



Final Report of the XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. Port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports: Status and prospects

*XLI Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council
Caracas, Venezuela
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Final Report

Economic and Technical Cooperation

*XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. Port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports: Status and prospects
Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
23 and 24 April 2015
SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/IF-15*

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RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

1. The XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports: Status and prospects, organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), jointly with the Government of Dominican Republic, through the General Direction for Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECOOM) of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, and the support of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77, took place on 23 and 24 April 2015, in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.
2. The objectives of this regional meeting were: i) Submit an assessment of the status of port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly on the initiatives in the area of digital ports; ii) Identify and list major successful experiences and best practices on port cooperation and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean; and iii) Identify areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports among the countries of the region and with other regions, particularly Asia and Europe.
3. Participants in the event included delegations from the following Member States of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA): Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic and Venezuela; as well as representatives of regional and international organizations, such as the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the Organization of American States (OAS), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
4. Participants also included representatives of national authorities who have been promoting experiences and best practices in this area: the Valparaiso Port Enterprise, from Chile, the Direction of Transport and Insurance of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Cuba (MINCEX), the Mexican Transport Institute, the Maritime Port Authority of Panama, the National Port Authority of Peru, and the firm World Caucedo of Dominican Republic.
5. The following authorities took the floor during the opening session:
 - a) Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Román Mayorga, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri.

Mayorga thanked Dominican Republic for hosting the meeting and underscored the importance of the subject. He said that the new phase of modernization of ports in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), with increased incorporation of digital technologies to organize dialogue and streamline ports and global value chains, allows for moving towards new standards of service in maritime and terrestrial transport, reducing costs and increasing competitiveness in international trade in the region. In his speech, he also stressed the importance of providing as much as possible information to the national focal points in charge of cooperation in the Member States of SELA, so they can return to their capitals with better chance of boosting cooperation actions and adequate public policies on port logistics and optimization through the digital ports. Finally, he requested the international cooperation directors to make suggestions on useful and important issues to be addressed

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in forthcoming meetings, for example in the areas of Science, Technology and Innovation, which is crucial for productivity and competitiveness of the productive apparatus of all the countries and for the proper performance of practically all the fields of their development.

- b) Message of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations and Chairman of the Group of 77, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, read during the opening ceremony of the event.

The Chairman of the Group of 77 underscored the support that the Group has offered to SELA, particularly in the last six meetings of International Cooperation Directors. He also reaffirmed the importance of the subject of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as fundamental tools for the economic and social development of the countries of the region, since they represent an opportunity, not only to reduce poverty, but also to bridge the technological gap between developed and developing nations. He emphasized the importance of the issue concerning the meeting, considering the growing importance of South-South trade and maritime transport in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the need for significant investments to improve port infrastructure, digital cooperation and the exchange of experiences, which are elements that will help promote development in the region. For this reason, the G77 is urging the international community, particularly the Latin American and Caribbean region, to provide resources and collaboration to boost the solutions to critical social and economic needs of the population, by strengthening triangular cooperation and consolidating programs and action plans, so as to make concrete strides towards the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

- c) Minister of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, Juan Temístocles Montás.

Minister Temístocles Montás welcomed officials and delegates. He highlighted the experiences of recent years in Dominican Republic with the national commitment to balanced, cohesive, sustainable development, which promotes production with innovation and quality, in harmony with the environment, and creates employment to reduce poverty. He pointed out that the fundamental pillar for achieving such development is to be successful in trade. There is no development without trade, he said, so it is necessary to facilitate trade. He also indicated that development means – among other components of the National Strategy for Development – working on the advancement of “soft” components such as administrative and customs procedures, the organization and management of transportation, packaging and inventory costs, tracking and location services, as well as the use of ICTs throughout the process. Competitiveness results also include the development of “hard” components, such as transport and road infrastructure, telecommunications and storage, thus enabling connectivity along the supply chain. Finally, he praised the initiative of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, to gather its Member States at this meeting of International Cooperation Directors to analyse the subject “Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports: Status and prospects”.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF WORKS

6. The informative and support documents submitted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and other regional and international organizations, as well as the presentations and contributions made by the Member States are included in the minisite about the meeting, on SELA's Web site (<http://www.sela.org>).

