



## Fifth Regional Seminar on Social Development

### Towards the Second World Summit on Social Development: Priorities for Inclusive Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

#### Panel I: Inequality, Social Cohesion, and Inclusive Social Development Policies

**Date:** Tuesday, June 24, 2025

**Time:** 3:00–4:30 p.m. (Chile time)

**Room:** Celso Furtado

**Connection link:**

<https://eclac.webex.com/webappng/sites/eclac/webinar/webinarSeries/register/8976b27a04ed4e128b56bf27f01f2344>

The event will have Spanish-English interpretation.

#### Background:

Despite the commitment made in the Copenhagen Declaration to reduce inequalities, they persist and are deepening. To give just one example among many relevant dimensions: over the past three decades, income concentration in Latin America and the Caribbean has consistently been the highest in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.45 in 2023 (ECLAC, 2024). These high levels of inequality are reflected in many areas beyond income.

At ECLAC, social inequality is addressed from a multidimensional perspective, recognizing that it constitutes a significant barrier to social, economic, and environmental development. It is produced and perpetuated by the interrelation and mutual reinforcement of the structural axes of the social inequality matrix, which includes socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, age, geography, disability, migratory status, and sexual orientation and identity.

ECLAC also notes that the high levels of inequality across all dimensions of well-being and the enjoyment of rights, which characterize the region, are associated with low social mobility and weak social cohesion. In this context, social cohesion has been placed at the center of one of the three development traps facing the region, which are: i) a trap of low growth capacity; ii) a trap of high inequality, low social mobility, and weak social cohesion; and iii) a trap of low institutional capacity and ineffective governance. As a result, high inequality, low social mobility, and the weakening of social cohesion reinforce one another. Weak social cohesion leads to high levels of interpersonal, institutional, and democratic distrust, as well as a greater sense of vulnerability and injustice among the population.

Recently, at the Summit of the Future, a commitment was made to invest in people to end poverty and strengthen trust and social cohesion. In light of these imperatives, a social





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cohesion policy agenda must necessarily address two main dimensions in an integrated and coordinated way: one focused on institutional capacities and governance, and another focused on building universal social protection guarantees.

This underscores the need to advance discussions on priority policy areas in the lead-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, in order to consolidate well-being guarantees and democratic governance that overcome the traps of high inequality, low mobility, and weak social cohesion in the region, as well as to address institutional challenges in the path toward inclusive social development that meets the needs and rights of specific population groups.

### Objective:

Building on the concept and measurement of social cohesion in Latin America, this panel invites reflection on the many challenges across various areas of public policy and institutional frameworks. It highlights the need to advance discussions on priority policy areas to consolidate guarantees of well-being and democratic governance, in order to overcome the trap of high inequality, low mobility, and weak social cohesion in the region, as well as to tackle institutional challenges in the pursuit of inclusive social development that addresses the needs and rights of specific population groups.

### Preliminary Program:

15:00 – 15:10	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC.</li> </ul>
15:10 – 15:30	<b>Presentation: The trap of high inequality and low social cohesion: policy priorities for an inclusive Social Development Pact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carlos Maldonado, Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC</li> </ul>
15:30 – 16:20	<b>Comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diego Spottorno, Technical Advisor of the Department of Cooperation with Andean Countries, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)</li> <li>Marcela Ríos, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)</li> <li>María Luisa Méndez, Director, Center for the Study of Conflict and Social Cohesion</li> </ul>
16:20 – 16:30	<b>Closing Remarks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC</li> </ul>
<b>Moderator:</b> Rodrigo Martínez, Senior Social Affairs Officer, ECLAC	