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Second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference  
on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Panama City, 12 September 2018

**REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Panama, 12 September 2018

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## A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date of the meeting

1. The second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was held on 12 September 2018 in Panama, in conjunction with the tenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and was convened jointly by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), pursuant to paragraph 23 of resolution 2(II) adopted at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development, held in Lima in 2017.

### Attendance<sup>1</sup>

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries in their capacity as Presiding Officers: Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay.

3. Representatives of the following ECLAC member countries also attended: Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Spain and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

4. Also attending were representatives of the following associate members of the Commission: British Virgin Islands and Sint Maarten.

5. Representatives of the following United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies also attended the meeting: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Panama.

6. Also present were representatives of non-governmental organizations and other special guests.

### Chair

7. The Presiding Officers elected at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in 2017, were as follows:

Chair: Uruguay

Vice-Chairs: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico and Panama

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<sup>1</sup> See the complete list of participants in annex 2.

## B. AGENDA

8. The Presiding Officers adopted the following agenda:
1. Adoption of the agenda.
  2. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2017).
  3. Presentation of the document *Towards a regional agenda for inclusive social development: bases and initial proposal*.
  4. Presentation of the Social Development Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean.
  5. Other matters.
  6. Consideration and adoption of agreements.

## C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

### Opening session

9. The second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was opened by Marina Arismendi, Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development, and Laís Abramo, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC.

#### Progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo, 2017) (agenda item 2)

10. The Minister of Social Development of Uruguay, in her capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development, reviewed progress in the implementation of resolution 2(II) of the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in 2017. She reported on the broad dissemination afforded to the ECLAC position document presented at the second session of the Conference,<sup>2</sup> which had also paved the way for other documents to address the link between the social and the productive spheres, thus contributing to the strategic development of social plans and policies in the region's countries. She remarked that recognizing the inefficiency of inequality and conceptualizing equality from a perspective of human rights, social justice and democracy were real challenges. After reviewing the milestones in the construction of a regional agenda for inclusive social development and emphasizing the participation of the countries in the discussion and building process, the Minister remarked that the agenda was based on the principle of public policies addressing the region's structural inequalities and the new challenges arising from technological change

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<sup>2</sup> See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Linkages between the social and production spheres: gaps, pillars and challenges* (LC/CDS.2/3), Santiago, 2017.

and the necessary transition to an environmentally sustainable economy, with a focus on rights, gender equality and the life cycle, and an approach of universalism sensitive to difference, within the general framework of the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Presentation of the document *Towards a regional agenda for inclusive social development: bases and initial proposal* (agenda item 3)

11. The document was presented by Laís Abramo, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC. Subsequently, Michelle Muschett, Deputy Minister of Social Development of Panama, and Margarita Cedeño, Vice-President of the Dominican Republic, commented on the document.

12. The Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC noted that the document *Towards a regional agenda for inclusive social development: bases and initial proposal*<sup>3</sup> had been prepared in response to the commitment to advance towards the definition of a regional agenda for inclusive social development undertaken at the second session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its aim was to strengthen the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda from a regional perspective. She stressed that without social development, it was impossible to achieve sustainable development. The concept of inclusive social development had been propounded since the first session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America, held in Lima in 2015, underlining the centrality of social inclusion and the reduction of inequalities related to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda. Inclusive social development required that States be able to ensure the full exercise of people's social, economic and cultural rights, consolidating spaces for participation and recognition, addressing gaps in access to fundamental areas of well-being and addressing social inequalities and their structuring axes, from the perspective of universalism sensitive to difference. The regional agenda for inclusive social development was expected to strengthen the social dimension of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from a regional perspective, giving greater prominence to the fight against inequality in the region.

13. The development of the agenda was not starting from scratch, as a social agenda had been outlined in a series of commitments adopted in regional and subregional forums. The technical secretariat was engaged in identifying and systematizing these commitments on the basis of the dimensions of the extended social pillar of the 2030 Agenda. The aim of the agenda was to devise both a political and a technical instrument to promote inclusive social development within the framework of sustainable development and a guide for action on the structural gaps and the social inequality matrix typical of the region. The regional agenda for inclusive social development should provide concrete guidelines for monitoring the countries' progress in the social sphere, including within arenas such as the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development—the regional follow-up mechanism to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—and other instruments, such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030 and, in particular in the framework of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

14. The Deputy Minister of Social Development of Panama referred to the context of inequalities in the region, noting that efforts to tackle them had been ineffective, and remarked that the document developed important concepts, including the link between the social and productive spheres. She asserted that achieving inclusive social development was a prerequisite for making progress in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda, which required policies that addressed structural inequalities from a regional perspective. She underlined the need to address issues associated with the vulnerability of the population just emerging from

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<sup>3</sup> LC/MDS.2/2.

poverty and with inequality in a broad sense, which were covered in the document. The speaker highlighted the challenge of achieving universal social protection and of strengthening social institutions and expressed satisfaction at the milestones and stages proposed in the document, underscoring the summary of the regional agreements and consideration afforded to the participation of civil society. She welcomed the incremental approach underlying the agenda, given the dynamic nature of human and social development, as well as the proposed principles contained in the document, especially universalism sensitive to difference and the systemic vision of development, which required breaking with sectoral mechanisms in the administrations. Finally, she called for action to make headway in developing the regional agenda.

