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REPORT ON TECHNOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL COOPERATION FOR THE FREE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND DATA CAPTURE SOFTWARE *

* This report was prepared by Colombia, with the collaboration of Brazil and Mexico.

2008-580

A. BACKGROUND

At the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bogotá on 29 and 30 November 2007, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico presented a report on the status of the proposal for technological and methodological cooperation for the free use of electronic devices and data capture software.

That report listed the activities carried out by each of the countries participating in the initiative with a view to identifying the legal, administrative and customs implications of transferring mobile data capture devices and lending them to other countries in the region.

The report also referred to the World Bank's presentation of the project on the monitoring and evaluation of Millennium Development Goals through innovative censuses to the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom. This presentation referred to facilitating technological exchanges among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and the use of some of the project funds to perform an analysis of viable methods for implementing the technology exchange programme as well as legal, logistical and security alternatives.

At the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the participating countries recognized the importance of using technology in operations on the ground but pointed out that sharing technological equipment was not without its difficulties. It was therefore suggested that the support of international organizations be sought to finance the countries' equipment purchases or to obtain discounts from personal digital assistant (PDA) manufacturers.

B. PROGRESS

Taking into account the observations made by the countries present at the thirty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations, held in New York from 26 to 29 February 2008, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico agreed to hold, with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank, an international seminar on census technology and the optimization of technology for the collection and processing of statistical data. At the end of this seminar, which was held in Washington, D.C., on 14 and 15 July 2008, the following commitments were made:

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) will draw up a draft agreement on cooperation in the exchange of technology. The proposed model will be legally validated by Brazil, Colombia, the United States, Mexico and Uruguay.

- Two workshops will be held by UNFPA on census data processing using the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO) tool, within the framework of the Working Group on Censuses of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

- A seminar will be held, with the support of UNFPA and the IDB, on the technological experience of Brazil, Colombia, the United States and Mexico.

- A technical cooperation model examined by Brazil, Colombia, the United States, Mexico and Uruguay will be presented at the eighth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

- The World Bank was asked to present a plan for the implementation of the resources that will be channelled through the Cuánto Institute after the project on the monitoring and evaluation of Millennium Development Goals through innovative censuses has been approved. Once the legal aspects with the Institute have been finalized, the World Bank will proceed to contract a coordinator for the project who, together with Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, will draw up a programme for the implementation of the resources.

Currently, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, together with the BID, UNFPA and the World Bank, are taking the necessary action to fulfil these commitments.