

DEVELOPMENT IN TRANSITION

Dialogues to chart new paths for
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



EXPERTS MEETING EU FACILITY JOINT RESPONSE TO COVID-19

JULY 2021

TENTATIVE AGENDA

The COVID-19 crisis has hit Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) harder than any other emerging region in the world. In economic terms, the region has suffered a 7.7% drop in GDP, and in human terms, over a million lives have been lost. With around 60% of informal workers and 40% of all workers in the region surviving without any form social safety net before the pandemic hit, the most vulnerable members of society are bearing the brunt of the crisis today.

Furthermore, a series of pre-existing development traps, outlined in the Latin American Economic Outlook 2019, have accentuated the toll of the crisis in the region. As LAC countries chart the path to recovery, development models need to evolve to break the vicious cycles that held the region back even before the crisis struck. We have also seen that national responses alone are not enough to overcome a crisis of global scale; new international partnerships and international co-operation on an equal footing are essential to ensuring a long-term recovery for the region.

At this critical juncture for Latin America and the Caribbean, the EU Regional Facility on Development in Transition is engaged in a series of efforts under “Fostering sustainable development models in LAC countries: A multidimensional approach to the post-COVID-19 world”. Partners including the OECD and its Development Centre, ECLAC and the European Commission (INTPA) have joined forces with key regional institutions to contribute, through analysis and debate, to shaping new development models for a sustainable and inclusive recovery in LAC.

The “Development in Transition Days” will be a first milestone in this effort. A series of discussions will help assess the policy priorities for LAC in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, especially in the fields of regional integration and global value chains; social protection systems; gender; primary healthcare, and regional and international partnerships. Latin American and European economic and political leaders will take part of the discussion for paving the way of the recovery. There will also be a focus on the specific cases of key countries in the region: Brazil, Panama and Paraguay.

Through these discussions, the EU Facility on Development in Transition aims to take stock of the valuable assessments, experiences and ideas that can help regional and European actors to jointly determine the post-COVID strategic priorities and line of action for a sustainable and inclusive recovery, beyond just the recovery phase. An endeavour that will also contribute to strengthening the longstanding partnership between both LAC and Europe towards the common goal of improving people’s well-being.



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Time Schedule

WEDNESDAY
14 July
10:30-12:00
(90 min.)

Middle income strata, COVID-19 and the challenges of social protection

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the social and economic impacts associated with the pandemic have been felt significantly by the population belonging to low-income strata. However, the pandemic has also highlighted the vulnerability that exists among the middle-income strata of our region.

The governments' response to the pandemic has included emergency cash and in-kind transfer packages. It is estimated that by 2021 middle-income strata will shrink below the 41.2% level which they represented out of the total population prior to the pandemic, but somewhat higher than the 37% of 2020.

Hence, the pandemic has placed at the center of debate the vulnerability of middle-income strata. The recommendation of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (RAISD), agreed at the Third Meeting of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2019, on moving towards comprehensive, universal and sustainable social protection systems has become even more relevant today. This requires discussing how to face the present and future with social policies that contribute to a transformative recovery, turning the challenges of the crisis into opportunities to strengthen the vision of universal and rights-based social protection systems, which respond sufficiently and adequately to the characteristics of the entire population.

The invitation to this event is to debate about social protection strategies and tools, analyzing the feasibility of implementation, and proposing ways to enable their development. The discussion will cover the analysis of the regional experience and scenarios, comparing them with the characteristics of the existing welfare states in Europe and their social protection strategies to face the pandemic.

This expert meeting will focus on the following topics:

- Topic 1: Middle-income strata and the pandemic: temporary and permanent effects of the health and social crisis in the region.
- Topic 2: The vulnerability of the middle-income strata to the crisis.
- Topic 3: The challenges of universality, comprehensiveness and sustainability of social protection systems to face the pandemic and recover better.



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- Topic 4: Universal Basic Income in times of pandemic.

Moderator:

Introductory presentation: Middle-income strata, COVID-19 and the challenges of social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Director, Social Development Division, ECLAC

Speakers:

- Daniel Arroyo, Minister of Social Development, Argentina
- Juan Luis Bermúdez, Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, Costa Rica
- María Ines Castillo, Minister of Social Development, Panama
- Stefano Scarpetta - Director, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD
- Rubén Lo Vuolo - Academic Director and Senior Researcher, CIEPP

[Register Here](#)

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