economic stimulus and confronting the global crisis caused by COVID-19, a road map for empowering the economy and seeking alternatives to respond to the various challenges. Those efforts were complemented by the implementation of

the National Economic and Social Development Plan for 2030, which covered the 17 SDGs. It also harmonized with the National Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education Plan and the Territorial Development Stimulus Policy, recently adopted, and the State Plan to Address Climate Change (Life Task).

31. One factor of vital importance had been the establishment of a system to guide economic and social development, whose guiding force was planning. In order to implement the strategy and avoid paralyzing vital productive activities, planning had played a proactive role as a flexible tool allowing swift reallocation of resources to national priorities (health, protection of the people, macroeconomic response and economic recovery), making the necessary adjustments effectively in an emergency. The country was already in the recovery process and the majority of its provinces were gradually returning to the new normal. The implementation of the strategy was proceeding with strict discipline, with a timetable that allowed for constant checking of the work plans, stressing the speed required in decision making, in order to achieve the objectives and make a qualitative jump in management and oversight systems.

Panel 2 – The role of planning and its territorialization in post-COVID-19 recovery

32. The panel was moderated by Mariana Kossoy, Secretary for Territorial Planning and Coordination of Public Works of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Works and Housing of Argentina, with the participation of Mildrey Granadillo de la Torre, Vice-Minister of the Economy and Planning of Cuba, Luis Arturo Meza Ochoa, Undersecretary for Development Planning and Programming of Guatemala, and Pavel Isa, Vice-Minister for Planning of the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic.

33. The moderator said that the purpose of the panel was to analyse the relevance of planning the post-pandemic recovery from a territorial point of view in order to reduce inequalities at the sub-national level and achieve sustainable development. Topics to guide the discussion included the contribution of planning under fiscal restrictions, priorities and targets that should be revised under government recovery plans and their linkage to medium and long-term measures, the new perspectives required in addressing territorial inequalities in the context of the recovery and the way in which the pandemic response at the sub-national level had contributed to the design of responses at the national level.

34. The Vice-Minister for the Economy and Planning of Cuba said that there were favorable conditions to promote decentralization and local development after the adoption of the Territorial Development Stimulus Policy, as part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, together with a focus on coordination of the agendas of municipal and provincial governments. The new constitution, adopted in 2019, strengthened the priority placed on territorial development, supporting the decentralization process and municipal autonomy. Before the pandemic, the need to empower local development as a response had grown. As President Miguel Díaz-Canel had stated, “everything we do must have an effect in the municipalities”.³ Local governments were essential, since they were a link between the central government and the communities, and played a fundamental role in the participation of various social actors.

35. The government pandemic response strategy had the support of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its economic pillar, through support to projects for revitalization of the local economy, placing priority on employment and livelihoods. Progress had been made in management and strategic planning of territorial development, with updates to methodological guidance for the elaboration of municipal and provincial development strategies, the

³ See [on line] <https://www.presidencia.gob.cu/es/noticias/diaz-canel-todo-lo-que-hagamos-tiene-que-tener-una-articulacion-en-el-municipio/>.

territorial development index, drafting of a New Urban Agenda and a set of tools to support government management. Under the leadership of the Ministry, the University of Havana and other actors were designing a second diploma in decentralization and financing of territorial development, that would strengthen capacity to promote local planning and management processes for revitalization. Measures taken to address the pandemic included reinforcement of local food production, promotion of scientific and technical assistance by the University to the government to foster the productivity of agricultural businesses, holding of videoconferences with municipalities to follow up on the design of municipal development strategies, operation of local development projects, social and demographic assessment of provinces with the assistance of the Centre for Demographic Research and the promotion of cultural initiatives through social media.

36. One positive and innovative experiences had been the 2015 establishment of the Platform for Integral Territorial Development (PADIT), a programme to strengthen institutional capacity for planning and management of territorial development. It was a flexible and holistic tool with many levels and actors, in line with the Cuban economic and social model, to help to territorialize the SDGs. The territorial projects under the Platform had led to economic revitalization through support to local food production through modern technologies and setting up small businesses. It also greatly facilitated public-private partnership, gender equality and innovation, and created jobs and linkages among local governments, bilateral cooperation, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and decentralized cooperation. The principle of Agenda 2030, that no one should be left behind, would guide the recovery and response to the impact of the pandemic.

