

## **SUBPROGRAMME 7: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

### Presentation

The interrelationship between economic growth, environmental protection, climate change, urban development and social and gender equality is increasingly important for governments and the main social stakeholders in Latin America and the Caribbean. The subprogramme activities aim to strengthen the capacities of the countries of the region to analyse and quantify the costs, benefits and trade-offs involved in the transition from the current pattern of development towards one that is more sustainable. Building these capacities will enable the design and implementation of integrated policies for achieving cross-sectoral targets, such as internationally agreed development goals, tackling new environmental challenges, promoting gender equality and reversing unsustainable trends.

The outcomes of a number of major conferences have had an impact on the activities of this subprogramme by connecting the global and regional agendas; these include the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992), more commonly referred to as the Earth Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002) and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). In this new period, the whole set of commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the ensuing governance for sustainable development, the Paris Agreement reached at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the agreements to be reached by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), in addition to the priorities established by the United Nations Environment Assembly, will set the framework for the programme activities during this year and in others to come.

The effects of climate change, the growing demand for natural resources and the need to foster economic growth through investment will place further economic pressures on the natural endowment and in many cases lead to socio-environmental conflicts. The regional trend towards rising urbanization rates and urban sprawl will continue, even in metropolitan areas. A gender perspective needs to be taken into account in the analysis of these issues, as well as in the resulting public policy proposals. The implementation of an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements will be a priority. Improvements in the use of economic tools for the evaluation of environmental policies will lead to more relevant policy analysis, thus supporting a transition towards lower-carbon economies. The international climate agenda set forth in the Paris Agreement focuses on follow-up to the commitments made by the countries regarding mitigation and adaptation, and on the financing and technology transfer mechanisms required to achieve these goals.

These thematic areas can be interwoven so as to facilitate coordination and modernization among all stakeholders and thereby contribute to the achievement of national targets for a more robust, sustainable pattern of development. Countries would thus be better prepared to make strategic environmental assessments, measure the externalities or implicit social costs of maintaining the status quo and model the alternative policy options at the different levels of government and territorial administration. At the subnational level, the socioeconomic and environmental implications of urban development in the Latin American and Caribbean region must be examined in order to strengthen the capacity of countries to design and put into practice policies and instruments for planning, financing and territorial administration that respond to the challenges posed by high rates of urbanization in the region and the growing importance of metropolitan areas, requiring governance styles to adapt accordingly. The formulation of policies and projects for human security at the subnational level is extremely important and this includes the study of environmental conflict and institution-building for sustainable development.