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**REPORT ON THE PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS, 2007-2008,
OF THE PROJECT FOR THE INTEGRATION AND HARMONIZATION
OF SOCIAL STATISTICS (INAES) ***

* Report prepared by the Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia.

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1. Background

The Project for the integration and harmonization of social statistics (INAES) of the Working Group on Institution-building of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is part of the Programme of Regional Statistical Work 2005-2007 and is based on the guidelines set out in the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of the Conference. This project was approved under the Regional Public Goods Initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which was launched in 2004 to finance new activities that respond to the needs of the region as a whole or of a group of its countries and whose benefits translate into tangible and sustainable results.

2. Goals

Overall objective:

To achieve the highest levels of harmonization, endorsement, comparison and integration of instruments and methodologies for the production of social statistics, with emphasis on health, education and the labour market.

Specific goals:

To draw up a list of the international standards that exist for each area and using a common methodology, to determine the extent to which national statistical practices are consistent with those standards.

To make consensual decisions on the best statistical practices for each item, in order to adopt them as regional standards based on the contributions of each subregion (Central America and Mexico, the Andean Community countries and the Extended MERCOSUR countries).

To disseminate information and train and advise technical staff of interested countries on agreed statistical standards in order to achieve greater harmonization of regional data.

3. Activities conducted

Phase 1: Effective country participation

This phase took place between January and March 2007, following the formation of a group comprising a project manager, an assistant from the Centro Andino de Altos Estudios (CANDANE) and an assistant from the Inter-American Development Bank. The following activities were conducted:

- Detailed planning of the project, following agreement with the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico, at a meeting held from 29 to 31 January 2007.

- A formal letter was sent by certified mail and fax to the directors of the different national statistical offices inviting each country to participate in the project and to provide a contact and a leader for each theme. In addition, information on the project was sent to each director's email address.
- Creation of a database of contacts and experts appointed by theme and by country.
- The Information Producers and Users identification form and the Information Restrictions and Needs form for each theme were prepared and sent out.
- Preparation of the brochure and invitations with project information. These were handed out to the directors of national statistical offices of the participating countries at the meeting relating to the use of statistics in promoting inclusive development, sponsored by IDB and PARIS 21 in Washington, D.C., in September 2006.
- Preparation of three electronic newsletters on the progress achieved in January, February-March and April-May, which were sent out to all the participants in the INAES project.
- Fulfilling the formalities required by the World Bank for holding the videoconferences with the subregions.
- Presentation of the project to the National Statistics Institute of Spain. Ms. Paloma Seone was appointed project support officer.
- Design of the web page for the INAES project, which will include the corresponding interactive tools.

Phase 2: Assessment of country status in each subregion

This phase was started in April 2007 and includes the following activities:

- Selection and hiring of three consultants:

Fernando Ruíz is in charge of health issues. Dr. Ruiz is a surgeon and holds a master's degree in Economics from the Pontifical Javerian University of Colombia and a master's in Public Health and Occupational Health from the Harvard School of Public Health.

María Paulina Dávila is in charge of education issues. Ms. Dávila holds a bachelor's degree in Social Communication from the University of Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano. She holds a master's in Education and a doctorate in Economic Policy and Theory from Pennsylvania State University.

Carlos Ignacio Becerra is in charge of labour-market issues. Mr. Becerra is an engineer with a degree from the Industrial University of Santander. He also holds a degree in Sociology from the National University of Colombia and is a social science researcher.

- Holding of three videoconferences, one with each of the subregions, to promote the active participation of the 18 countries invited to the different phases of the INAES project.

The videoconferences took place on the following dates: 9 May 2007, Mexico and Central America (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama); 16 May 2007, countries of the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) together with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 23 May 2007, Extended MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

- Preparation of the forms and dispatch by e-mail to all the coordinators of the Information Producers and Users Identification Form and the Information Restrictions and Needs Form.
- Preparation of questionnaires on health, education and the labour market, which will be converted into electronic questionnaires.
- Preparation of the electronic questionnaire on the labour market, which is in the final test phase and will soon be available for completion online by the participating countries.

4. Advances

- Effective participation of 19 countries.
- Preparation of a database of contacts and experts for each theme and country.
- Preparation of Information Producers and Users Identification Form and the information Restrictions and Needs Form for each item.
- Preparation of the database with each country's response to the above-mentioned forms.
- Preliminary analysis of the results of information from the above-mentioned forms.
- Preparation of an information brochure on the INAES project.
- Preparation of electronic newsletters with monthly status reports.
- Preparation of formulas on the labour market, health and education.
- Preparation of an electronic form on the labour market (in the test phase).
- Design of the INAES project virtual community page (www.dane.gov.co/inaes).

5. Activities to be carries out

- Publication on the web page of the database project with each country's response to the electronic questionnaires.
- Request to participating countries to send the responses to the electronic questionnaires; follow-up and monitoring of the process
- Processing and analysis of the information received through the electronic media.
- Preparation of an assessment of the region in terms of the consistency of the national statistical practices with the international standards for each theme (to be assigned to the consultants).
- Preparation of the document on agreements and differences by subregion and theme.
- Distribution of the preliminary documents prepared on the basis of the country assessments by theme.
- Review, commentary and analysis of the results and country proposals.
- Preparation and holding of a consensus-building seminar.
- Preparation and holding of an analytical seminar on specific themes.
- Preparation and holding of three training workshops (one on each theme).

6. Final outputs

The final outputs of the INAES project, which will be made available as a regional public good, are the following:

- Inventory of existing international standards.
- Databases with the responses of countries to the electronic INAES project questionnaire in the areas of health, education and the labour market.
- Assessment by theme of the current situation of the countries, subregions and region with respect to the consistency of national statistical practices with international standards.
- Formulation of standards common to all Latin American countries for the production of social statistics.

- Manual setting out proposals for standards in the area of health, education and the labour market.
- Holding of two seminars with the active participation of all countries, one on consensus-building and the other on specific issues.
- Holding of three training workshops on agreed standards.