

**Remarks by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), at the opening proceedings of the meeting of the Committee on South-South Cooperation, on the occasion of the thirty-fifth session of ECLAC, held at Lima, 7 May 2014**

Representatives of the member States of ECLAC,  
Representatives of donor countries,  
Representatives of civil society organizations,  
Colleagues of the United Nations system,  
Colleagues of the Commission,  
Special guests,

Friends:

I would like to express the Commission's deep gratitude to everyone here present, for your attendance at this thirty-fifth session. Your being here is tangible evidence of your respective countries' and organizations' interest and engagement in the work of ECLAC, which is ever at your service.

As the Committee on South-South Cooperation begins its work, I would like, very briefly, to share some of the reflections that we have been developing as regards the dynamics of cooperation activities in our region, and the role that ECLAC sees for itself in this, one of our strategic lines of work.

Let us be clear: cooperation has reached a turning point. The traditional paradigm that established an obvious and natural one-way flow from North to South has become blurred, and no longer reflects a reality that is more complex, more diverse and, in many ways, richer.

Our region is no longer a homogeneous destination. Average data fail to capture the wide heterogeneity that now shapes the face of the region. Today's Latin America and the Caribbean is a crucible in which we may discern realities of all kinds. Our nations include high-, medium- and low-income countries, on a gradient from Haiti to Antigua and Barbuda.

Consequently, there is no way of devising a single effective formula for cooperation, or even a standard toolkit. We must also be able to recognize that the challenge requires more imagination than it did before, and no lesser a sense of urgency.

That our region has cooperation needs is not in doubt, yet, in a sign of new times, it also has a supply of cooperation to offer.

Of course, viewed in terms of the traditional battery of cooperation tools, it is very difficult to understand the nature of this regionally fashioned supply of cooperation. In fact, much of what we are able to offer in Latin America and the Caribbean is not materialized in monetary form. And since it is not monetized, it may ultimately be overlooked. Yet some of these instruments are delivering significant results in the settings in which they are deployed. To understand this, one only has to look at the impact of PetroCaribe or the indelible mark left by Cuban health and education professionals in several of the countries where they have been welcomed.

Friends: the impression is growing that the developed world has come to the conclusion that the Latin American and Caribbean region no longer requires cooperation. This conclusion is an erroneous one. The reality is that cooperation needs have changed, because our continent has changed.

ECLAC has had the inestimable privilege of being a witness to these transformations and now aspires, as ever in consultation with the countries themselves, to make these new circumstances widely known and to explore horizons for a cooperation model that takes full account of the emerging picture.

ECLAC is here today to give an account of what has been accomplished with the resources provided by its donors, to give an account of the multiplier effect they have achieved by allowing us to be their technical counterpart in this effort.

The say this with humility, aware of our limitations but very proud of the tremendous work that our staff devote to the task. ECLAC multiplies the resources allocated to cooperation projects because it regionalizes these efforts. It brings its history and legitimacy to bear and seeks convergences with an integrated and consistent development proposal which is itself the outcome of agreements reached by the countries of the region (such as our effort to place gender equality at the heart of the agenda). ECLAC spurs on intergovernmental dialogues which have their own channels of transmission in the Commission's subsidiary bodies, and it coordinates the approach to cross-cutting themes.

As an agency of the United Nations, ECLAC also carries in its very essence an irrevocable calling to connect the regional dimension with the contemporary global agenda.

And, in that task, the voice of the region speaks with clear accord: in cooperation matters, too, we understand that our mandate is to clearly delineate the common themes: equality gives us a clear aim, structural change an unavoidable path, and compacts a political and policy tool.

We have the opportunity today to listen carefully to the reflections of our cooperation partners with regard to this proposal.

And we will also have the opportunity, in the course of the morning, to discuss the relevance of the criteria used to establish the traditional categories of cooperation, and the urgency of dispensing with the practice of allocating resources solely on the basis of GDP and pursuing another, collectively built, approach. In this new approach, the structural gaps that prevent the development of our peoples are an essential reference.

Now, a third and final point.

Friends, as we said in the position paper prepared on the road to this session, the countries of our region must be lead actors in a compact of the international community for development and cooperation beyond 2015.

From the point of view of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, the shift from an approach based on the Millennium Development Goals to one based on sustainable development goals requires stabilization mechanisms to mitigate the transition costs and consolidate and strengthen progress towards a development model that is environmentally and socially sustainable and economically inclusive.

As we consider together the new horizons for cooperation, we will surely uncover fertile new ground in the process.

This global compact should target an economic structure capable of attaining threshold levels of environmental sustainability and social well-being for the majority of the population. Its scope should go beyond the satisfaction of basic needs to encompass reduction of the deep-seated inequalities and asymmetries in our societies.

This means leaving behind the traditional premise of development assistance, whereby the rich countries help out developing countries and prescribe the kinds of action they should take in order to combat poverty.

It means forming a global compact that expresses solidarity with coming generations who will be living in a world marked by greater uncertainty and more severe shortages of natural resources. It will also involve advocating the conclusion of international trade, environmental and social agreements that will respect the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and that will not shift the heaviest costs onto the shoulders of the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

Thank you very much.