15. The Vice-President of the Dominican Republic stressed that the well-being of present and future generations depended on action taken in the present, and affirmed that social issues were not played out in the social sphere alone. She noted that progress had to be made towards more inclusive societies and more solidarity-based social protection systems, in which poverty was treated as an ethical problem and an injustice, not as a predestination, and in which the provision of opportunities was seen as a priority to avoid perpetuating deprivation. She also emphasized that it was necessary to start from an equality-based development model, in which the goal was a virtuous circle between equality, economic performance and social development, in order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality. She expressed gratitude for the document presented and voiced concern over violence in the region, especially gender-based violence, stressing the need for deeper analysis and strategies for action. The Vice-President proposed that the agenda of the Presiding Officers should include the promotion of policies for reducing inequalities, especially those undermining societal cohesion, in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. She also proposed affording prominence to policies that had proven the most effective in affording comprehensive protection to women and addressing the various manifestations of violence, especially gender-based violence, as a critical bottleneck and an emerging challenge to inclusive social development. The regional agenda for inclusive social development should be seen as a tool for tackling this scourge. She indicated that, in order to solve the problems of inequality and violence, structural reforms and redistributive welfare and prosperity policies needed to be implemented in a sustainable manner. Finally, she urged the Presiding Officers to continue standing behind the synergy between social equality and economic growth, to avoid compromising the resources of future generations.

16. Next, statements were made by the representatives of the delegations in attendance.

17. The representative of Mexico stressed the importance of addressing the territorial level in the agenda for inclusive social development and in the 2030 Agenda, given the high transaction costs in taking policies from the national government to the local government level. He suggested that it was necessary to ensure that local governments were familiar with the agendas to be implemented and that they should propose alternative development agendas for their territories. He recommended that the document should reflect on the role of citizen participation, since inclusive development should ensure that people stayed out of poverty, by promoting a form of social citizenship beyond the existing structures of welfarism and clientelism. In order to combat the culture of privilege, he stressed that citizens needed to be empowered and to participate in the solutions. Finally, he proposed to the Presiding Officers that Mexico host the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, expressing the conviction that multilateralism was the best way to drive development in the region.

18. The representative of Ecuador acknowledged the contributions of the regional agenda on inclusive social development, as these helped to deepen understanding of key issues for her country. She also stressed the importance of the concept of a universalism sensitive to difference in reflecting upon the approach, characteristics and implementation of social policies in the region. She recommended insisting on the concept of national compacts and agreements to underpin achievement of the proposed goals, so that these

would not depend on the economic and social imbalances inherent to the region. She went on to affirm the importance of the life cycle concept as a critical factor of development at the early and late stages of life, with a view to generating instruments for inclusion without losing sight of the specificity and particularities of different ages or conditions (disability, early childhood and old age, among others). The issue of violence was also highlighted, insofar as it led to exclusions and had an impact on an individuals' life cycles. She stressed that the justice sector had the capacity and the mechanisms in place to address some of these elements, such as accountability or the development of freedoms and capacity-building. Finally, she pointed out that the institutional framework should be closely related to social protection policies. For example, any transfers made should be complemented by care provision in order to increase and improve their impact.

19. The representative of Uruguay thanked ECLAC for presenting the document and reflected on the development and progress in the region over the past 15 years. He stressed the need to rethink social policy for the future, as well as the concept of social protection in its broadest sense, and remarked the importance of rethinking the notion of work, along with its social rather than purely economic connotations, as a central element of social protection. He called for rethinking the role of work not only from the disruptive perspective of the fourth technological revolution, but also from the perspective of the social inclusion ceiling implied by never having reached full employment. He stressed the need to stop treating employment as something determined solely by growth, in a context of low growth and slowdown, and to begin to view it as part of the long-term macroeconomic balance that included social inclusion. This would imply the social dimension regaining its place in policies more broadly, beyond social policy per se. He referred to the need to address the intergenerational reproduction of poverty, in which work and the sustained availability of income over time were key aspects. Work should be viewed as a right and as a form of social policy that acted to generate the conditions in which all other social policies operated. It was important to put an end to the stigmatization caused by the distinction between those receiving contributory monetary transfers and those receiving non-contributory transfers. He concluded that, beyond what was already known about poverty, deeper studies on wealth were needed to ascertain how it was distributed and the relationships that generated it. Finally, he reflected on the importance of the State's regulatory function, citing the impact of public spending in reducing inequality in Uruguay. Lastly, he stated that work was a marker of social integration that produced income, recognition, integration and cohesion, gave people a place in the world and protected them from violence.