37. The Undersecretary for Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala said that the effects of the pandemic persisted, resurgences were expected; although the arrival of the vaccine was promising, it was necessary to plan and adapt to live with the pandemic. The crisis had revealed weaknesses in existing institutional capacity, especially at the territorial level. Emergency plans should strengthen that capacity with emphasis on the territories, given that the effects varied. In Guatemala there were major gaps. Out of 340 municipalities, 114 had been given priority for special intervention because of their vulnerability and fragility. The economic decline in the country was estimated at around 2% of GDP, under conditions of fiscal restriction.

38. In March, after the first case of the disease was detected, the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Office of the President had drafted a general plan to address the COVID-19 emergency. Resources amounting to US\$ 1.9 million had been authorized for emergency programmes, aimed at small and medium businesses, food production, the elderly, food supplies during lockdown and cash transfers and vouchers to address unemployment and informal work (which affected 70% of the population). It was important to invest in infrastructure, connectivity, equipment, hospitals, educational institutions and irrigation systems in order to build up the territories and increase productivity.

39. The efficiency and effectiveness of expenditures must be maintained and resources for priorities ensured through strengthening collaboration with local governments. The government had five pillars and 50 strategic development targets, but a subsequent analysis had shown that some could not be met and that the strategy should be adjusted. Those targets were the national development priorities in connection with Agenda 2030. The Presidential Commission to address the COVID-19 emergency and the Secretariat had implemented a territorial alert system for closures or openings (based on testing and spread). Planning should be closely linked with the territories; public policy should become concrete in the territories. The country had a National Development Plan: K'atun Nuestra Guatemala 2032, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. There were 260 municipal and territorial level development plans and the rest were being completed, so that 90% of the territory would have a plan to harmonize the sectors

with the central authority. The purpose was to ensure the allocation of resources with an emphasis on coverage of basic services with the greatest relevance to the territories according to their needs. Lastly, it was important to pay attention to the borders and exchanges with the rest of the Central American countries, as an opportunity to work together.

40. The Vice-Minister for Planning of the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic based his presentation on eight points. (i) Development was a collective process that required deliberate efforts. Planning played a central role in making public actions effective, because it guaranteed coherence and allowed the impact of actions to be measured and was essential to guaranteeing the quality of expenditures. Policies should have a territorial aspect because the population lived in specific territories. The territories had been invisible in the country, planning was highly separated by sector and the territories were not taken into consideration. (ii) There were appropriate legal frameworks that incorporated a territorial dimension. The National Development Strategy, defined by law, addressed territorial development and cohesion and provided for the establishment of a territorial cohesion fund. The Municipalities Act was along the same lines. (iii) Progress had been made in planning, including various instruments and a definite culture of planning, but there were gaps. Planning had not been effective and the Ministry had the mission of changing that through incentives. (iv) There were two missions: to ensure that planning functioned in harmony with the budget, and that it was based on results. Furthermore, planning instruments were being territorialized, which required strengthened planning capacity in the municipalities. Due to major fragmentation at the territorial level and the absence of intermediate government, the challenge was to unite the central and local levels.

41. The other points referred to the crisis brought about by the pandemic. (v) The health crisis had shown that the territories were affected in different ways and required different responses. The virus had reached the tourist and urban centres most connected to other countries, while incidence was lower in rural areas. A strategy to diminish production had been applied in urban areas in order to avoid contagion, and production was promoted in rural areas in order to maintain the food chain. (vi) Local responses had been weak, because local governments were weak. (vii) With regard to health care, the response was widely varied and reactive. (viii) The Ministry had promoted a differentiated protection response. The fiscal deficit rose from 2% to 3% of GDP to between 9% and 10%, due to the enormous resources the current and former Governments had allocated to social protection programmes, the Social Assistance Fund for Employment and the unconditional monetary transfer programme “Stay home” (Quédate en casa). Those social protection programmes would have to be maintained if the pandemic continued, especially if there was a second wave. There were hopes for a recovery that would combine the sectors and the territories, and would incorporate planning. They had worked with the World Bank and the United Nations system on methodology to evaluate post-COVID-19 recovery needs, but would incorporate them into planning so that recovery would be part of planning.