INTRODUCTORY SESSION: Fernando Guglielmelli, representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) system economic Latin American and the Caribbean (SELA) and moderator of this session, introduced SELA's Consultant, Luis Ascencio Carreño, who made a presentation on the study entitled "Digital Ports in Latin America and the Caribbean: Situation and Prospects " (SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/DT N° 2-15).

7. In his presentation, Ascencio Carreño explained that, in general terms, digital ports are a mechanism for trade facilitation. The term *Digital Port* refers to the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to port community-type processes, within the context of logistic port chains, which involve both terrestrial and maritime interfaces, with the purpose of increasing efficiency to the different linkages through the digital connection of services and interoperability with the national systems Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW). In turn, the concept of *Collaborative Ports* refers to the new governance required to implement the digital modernization of ports, with emphasis on public-private partnerships. In 2013, intra-regional trade in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) reached 18.7%, whereas in other regions, such as the European Union, it increased to 59%, and in Asia-Pacific it rose to 50% that same year. In general, as revealed by a simple analysis, Latin American countries and their port systems have "competitive" costs. However, the "hidden" additional costs, which are not measured by Doing Business, range between 20% and 40% of the total logistic costs. The low logistic competitiveness of ports affects competitiveness of foreign trade in LAC. In the last *Panama Summit 2014*, the maritime and port industry warned that ports are reaching a critical point of low productivity due to the lack of investments and poor management in the third port line (access to ports and cargo congestion and road transport). The administration of the Supply Chain Management (SCM) *"promotes an efficient integration and coordination of public-private actors involved in the planning, implementation and control of the of sea and land transport, and the flows of cargo and information (international trade documentation and service orders) from their source to their destination (hinterland and foreland), in an efficient and effective manner, in order to minimize the overall costs of the system, while meeting the service levels of importers and exporters (agility and predictability)"*¹. The Programme Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports is a reference model for competitiveness of Port Logistic Chains (PLC) and focuses on identifying and promoting the best collaborative and institutional practices characterized by the use of new forms of inter-organizational work, ICTs for the electronic exchange of data, efficient logistic processes and implementation of new and improved standards cargo and transport services. The Programme is based on four fundamental pillars and 12 checkpoints. The pillars are as follows: i) Operational Integration of the port logistic chain; ii) Governance and institutional framework for local, national and subregional logistic facilitation; iii) Ensuring quality, security and efficiency of port logistic services; and iv) Electronic exchange of data and interoperability. For further information, see the base document for the meeting Digital Ports in Latin America and the Caribbean: Situation and Prospects (SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/DT N° 2-15).

¹ Ascencio & González-Ramírez (2014), Journal of Applied Research Technology (JART-UNAM Magazine).

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8. Ana María Méndez Chicas, Deputy Secretary of International Cooperation of the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency of the Republic (SEGEPLAN) of Guatemala, after thanking for the presentation made by Ascencio Carreño, referred to the need for reform in the port sector, not only in its institutional framework so as to make it more adequate, but also in the transition in which the private sector starts playing a key role. Therefore, she asked if there was any important step in this direction to improve the performance of the private sector.
9. Ascencio Carreño remarked that the private sector has played a leading role in the productivity of ports in Latin America; and for this reason, shipping companies have continued to intensify that relationship, in view of the reforms in many countries to keep continuity of trade flows. This move was immediately supported by shipping companies, investor groups and operators, and many of them are still developing this project.
10. The representative of Guatemala pointed out that in her country the effects of climate change (hurricanes, storms) severely affect road connectivity and wondered how this could affect the national budget.
11. Ascencio Carreño replied that in port logistic chains, the concept of resilience is very important in view of the climatic phenomena affecting them, which are being measured. Unfortunately, in order to deal with these problems it is necessary to count on a great deal of public resources and early warnings to anticipate them. It is also necessary to endow our logistics systems with this formula so as to adjust trade flows within the territory and even into neighbouring countries. In the case of Guatemala, it only has one major port on the Pacific, so it should have a plan B to count on an exit to sea, for example, from El Salvador.
12. Francisco René Ramos, Coordinator of Cooperation and Investment of the Autonomous Port Executive Commission of El Salvador, who also thanked for the presentation made by Ascencio Carreño, referred to the issue of climate change, pointing out that more in-depth analyses should be conducted because climate change is not a future, but a current problem. He said that the most important assets for El Salvador are its ports, and it is there where there are the greatest risks. Ramos underscored the challenge for this meeting to move ahead with the analysis of countries' resilience. He wondered: What measures can be taken in this connection? Finally he said that Cuba, in turn, has vast experience and has conducted many studies on the subject.
13. César Talledo León, Chief of the Office of Technologies and Information of Peru, asked: How could this reference model for competitiveness of port logistic chains help to remove the legal regulatory barriers, which are protectionist and old-fashioned, and are hindering development in many of our countries?
14. Ascencio Carreño pointed out that Chile is creating a Port Commission, since it doesn't even have a national logistics plan. Such Commission has focused on identifying legal problems. Therefore, based on the reference model, our proposal is that networks in each country may form part of some kind of technical secretariat serving national commissions. Once port communities are well structured, the next step is that they take national actions to enter permanent forums to modernize legislations on transport, as in the case of Australia. The experience of Chile can be replicated in other countries.

