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**MESSAGE TO THE 34th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
San Salvador, 27 August 2012**

To be Delivered by ECLAC Executive Secretary Alicia Barcena

I am pleased to offer warm greetings to all participants at the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. I thank President Mauricio Funes of El Salvador for hosting this meeting. I also take this opportunity to thank Brazil for leading ECLAC for the last two years.

El Salvador provides an inspiring setting for your discussions. The return of democracy following a period of conflict has brought great economic and social progress and the consolidation of peace.

This session provides an opportunity for you to discuss ECLAC's integrated vision for development, titled "Structural Change for Equality." I am sure this strategy of growth with equality and sustainability will contribute to development across Latin American and the Caribbean.

Your session comes at a time of challenge and hope. The world and the region continue to confront the instability of financial markets coupled with the deceleration of growth in the industrial world and important emerging economies. At the same time, the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development has strongly renewed the international commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and shape the post-2015 global development agenda.

Latin America and the Caribbean have shown the value of addressing the development needs of its many middle income countries. The region is also demonstrating the imperative to advance regional integration. Toward that end, I laud the recent creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

It is critical to build more equal societies based on productive and inclusive growth, and to change unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, as ECLAC has repeatedly emphasized.

Your discussions over the coming days can have a positive impact on the future well being of your region. In that spirit, I wish you great success.

Thank you.