20. Next, the representative of the Central American Social Integration Secretariat (SISCA) reported on the Regional Intersectoral Agenda on Social Protection and Productive Inclusion with Equity (ARIPSIP) 2018–2030, adopted in 2018, which sought to achieve complementarity between social and economic policies, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development. He said that ARIPSIP had originated in the regional compact for the social pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals, signed in 2016. He described the four strategic lines of the Agenda: (i) universal and equitable access and coverage, linked to social protection systems and services, including the prevention of the various forms of violence throughout the life cycle, the social protection services linked to development in early childhood and of older persons, the multi-causal reduction of teenage pregnancy, children's school integration and the elimination of child labour, among other actions; (ii) greater productive capacity for the generation of decent employment, entrepreneurship and employability with a sustainable approach; (iii) urban and rural territories with more productive, inclusive, resilient and equitable dynamics, and (iv) integrated management of migration, from a rights-based and systemic perspective.

#### Presentation of the Social Development Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean (agenda item 4)

21. Under this agenda item, Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer of the Social Development Division of ECLAC, presented the Social Development Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean.

He noted that this first version of the Observatory included a set of links and databases with information concerning regional agreements on social development, non-contributory social protection programmes, social institutions, youth and food and nutrition security. The Observatory offered direct access to country fact sheets, from which national data and programmes could be viewed, with links to different sources of information and analytical documents. Importantly, the Observatory was intended to be a living instrument which could be complemented with other databases and documents.

22. The Minister of Social Development of Uruguay commended the Social Development Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean as a fundamental tool that was useful for all the countries, governments and social organizations in the region.

Consideration and adoption of agreements (agenda item 6)

23. The representatives adopted the agreements contained in annex 1 of this report.



## Annex 1

**AGREEMENTS**

*At their second meeting, held on 12 September 2018 in Panama City, on the occasion of the tenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to:*

1. *Welcome* the document *Towards a regional agenda for inclusive social development: bases and initial proposal*,<sup>1</sup> and adopt the plan of work proposed therein for the preparation of such an agenda, drawing attention to the importance of:

- (i) Building intergovernmental compacts and agreements as a foundation for progressing towards the achievement of sustainable development, the consolidation of a culture of equality and the eradication of the culture of privilege in the region;
- (ii) The centrality of inclusive social development as a pillar of sustainable development and a condition for economic development and environmental sustainability;
- (iii) Preparing the regional agenda for inclusive social development in accordance with the guidance offered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the targets contained in the extended social pillar, tackling the imperative of eradicating poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty, and significantly reducing inequalities in their multiple dimensions, leaving no one behind;
- (iv) The contribution of this agenda to the progressive achievement of inclusive social development, by ensuring the economic, social and cultural rights of the population, reducing gaps in access to well-being and addressing social inequalities and the axes around which they are structured, from the perspective of universalism sensitive to difference and with effective mechanisms for recognition and participation;

2. *Establish* that the regional agenda for inclusive social development should be prepared with the active participation of the members of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the leadership of the Presiding Officers, and should include means for consultation with civil society;

3. *Commend* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the launch of the Social Development Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to supporting the design and implementation of public policies in the region and analysing their trends;

4. *Request* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to convene the third meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in the second quarter of 2019;

5. *Thank* the Government of Mexico for its offer to host the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019;

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<sup>1</sup> LC/MDS.2/2.

6. *Thank* the Government and people of Panama for their hospitality and excellent organization of the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the tenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

7. *Commend* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the United Nations Development Programme for having jointly convened the second meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the tenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, thereby harnessing synergies and complementarities.

## Annex 2

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****A. Estados miembros de la Comisión  
Member States of the Commission****ARGENTINA**Representante/Representative:

- Pablo Alfredo Pucciarelli, Subsecretario de Gestión y Análisis de la Información, Dirección Nacional del Sistema de Identificación Nacional Tributario y Social, Consejo Nacional de Coordinación de Políticas Sociales

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- Daniel Quintero, Asistente del Vicepresidente Sectorial para el Desarrollo Social y Territorial

**B. Miembros asociados  
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**Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

- Jorge Giannareas, Especialista de Política Social, Panamá

**D. Organizaciones intergubernamentales  
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