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UNITED NATIONS



THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF ECLAC
MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY, 20 – 24 MARCH 2006



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

The thirty-first session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) will be held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 20 to 24 March 2006. Pursuant to resolution 613(XXX) as adopted at the thirtieth session of ECLAC (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 28 June to 2 July 2004), member States agreed that the meeting would be held in Montevideo, Uruguay.

As the Commission's most important event in each biennium, the session provides an opportunity to analyse issues that are important for the development of countries in the region and to examine the progress of the activities conducted by ECLAC.

The aim of this document is to provide delegates attending the session with useful background information and logistical support to facilitate their work at the thirty-first session of ECLAC.

Session coordinators will be pleased to answer any questions you may have concerning the logistics or organization of the event, either before or during the session.

1. Basic information about Uruguay

Location

Uruguay is located in South America, between 30° and 35° latitude south and 53° and 58° longitude east.

Population

The population of Uruguay is mainly of European origin. Despite being a country known for livestock raising, 80% of the population live in urban areas, with 43% living in the capital Montevideo.

Population	3,241,003 (2005)
Annual population growth rate	0.6%
Population density (inhabitants per km ²)	18

Government

Uruguay is governed under a republican, democratic, presidential system, with State functions divided up into the executive, legislative and the judiciary. Under the present Constitution, government elections are held every five years.

The current president is Tabaré Vázquez, who represents the Progressive Encounter-Broad Front-New Majority coalition and was elected as 51st President of the Republic by an absolute majority in October 2004.

Economy

Uruguay is a major livestock raising country, with 85% of its land given over to grazing. The tourist industry is also an important part of the national economy.

GDP (2004)	US\$ 13,216 million
Per capita GDP (2004)	US\$ 4,078
GDP composition by sector (2004)	Agriculture and fishing - 11.5% Manufacturing and mining - 20.8% Electricity, gas and water - 4.3% Construction - 3.4% Transport and communication - 9.4% Commerce, restaurants and hotels - 12.7% Financial services, insurance and housing - 21.0% Other services - 17%
Inflation	4.90% (December 2005)
Economically active population	1,256,600 (December 2004)
Unemployment rate	11.9% (September-November 2005)
Merchandise exports	US\$ 3.439 billion (2005)
Main export products	Meat, dairy products, wool, honey
Main trading partners (exports)	United States, Brazil Argentina, European Union
Merchandise imports	US\$ 3.092 billion (2005)
Main import products	Machinery, mechanical devices, cars
Main trading partners (imports)	Brazil, Argentina, Middle East, European Union, United States

Uruguay is the gateway to MERCOSUR, and greatly benefits from the conditions of the agreement concluded to form the four-country trade bloc.

Tourism

In 2004, tourism represented 3.73% of GDP (US\$ 493.9 million). Uruguay's appeal as an international tourist destination has grown in recent years thanks to the wide range of tourist options (including ecological, business and sports tourism), plus the security and stability of the country in general.

Uruguay has 450 kilometres of coast along the Río de la Plata and 220 kilometres along the Atlantic Ocean. The chain of beautiful sandy beaches offers major tourist attractions, especially in Piriápolis, Punta del Este, La Paloma, La Pedrera and Cabo Polonio.

Culture

Uruguay has a well-established cultural identity, which is reflected in myriad activities (arts, theatre, dance, music) carried out in association with official bodies responsible for preserving cultural heritage, promoting cultural activity and enhancing cultural management.

Websites of interest

Presidency	www.presidencia.gub.uy
Ministry of Economy and Finance	www.mef.gub.uy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	www.mrree.gub.uy
Ministry of Education and Culture	www.mec.gub.uy
Ministry of Social Development	www.mides.gub.uy
Instituto Uruguay XXI	www.uruguayxxi.gub.uy (Spanish and English)
Interactive maps:	www.sgm.gub.uy
Online tourism resources:	www.turismo.gub.uy (Spanish, English and Portuguese) www.mintur.gub.uy
<i>El País</i> newspaper	www.diarioelpais.com.uy
<i>La República</i> newspaper	www.larepublica.com.uy
<i>El Observador</i> newspaper	www.observador.com.uy
Radisson Victoria Plaza Hotel	www.radisson.com.uy
General information on Montevideo	www.montevideo.com