15. Jorge Durán, Chief of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the Organization of American States (OAS), said that from the perspective of the OAS, it is obvious that there should be a regional and global vision of the subject. With respect to the issue of logistics for competitiveness among ports, he said that technology should not be regarded as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve a greater purpose: its competitive virtue. He pointed out that the focus should not be on the technology *per se*, because that could bring about problems with cyber-attacks. In addition, he underscored the initiative undertaken in this meeting because if operational aspects are not planned as a region and each country makes it individually, then, practically, the integration of these technological platforms will turn out to be more costly. It would be advisable to plan it all together. But for this to happen it is necessary to have a regulatory framework. Technology cannot be regarded as an end in itself, the focus should not be on ICTs; on the contrary, the focus should be on further automating processes concerning security and cybersecurity.
16. Octavio Doerr, Specialist in Port Issues of the Division of Infrastructure Services of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), made a comment regarding the *Top Down* approach. He pointed out that, in general, reform processes led to the Latin American and Caribbean region to decentralization, handing over some processes to the private sector. Therefore, he asked the consultant: Which approach should be followed at the level of national policies?
17. Ascencio Carreño replied that the dynamics of ports have been different; in some cases the process has been undertaken locally, but there is a need to re-articulate those activities. In other countries, such as Colombia, the Chambers of Commerce are leading the articulation activity. Faced with this problem, the solution has been to create a chamber that gathers the private sector, and at the national level the dynamics is aimed at national planning in order to rationalize public resources. In Colombia, just like in Panama, there are no local authorities; so a chamber was created to conduct such activity. However, the important thing is that the principle and the language are equally directed towards the local level. In addition, public services must be endowed with an organizational standard, so that the necessary mixed local-national integral adjustments can be made in order to optimize the logistic chain.
18. After the session of questions and answers, the moderator thanked participants for their remarks in such fruitful debate and the consultant for his presentation, comments and for responding the questions.

SESSION I: Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital Ports. Initiatives promoted by Regional and International Organizations. This session was moderated by America Bastidas Castaneda, Adviser of Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of Dominican Republic, who introduced the subject and gave the floor to the speakers.

19. Jorge Durán, Chief of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the Organization of American States (OAS), made a presentation on "Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean" (SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/Di N° 5-15). In his presentation, he pointed out that a study conducted with Oxford Economics on the economic and competitive advantages of the adoption of best practices in multimodal terrestrial-maritime transport in

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the Americas shows that the implementation of the TIR² system could boost exports in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico from US\$ 1 to US\$ 5 billion per year (a total of US\$ 9 billion per year for the three countries). The implementation of a computerized version of the TIR system – paperless exchange of the information related to the TIR procedure, or e-TIR – could offer the freedom to decide about the form of delivery, operating in the most sustainable way, at lower costs and with higher quality. Durán noted that in order to outline a TIC strategy an analysis must be made of the level of modernization, capacity and specialization of the port; the participation of the private sector and of public-private partnerships; collaboration with other public entities; the use of technology as part of the modernization of the port; and the procedures, practices and existing arrangements. Greater automation increases productivity, and reduces both environmental impacts and operational costs, among other things. Durán underscored some solutions to promote competitive ports, as well as the need for a modern, up-to-date and flexible legislation and technology that allows for a change and spaces for innovation. A suitable regulatory framework will make ports more efficient and competitive. With respect to cyber security, he noted that “increased reliance on automated systems makes local and global chains supplies vulnerable to criminal and terrorist attacks, or to the use of the ports as a means to perpetrate them”.

