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Seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the  
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Bogotá, Colombia, 29 and 30 November 2007

**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE DISSEMINATION OF THE EUROPEAN  
STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN \***

\* Report prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

## 1. Background

At its fourth meeting, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in response to a request put forward by several countries, agreed to promote the discussion and dissemination of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the region and requested ECLAC and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) to prepare a programme of action to implement this initiative.

On 25 May 2005, the European Commission adopted a Communication on the independence, integrity and accountability of the national and Community statistical authorities and a recommendation that promulgates the European Statistics Code of Practice prepared by the statistical authorities and adopted by the Committee of the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC).<sup>1</sup> This Code of Practice is an ambitious approach to ensuring quality in statistics; it is a self-regulatory instrument containing standards for the independence of statistical authorities which provides a further guarantee for the good functioning of the European Statistical System (ESS) and the production of high quality and reliable statistics.

The European Statistical System refers to the partnership comprising EUROSTAT, the National Statistical Institutes and other national statistical bodies responsible in each Member State for producing and disseminating statistics. It has a dual purpose:

- To improve trust and confidence in the statistical authorities by proposing certain institutional and organisational arrangements.
- To reinforce the quality of the statistics that these authorities produce and disseminate, by promoting the coherent application of best international statistical principles, methods and practices by all producers of official statistics in Europe.

The Code of Practice is based on a definition of statistical quality common to the entire statistical system in Europe and encompassing all the relevant areas, from the institutional environment and statistical production processes to the final result, that is, official European statistics. The European Statistics Code of Practice establishes 15 basic principles for the production and dissemination of official European statistics and the institutional environment, which govern the actions of the national and Community statistical authorities. In order to follow up the implementation of the Code, there is a set of best practice indicators that serve as a reference for each of the 15 principles.

The key goals of the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 of the Conference include the following: “to strengthen the strategic and operational management practices and organization of the national statistical offices and national statistical systems in order to ensure the quality of their outputs and the satisfaction of users” (goal 1) “to promote the development of technical and methodological capacities in order to generate high-quality statistical information in the region” (goal 3).<sup>2</sup> Thus, a thorough knowledge of the European Statistics Code of Practice and, above all, of national experiences obtained in its implementation can be a very valuable tool for indicating ways, mechanisms and methods for achieving the goals of institution-building and quality in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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<sup>1</sup> Implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice (DDR/8), document presented at the fourth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile, 25-27 July 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Strategic plan 2005-2015 (LC/L.2715(CEA.4/3)/Rev.1), Santiago, Chile, 14 August 2007.

## **2. Objectives of ECLAC-EUROSTAT cooperation**

The overall objective for cooperation between ECLAC and EUROSTAT is set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and ECLAC, signed by the two parties on 7 November 2006 in Santiago, Chile. On the basis of this Memorandum of Understanding, at its fourth meeting, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC identified the European Statistics Code of Practice as a standard for best statistical practices worthy of emulation and dissemination in the Latin American region with a view to fostering the adoption of best practices in countries, especially with respect to the institutional environment, bearing in mind the specific circumstances existing in each country. The institutional and organizational factors have a significant impact on the efficacy and credibility of a statistical authority which prepares and disseminates statistics. The relevant questions in relation to the goals set out in the Strategic Plan 2005-2015 adopted by the Conference are contained in principles 1 to 6 of the Code: professional independence, mandate for data collection, adequacy of resources, quality commitment, statistical confidentiality, and impartiality and objectivity.

## **3. Activities scheduled for 2007-2009**

The following guidelines for the programme of work are proposed for discussion and approval at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas.

- (a) Creation of a task force made up of experts from countries interested in participating in this activity (December 2007).
- (b) Preparation of a self-evaluation questionnaire for the countries on principles 1 to 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice, indicators and their application (first quarter 2008).
- (c) Preparation of a document for participating countries on the results of the questionnaire on the application of the principles, in which the strengths and weaknesses are identified (April-May 2008).
- (d) Organization of a workshop relating to the application of the principles on institutional factors with a view to analysing the European experience and discussing the results of the self-evaluation exercise (September 2008). The workshop will be attended by the task force, the European countries proposed by EUROSTAT and the members of the Conference who express an interest.
- (e) Preparation of a support project for the implementation of best practices in the area of institutional factors in countries that wish to receive technical assistance in this field from experts from the European Union, ECLAC and member countries of the Conference (October-December 2008).
- (f) Raising funds to finance the above-mentioned programme (October 2008- May 2009).
- (g) Discussion and approval of the proposed programme of work at the fifth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (June 2009).