Useful information

Local currency Uruguayan peso (\$)	Uruguay has a floating parity exchange system. In January 2006, the exchange rate of the Uruguayan peso (\$) in relation to the United States dollar was: Purchase: 23.50 Uruguayan pesos to the dollar Sale: 25.00 Uruguayan pesos to the dollar
Time zone	UST (UTC -3)
Electricity	220 volts (60 cycles per second). Hotel connections use 110 volts (60 cycles) or transformers
Tax	The price of goods usually includes tax, unless specifically stated otherwise
Airport tax	Airport tax is US\$ 14 for flights to Aeroparque in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and US\$ 26 for flights to Ezeiza airport in Buenos Aires, other cities in Argentina and the rest of the world
Tipping	The tip is not included in hotel or restaurant bills. It is usual to leave a tip of 10% of the total
Taxis/remises	Visitors are advised to use radio taxis, which are available outside hotels and which charge according to the meter and the relevant price list There are also "remises", which are unmarked taxis with prearranged fixed prices based on distance or time
Business hours	General: 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Shopping centres: 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Banks: 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cash dispensers/ATMs can be used at any time
Telephone system	To call Uruguay: 598-2 (country code + code for Montevideo) Options for calling long distance: international dialling through an operator, reverse-charge/collect calls abroad and international cards using the 0800 system. The hotel will be able to inform you of the prices of the various services
Useful numbers	911 or 109 Police 104 or 911 Fire service 120 National long distance (through operator) 0007 International operator service (Latin America) 0008 International operator service (all other countries) 122 National telephone directory information

2. Location of the session

The thirty-first session of ECLAC will be held at the Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel, in the capital city of Montevideo.

Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel

Address: Plaza Independencia 759
11100, Montevideo, Uruguay
Telephone: (598-2) 902-0111
Fax: (598-2) 902-1628
E-mail: radisson@adinet.com.uy
Website: <http://www.radisson.com/montevideouy>

Approximately 200 governmental delegates and 100 representatives of specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and special guests are expected to attend.

3. Coordination of the session

The session will be organized by ECLAC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.

Office of the Secretary of the Commission
ECLAC, United Nations
Mr. Luis Yáñez
Fax: (56-2) 208-1553
E-mail: luis.yanez@cepal.org
Santiago, Chile

Conference Services Unit
ECLAC, United Nations
Consultations regarding logistics
Ms. Cecilia Guarachi
Fax: (56-2) 210-2279
E-mail: cecilia.guarachi@cepal.org
Santiago, Chile

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ms. Marión Blanco
Directorate of international economic organizations
Telephone: (598-2) 902-1010 (2220/2222)
Fax: (598-2) 901-7413 (mark for attention of DIOE)
E-mail: dioe42@mree.gub.uy
Montevideo, Uruguay

Mr. Fernando Lugrís
Telephone: (598-2) 902-0340
Fax: (598-2) 902-2135
E-mail: vm@mree.gub.uy
Montevideo, Uruguay

4. Programme of activities

The thirty-first session will be held from Monday 20 March to Friday 24 March 2006.

On Monday 20 March, the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development will meet in Conference room 1, while a press conference on the thirty-first session will be simultaneously held in Conference room 2.

On 21 March, the meeting of heads of delegation will be held in Conference room 1. In the morning, participants will examine the Report on the activities of the Commission and the Committee on South-South Cooperation will also meet (Conference room 1). In the afternoon, delegates will consider the programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium (Conference room 1).

In the morning of 21 March, there will be a meeting of the ECLAC sessional Ad Hoc Committee on Population and Development (Conference room 2).

The official opening ceremony of the thirty-first session will take place in the morning of Wednesday 22 March. The rest of Wednesday and Thursday will be reserved for the high-level seminar "Shaping the Future of Social Protection: Access, Financing and Solidarity" (Conference room 1).

The secretariat suggests that, in addition to participating actively in the high-level seminar, ministers may also wish to take part in the general discussion concerning the programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium and the adoption of the resolutions of the session.

The following social activities will be held during the thirty-first session of the Commission:

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC will hold a lunch for heads of delegation at 1:30 p.m. on 22 March.

The Government of Uruguay will hold a dinner in the Solís theatre on Wednesday 22 March.

5. Hotel reservations

Requests for hotel reservations should be addressed directly to the Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel before 15 March 2006. After 15 March 2006, the hotel reserves the right to alter the rate offered and will not guarantee availability. We suggest that you use the attached form for this purpose.

Delegates are responsible for their own reservations. It is advisable to check that the hotel has processed your reservation and to request a reservation number or code for reservation.