20. Durán said that ports should enhance soft and hard infrastructure (hard infrastructure is not the only solution) in order to improve productivity and reduce delays in ports. Customs and ports need to improve cooperation and exchanges of information. There is a need for a sea-land integrated intermodal network in order to promote trade and commercial exchanges among Latin American countries. The elimination and reduction of paperwork and documentation is essential, as well as establishing a single window or that there exists interoperability among different single windows where all border agencies, including security at ports, can receive and handle the information. It is important to make emphasis on public-private partnerships, taking into account the performance of the private sector as a factor for innovation and competitiveness and the role of the State in outlining public policies conducive to development with incentives for the participation of the private sector.
21. Octavio Doerr, Specialist in Port Issues of the Division of Infrastructure Services of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), made a presentation entitled “Public policies and challenges for collaboration in ports”. On the matter, Doerr described the problems from different points of view, such as institutional, labour, logistics, development sustainable, among others. He pointed out that there must be an updated sectoral diagnosis and a proposal on strategic objectives, and in some cases, a sectoral body to resolve pending issues should be created. The implementation of technologies in ports and their logistic environment contributes to improve the efficiency of the various links in the chain. New approaches to labour relations are necessary and the greater competitiveness and sustainability call for acting in a proactive way in this field. The existence of technological platforms to manage and monitor cargoes and their means of transportation would allow for greater efficiency in the supply chain and in the port community. In order to respond to new growth, sustained increases must be provided to the long-term capacity of ports, by adding new infrastructure or replacing outdated one. The introduction of a greater dynamism in the market through the promotion of competition in ports allows current operators to act in consideration of competitiveness challenges. Finally,

² The TIR system (International Road Transport) allows for the transport of goods following a procedure established in the TIR Convention, signed in 1975 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It consists of a harmonized customs document for international transport of goods carried out, at least partly, by land.

in terms of economic regulation, Doerr said that the market should be rearranged in order to increase competition, protect users or ensure that efficiency gains are effectively transferred to users.

22. Otto Noack, Executive Director of the Central American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), made a presentation on "Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports. Initiatives promoted by regional and international organizations". COCATRAM is the specialized agency that forms part of the institutional framework of the Central American Integration System (SICA). Based in Managua, Nicaragua, it takes care of matters related to maritime and port development in Central America. It is responsible for providing advice to the Council of Ministers in charge of transport in Central America (COMITRAN) and to the Member Governments in the adoption of policies and decisions for the harmonious development of the sector. COCATRAM promotes national workshops for the generation of public-private consensus in the preparation of the Action Plan for the Development of Short-Distance Maritime Transport in Mesoamerica (TMCD) which aims at reviewing and validating the roadmap to implement such transportation in the ten countries comprising the Mesoamerica project. Noack said that the Central American Regional Maritime Port Strategy (EMPRCA) seeks to promote investments in the physical port infrastructure required to efficiently meet the present and future demand of cargoes, ships and passengers so as to strengthen the production and comparative advantages of the region, positioning the logistic activities in accordance with the rules and practices relating to the preservation of the marine environment, security and protection in its facilities. Finally he explained that the forums of COCATRAM are as follows: REDCAFOR, Central American Network of Centres of Maritime Port Training; REDMARPOR, Network of Maritime Port Statistics of Central America; ROGRAM-CA, Operational Network of Regional Cooperation among Maritime Authorities of Central America and Dominican Republic; and REPICA, Port Meeting of the Central American Isthmus.
23. Julián Abril García, Secretary of the Facilitation Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), made a presentation on "The activities of the IMO in the area of Facilitation of Maritime Traffic and the Project of Technical Cooperation on Maritime Single Window". The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, with headquarters in London, United Kingdom, which promotes cooperation among States and the transport industry to improve maritime safety and to prevent sea pollution. Recent initiatives of the IMO include reforms to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78). The scope of application of the rules drawn up by the IMO includes about 50 conventions and protocols, hundreds of codes, circulars and recommendations covering practically all aspects of the maritime business, design, construction, equipment, maintenance and crew. The Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL) was adopted on 9 April 1965, with 115 contracting Governments. Its objective is to avoid unnecessary delays in maritime traffic, encourage cooperation among countries, and ensure a high degree of uniformity in documentation and procedures for the arrival, stay and release to the largest possible extent. The Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) has resulted in an effective control of the flag State and the port State control authorities. It has strengthened the responsibilities of maritime administrations through legislation models, and has established systems and procedures in the field of prevention, response and control of sea pollution.