42. In the ensuing discussion, the Undersecretary for National Planning of the Technical Secretariat for Planning of Ecuador, Israel Berrezueta, said that in his country, territorialization of planning had been an essential part of the National Development Plan. With regard to the pandemic, the government had amended the law as required to address the situation and assisted local governments in updating their development and territorial management plans focusing on such sectors as water, health, education and production, identified with support from United Nations bodies. The central government had prioritized certain investment projects, since they required investment at the central level, until the private sector recovered from the effects of the pandemic. An act on humanitarian aid had been promoted and a US\$ 1.4 million fund for credits for the production sector established. Aid had been granted for employment in the private sector, as there would be no economic development without employment. Resources had been allocated for the most vulnerable sectors. The government would be in office until May 2021 and would need to make recommendations to the next government.

Panel 3 – Planning challenges in building resilient public institutions: policy coherence (intersectoriality and multisectoriality) and strengthening of the public management cycle for the post-pandemic recovery

43. The panel was moderated by José Agustín Espino, Director of Investment Programming of the Ministry of Economics and Finance of Panama, with the participation of Carlos Molina Rodríguez, Vice-Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica, and Isaac Alfie, Director of the Office of Planning and Budget of Uruguay.

44. The moderator said that the panel would analyse the role of development prospects in the preparation of institutions to confront the crisis, coherence of public policies (between the plan and the budget, in the short, medium and long term and among policies at the various levels of government), transparency, accountability and citizen participation in solving public problems for an effective and efficient State response. To guide the discussion, he proposed that the presentations should address the linkages between the tools for development prospects with the measures for post-pandemic recovery and how they could support identification of risks and threats to reinforce preparation for future crises; factors limiting coherence of public policies in a recovery scenario; how results-based management tools could support effective recovery measures; measures for opening of information, participation, citizen collaboration and transparency necessary in a post-pandemic context, and the new capacities in public action that should be developed or strengthened for that recovery.

45. The Vice-Minister for National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica said that institutions should be resilient while maintaining transparency. The countries that had achieved better results had been distinguished by their use of forward-looking perspectives to predict scenarios and future effects of the pandemic (such as the number of beds and mechanical ventilators required) because it had affected their planning as a whole. For example, at the beginning of the pandemic, the University of Costa Rica and the Ministry of Health had modelled projected use of intensive care units in order to estimate the need for hospital beds and when they would be needed, which allowed them to take actions and apply policies to flatten the curve.

46. The Ministry had lengthy and robust experience in evaluation and monitoring. The National Planning Act had mandated it to conduct an evaluation of national development, for which current data was essential. There must be concrete data and it must be clear on what basis and how it would be measured, and who would be responsible. In order to measure the efficiency of institutions, a government alone could not be involved in planning; it should be institutionalized so that technical ability was consolidated over time. With regard to achieving policy coherence, planning that was not associated with a budget, responsibilities and capacities had no meaning. Planning was done by both the public sector and the private sector, and both had that flaw. Results-based management and project evaluation techniques required robust institutions capable of monitoring various programmes.

47. Availability of information was important so that the citizens could monitor the execution of programs and have knowledge of expenditures and citizen participation. He underlined the importance of open government; in 2012 the country had joined the Alliance for Open Government, in order to generate trust and openness. Open government had allowed it to change its planning and implementation methods through joint action with the people. One of the pillars of the National Development Plan was transparency and openness in order to diminish instances of corruption. Open government was already a cross-cutting theme of planning. Costa Rica had developed four plans of action: the first (2013–2014) had mainly originated in the Executive Branch; the next had begun to involve civil society, with commitments regarding open data; later a co-creation model was applied that included such topics as gender equality, the environment and open contracting; the most recent plan was called the Plan of Action for the Open State

(2019–2022), as it included other State authorities. There had been movement from a National Commission for Open Government to a National Commission for an Open State, under which legal commitments had been made. The 82 local governments were committed to that process. Improvements had been made and the principal targets were continuity in the open government process, its institutional character, collaboration with institutions, more structure and the involvement of more sectors. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, a digital portal had been established with open, centralized, verified and updated information. Lastly, citizens must be able to use the information and data. The information era had given way to the era of information use, and that should be improved, on the basis of real information, in order to make better use of resources.