Hotel	Room	Daily rate ^a
Hotel Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel	Single	US\$ 80
Plaza Independencia 759	Double	US\$ 90
11100, Montevideo, Uruguay	Single/double suite	US\$ 112
http://www.radisson.com/montevideouy Telephone: (598-2) 902-0111; (598 2) 9000 539 Fax: (598-2) 902-1628 Contact: Gabriela Bardanca, Group coordinator E-mail: reservas@radisson.com.uy		

^a Rates include a buffet breakfast served in the Arcadia restaurant on the 25th floor and are exempt from VAT for guests who are not resident in Uruguay.

The rates offered by the hotel are based on a group rate. When making a reservation, please mention the “ECLAC group” code. The hotel has agreed to provide all conference guests with access to the spa, which includes free use of the heated semi-olympic swimming pool, gym, indoor running track and sauna.

The hotel requires a credit card number to hold a reservation. Uruguayan hotels apply a “no show” policy, whereby reservations may be cancelled up to 24 hours prior to arrival; otherwise, cardholders will be charged for the first night. All delegates must settle their own hotel bill at the end of their stay.

6. Entry requirements for Uruguay

Holders of regular, diplomatic or official passports of other nationalities should apply for a visa at the nearest Uruguayan embassy or consulate.

Information on Uruguayan embassies and consulates is available online at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.mrree.gub.uy].

7. Local transportation

Delegates are responsible for arranging transport between the airport and the hotel. There is a taxi service that charges around US\$ 20 for that journey.

8. Registration

Participants should complete the attached registration form and send it as soon as possible to isidora.vidal@cepal.org (telephone: (56-2) 210-2324).

Registration of delegates will take place on 20 March in the lobby area of Conference room 2 (Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel) from 8:30 a.m. onwards. Participants will be given identification badges, which, for security purposes, will have to be shown at all conference meetings.

9. Communications

International fax and telephone services will be available to delegates in the conference area. Calls must be paid for by each delegate individually, either by calling collect or by using a credit or telephone card.

10. Internet

The conference area (offices and meeting rooms) will have wi-fi Internet access.

11. Languages

The official languages of the session will be Spanish, English and French.

12. Medical services

The hotel is equipped to administer first aid 24 hours a day in the event of an emergency during the session.

13. Meals

Room rates include a buffet breakfast served in the Arcadia restaurant on the 25th floor. Coffee will be served during recesses. Delegates are responsible for all other meals.

14. International press centre

In order to facilitate press coverage of the thirty-first session of ECLAC, an international press centre will be set up in the conference area of the hotel. Reporters wishing to cover the session must register and obtain accreditation the press centre, which will be open on a daily basis starting at 9:00 a.m.

The centre will have an information and documentation office, plus cubicles and working areas for accredited press representatives and media journalists.

Questions should be directed to Mr. Víctor Fernández, Chief of the ECLAC Information Services Unit, telephone (56-2) 210-2330; fax (56-2) 210-1947; e-mail vfernandez@eclac.cl.



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THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC)
Montevideo, Uruguay, 20-24 March 2006

HOTEL RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

Name		Last name	
Head of delegation <input type="checkbox"/>	Delegate <input type="checkbox"/>	Observer <input type="checkbox"/>	Special guest <input type="checkbox"/>
Official title:			
Organization or institution:			
Address:			
City:		Country:	
Telephone:	Fax:	E-mail:	

Hotel reservation with:

RADISSON MONTEVIDEO-VICTORIA PLAZA HOTEL PLAZA INDEPENDENCIA 759 (11100) MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY Tel: (598 2) 902 01 11 Fax: (598 2) 902 1628 E-mail: reservas@radisson.com.uy Contact: Ms. Gabriela Bardanca, ECLAC group coordinator	Single	US\$ 80
	Double	US\$ 90 Breakfast included
	Single/double suite	US\$ 112 Breakfast included
Type of accommodation: Single <input type="checkbox"/>	Double <input type="checkbox"/>	Suite <input type="checkbox"/>
Date of arrival in Uruguay:	Flight No.:	Arrival time:
Date of departure from Uruguay:	Flight No.:	Departure time:

I authorize the use of my credit card to guarantee my hotel reservation:

American Express <input type="checkbox"/>	Master Card <input type="checkbox"/>	Visa <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Credit card No./Security code:			Expiry date:

Reservations should be made directly with the Radisson Montevideo-Victoria Plaza Hotel. Each delegate is responsible for his/her own reservation. It is advisable to check that the hotel has processed your reservation and to request a reservation number or code for confirmation. To guarantee your reservation, it is vital to indicate flight number, time of arrival and departure, and credit card type and number. The rates offered by the Hotel are based on a group rate. When making a reservation please mention the "ECLAC group" code.