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24. Abril also noted that maritime transport mobilizes over 80% of the global transport volume and 70% of its value; and these figures are higher in developing countries. Since 1970, maritime transport has grown at an annual average of 3.1%, up to an estimated volume of 8.7 billion tons in 2011, and according to projections a growth of 36% is expected by the year 2020, and the double by 2036. The prototype of Maritime Single Windows is being carried out in two phases. In the first phase, the IMO has conducted a survey electronically in 13 countries that have carried out technical cooperation activities in the past three years (Bahrain, Egypt, Peru, Antigua and Barbuda, Chile, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Myanmar, Angola, Congo, Kenya, Turkey and Cambodia) in order to assess the current situation and the needs of the countries in the area of Single Windows. In the second phase, on the basis of the information gathered in the first stage, the selected consultants will prepare user requirements and design criteria intended to facilitate the selection of the company or countries interested in developing the prototype. In addition, they will also provide estimated costs. The results from these two phases will be submitted in June 2015 to the 95th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 95) and the 65th Session of the Technical Cooperation Committee (TC 65), so that the project can be included in the ITCP for the two-year period 2016-2017. Subject to the approval of the TC 65, the project will be developed by experts in information technologies and dispatch of ships. Once this process is completed, the project will be implemented in one of the countries that participated in phase 1. The Maritime Single Window developed by the IMO will focus on facilitating the dispatch of ships, passengers, crew, and connection with information related to cargoes, by using the information from the FAL forms established in the FAL Convention.

The moderator thanked speakers for their presentations and invited delegates and participants to discuss about them.

25. Ximena del Rocío Salvador Medina, Director of Ports of Ecuador, referred to the delays in ports due to the procedures with health authorities and to the Convention on International Health, which, since 2005, relates the health sector with the port sector. For this reason, the implementation of the Maritime Single Window of this type is scheduled for 2019.
26. Julián Abril García said that, at the time of the survey, the focal points of the 13 countries were requested to contact the competent administrations in the area and ensure the involvement of health and agricultural authorities. Based on the results of this consultation, a simple prototype linked to the dispatch of boats would be implemented, then countries would adapt it and improve it.
27. The representative of Ecuador took the floor again and said that in her country there is an overlapping of functions among all the parties involved when a ship docks in the port, and indicated that the State is involved at all levels.
28. Julián Abril García pointed out that, technically, establishing a Single Window is simple; however, improving the facilitation and procedures requires political will. If the parties do not reach agreements, the Single Window or electronic system will not work, he said.
29. Carlos Martner, of the Mexican Transport Institute, asked which would be the authority responsible for the interconnectivity of the port with other regions and for handling everything related with the coordination between city ports and the road and railway systems, because ports' jurisdiction is restricted to their physical limits.

30. Octavio Doerr, of ECLAC, said that there is not a fixed solution; the design proposed can be tailored to the reality of the system in each country. Doerr recommended adopting new legislations because the countries consider the issue of logistics at the national level, but eventually the port managers are the ones to take care of this matter. The private sector also has an important role in reducing this over-expenditure gap in the region.
31. Jorge Durán, of the OAS, referred to the Mexican ports and the insufficient waterway and railway transport means in the country. He said that, first of all, standards should be outlined, involving the private sector. In Mexico, the government is setting the example so that the private sector gets involved and can take advantage of the facilities; but such task corresponds to lawmakers.

SESSION II: Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital Ports: Status and Prospects. National Prospects and Experiences – Port Community System or Port Single Window. This session was moderated by Héctor Vinicio Mella G., Vice-Minister of Industrial Development, of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Dominican Republic, who introduced the speakers and gave them the floor.