48. The Director of the Office of Planning and Budget of Uruguay said that there was a need to establish public sector institutions and have permanent staff. Governments were transitory, but they required technical capacity and must have access to the institutional memory of those who had developed initiatives and had experience. States had gone through crises and the staff had gained experience, retained the collective memory and assisted the authorities in taking appropriate measures. Uruguay had perhaps had an advantage before the pandemic occurred in that it had staff with long experience in complex situations. The government had taken office not long before and was not prepared, but teams rapidly formed, the experience of other countries was followed, including in emergencies in other areas (such as the economy), and there was reliance on planning. It was possible to want more or less of the State, but in an emergency the central authority had to be in charge, in the end. Without central authority coordinated action would be lacking and it would not be possible to deal with an emergency.

49. Uruguay had decided on the sectors that must be kept open, for the least health risk and the greatest level of employment, and thus it had maintained agriculture with precautionary measures. Manufacturing and the chain of payments had been maintained in accordance with the planning carried out by the authorities and the technical teams. A technical advisory team was formed in various specialties (around 60 persons) that supported the government in deciding on opening of schools and some cultural activities. Protocols were designed and coordination was strengthened with local emergency systems, specialists and subnational governments. There was a high degree of information and transparency. Public-private linkages were established for contract tracing and testing. National production capacity was increased as some imports and goods did not arrive. Cases had later increased (especially on the border with Brazil), but remained at low levels which could be covered by existing capacity.

50. Lessons for the future were that participation of subnational governments, transparency and open government were essential; coordination with the budget was required and the roles of the central and subnational governments should be separated. The human resources of subnational governments must be strengthened so that there were people with sufficient preparation outside of the capital; the major task of the central government was to invest in the local governments, for example in education and guidance for a separate production matrix. There was a multi-year budget (five years) with annual revisions. It had been necessary to plan and establish coordination with subnational governments in the midst of uncertainty. Lastly, it was important to rely on the support of science, because the people valued it.

51. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that resilience and the ability to respond to future emergencies would depend in large measure on maintaining teams and specialists that could take action efficiently and effectively in such contexts. Intersectoral activity was better managed than multiple levels of activity. The territories were the location where actions were called for and strengths and weaknesses revealed, and where history would be written. Their importance must be understood, since the community saw itself as part of a certain geographical context.

52. The Chief of ILPES noted the challenge of maintaining a talented team, establishing agreements with all political parties and forming working groups that rose above political cycles.

53. The Director General of Public Policy Analysis of the Technical Secretariat for Planning of Paraguay said that in confronting the pandemic his country had imposed an early quarantine. It had adopted a national emergency law that allowed the Executive Branch to use US\$ 2 million for credits. It had also directed resources to the most vulnerable and informal sectors of small and medium businesses. There had been good results, but there would be challenges in the future, as a resurgence was expected that would impose new demands.

Review of the progress made with respect to the resolutions adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), held in Montevideo in 2019 (item 2 of the agenda)

54. Cielo Morales, Chief of ILPES, reviewed the methods of operation of the Institute, since some representatives present had just taken up their duties, then referred to the requests on various subjects that the Regional Council for Planning had made in its resolutions, together with a proposal for a document that would be presented at the next Meeting. She reported on progress in the three modalities of its work, courses, technical assistance and applied research.

55. Twenty-eight technical cooperation missions had been conducted in 8 countries (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Mexico and Uruguay) between July 2019 and 2020, in such areas as strengthening the national planning system (in Panama, with the support of Guatemala and Jamaica), formulation of a regional development policy (Costa Rica), policy evaluation (Mexico), mainstreaming of the gender perspective (Uruguay), forecasting (Guatemala and Honduras) and elaboration of the national voluntary review of progress in the implementation of Agenda 2030 (Honduras).

56. In the area of training, there had been a rapid adjustment to the distance learning format (rising from 4% to 33% in less than a year), and progress was made in the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the PlanBarometer, the Network of National Public Investment Systems and the Network for Development Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean. Research projects had also been disseminated through documents, in particular the Planning for Development Notes and their recent edition on climate action.

57. She also reported on the status of regular contributions and activities planned for 2021. The former system of contributions was in a complex situation owing to the crisis, and she called on countries to maintain their contributions so that the Institute could continue to carry out its mandate.

58. The Chief of ILPES also indicated that given the importance all countries had given to institutional resilience, the Institute would approach the subject from a viewpoint of capacity-building by the State to anticipate, prepare for and respond to crises. There were conditions, competencies and capacities that produced resilience, and in view of the needs expressed by countries, that would be the theme to be prepared for the next Meeting of the Regional Council for Planning.

59. The Chair of the Presiding Officers noted the multiple facets of planning and the need for coordination among all sectors to avoid duplication and loss of resources. Investments in physical infrastructure also required coordination. Initial planning was important in order to make good use of scarce resources.

60. The Director of Investment Programming of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance of Panama expressed gratitude for the collaboration of the Institute in rebuilding the national planning system in his

country, which had been strong during the 1970s but had since been weakened for political reasons, and also expressed his satisfaction with the report presented.

61. The Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica said that in such challenging times, the work of the Institute to foster dialogue, peer learning and best practices was greatly appreciated. The pandemic would force institutions to become more nimble and flexible, focus resources and priorities, and centre themselves on the subjects that would need to receive the most focused attention. Subjects that immediately came to mind included social protection mechanisms for the most vulnerable and the creation of resilience in the economy and the environment as well as the social sector, so that resilience would be sustainable in preparation to respond to future crises. There were challenges to the digital agenda, in order to ensure that students and workers who must study or work remotely would not be left behind because of a lack of connectivity.

Preparations for the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) (agenda item 3)

62. The delegation of Panama presented the offer of its country to host the XVIII Meeting of the Regional Council for Planning, to be held in the second half of 2021. The delegations present welcomed that proposal.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 4)

63. The Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of ILPES, at its twenty-eighth meeting, adopted the agreements found in annex 1 of this report.

Closing session

64. In the closing session, the Director of the Office of Planning and Budget of Uruguay, in his capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers, highlighted the ability of the Institute to produce a substantive agenda in a distance format, convene the authorities and record the needs of the countries. Planning in the public sector could not be associated with an ideology. The crisis in multilateralism was highly relevant and maximum efforts should be made for its re-establishment; cooperation for peace was essential. Fiscal policies should be applied with responsibility and respect for limits. The exchanges that had taken place had allowed different realities to be known, as well as the differing responses of governments to similar challenges. Lastly, he expressed gratitude for the participation and preparation of the panelists.

65. The Chief of ILPES appreciated the participation of the authorities, the commitment of the Chair of the Presiding Officers and delegations and the offer by Panama to host the next Meeting. Planning was action and there should be linkages between the budget and public investment, and among various instruments. Political will and agreements were relevant, and there was a need to establish a culture of planning and collaboration to generate resilience in institutions. The Meeting had underscored the importance of information and territorial systems, and the impossibility of conceiving of State actions in a fragmented way. The integrity of public policies, collaboration on solutions to public problems, results-based management and more participatory and inclusive public management were fundamental. Lastly, she welcomed the participation and confidence shown by ECLAC.

Annex 1

AGREEMENTS

At their twenty-eighth meeting, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning agreed to:

1. *Take note of the Report on the activities carried out by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), 1 July 2019-1 July 2020,*¹ which includes the Institute's technical assistance, applied research and training activities;
2. *Recognize the consolidation of and progress achieved by the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;*
3. *Take note of the Report on the status of the Regular System of Government Financing for the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES);*²
4. *Also take note of progress in the research on the linkage between reports on nationally determined contributions and national development plans, which will be published in the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;*
5. *Further take note of the proposed theme of "institutional resilience" for the position document that will be presented at the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning in 2021, and request the Institute, in conformity with resolution CRP/XVII/01, to continue progressing with the preparation of that document, taking into consideration the ideas and issues discussed at the present meeting;*
6. *Request the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning to continue calling on the countries to keep their voluntary contributions up-to-date to facilitate the resource flow with a view to supporting delivery of an efficient and effective service;*
7. *Request the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to convene the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning and the sixteenth Conference of Ministers and Heads of Planning of Latin America and the Caribbean in the second half of 2021;*
8. *Thank the Government of Panama for its offer to host the eighteenth meeting of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning.*

¹ LC/MDCRP.28/DDR/1.

² LC/MDCRP.28/3.

Annex 2

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