32. Héctor Tamburini, Senior Sales Manager of DP World Caucedo in Dominican Republic, delivered a presentation entitled “Port Community System or Port Single Window”. Before starting his presentation, he pointed out that Port Single Windows are crucial for the development of nations and said he was surprised at the fact that little progress has been made on the subject in the region. Then, he underscored the progress made in the ports of Dubai and Singapore and made emphasis on the simplification and harmonization of processes – so as to transform the end-to-end supply chain – as key mechanisms for the development of ports. Tamburini said that Latin America should take advantage of its geographical position and upgrade its port soft infrastructure. Finally, he highlighted two areas for action. The first area is the creation of virtual portals in the countries of the region. In the case of Dominican Republic, the virtual portal “RD TRADE”, aimed at promoting competitive administrative processes. The second area is the development of human capital through logistic training centres.
33. Luis Rodríguez, Director of Transport and Insurance of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Cuba (MINCEX), made a presentation on the “Progress of Digitalization in Latin America and the Caribbean”. He pointed out that even though Latin America and the Caribbean does not have the same level of development of other ports in the world, it has made achievements in certain areas and counts on strengths that allow it to pursue bridging the gap with the rest of the world in the medium term. Although they are the least developed subregions, Central America and the Caribbean are undertaking ambitious maritime port infrastructure development projects, which require making a qualitative leap as regards digitization in order to meet the standards imposed by globalization. Rodríguez pointed out that this Meeting on Digital Ports in LAC should provide the elements for the actions to be taken in the next five or ten years in order to bridge the gap that separates the region from developed countries in terms of maritime and port activities. Continuity should be ensured for the work carried out by SELA in 2014 with the Programme Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, which promotes the improvement of competitiveness and productivity of logistic chains among its Member States and collaboration with other multilateral organizations. For this purpose, advantage should be taken of the best experiences reported in the countries of the region and in the most advanced nations worldwide. Finally, Rodríguez urged those countries that have made progress with the digitization of their ports

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and with Port Single Windows to share such experiences, through free advisory and training programmes aimed at human resources in those Latin American and Caribbean countries with delays in terms of Port Digitalization.

34. Carlos Vera, Logistics Manager of the Valparaiso Port, in Chile, made a presentation on the operation and the experiences of the Port of Valparaíso, in which he stressed that the cargo transfer is performed through the control, coordination and inspections in the Extension and Logistic Support Zone in Valparaiso (ZEAL), the institution that performs the first routine inspection of cargoes. Once the trucks comply with a series of conditions, they are directed to the respective terminals where they are dispatched in a controlled manner to prevent accumulations. Their routes are monitored in order to improve the flow, prevent accidents and timely react to any eventuality. Applying the model used in Valparaiso mainly results in ensuring the coordination of physical flows, controlling the time spent in the port facilities and allowing for making arrangements in advance. But even so, the logistic port chain remains under permanent monitoring in order to identify eventual “bottlenecks” which can affect the logistic port chain, especially outside the port. To this end, a project that measures the times along the chain was developed. Eighty-six percent of the time frames of foreign trade in the logistic port chain are concentrated in stages prior to entry into the port. Among the solutions identified, Vera underscored the need for greater visibility along the whole chain, so that the information for the coordination of transport and removal of containers can be systematized; greater anticipation of the demand for port services, reduction of the amount of manual procedures and digitization of information are also necessary.
35. Guimara Tuñón, Deputy Director of Ancillary Maritime Industries of the Maritime Authority of Panama, made a presentation on the experience of the Panamanian port system, the electronic exchange platform and its future prospects. In the strategic plan of the Government of Panama, port logistics is regarded as the most important pillar of the country’s economy. The shipping, transport, storage and communications sectors generate 25% of the gross domestic product of the country. Stakeholders in the port sector of the country include the Maritime Authority of Panama, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the National Migration Service, the Authority of Safety and Foodstuff and the Chamber of Panama. Sometimes, for instance, all the documents requested by those authorities from a ship are recurrent and this process can become bureaucratic. For this reason, Panama created the National Facilitation Committee, coordinated by the Maritime Authority, which has established a work plan to make the logistic platform much more competitive.
36. César Talledo León, Chief of the Office of Information Technology, the Port Authority of Peru, made a presentation entitled: “Experience and prospects of Peru in the Implementation of a Port Single Window”. This presentation highlighted as the central problem of the logistic port chain the slow and complicated flow of procedures and documents for the scale of the ships arriving at the ports of the country. He said that the direct cause for this problem is the high number of procedures and documents flowing between the users and the entities and the slow procedures used for physical documents. The Port Single Window (PSW) is an integrated system of optimized processes that allows, through electronic means, for ensuring the facilitation, compliance and the efficient control of the processes related to licences and authorizations of port services, and to the services provided to ships prior to arrival, during their stay and prior to their dispatch. At present, in Peru, maritime agencies account for nearly half of the users of the Foreign Trade Single

- Window (FTSW). In 2010, a Port Component (PSW) project began to function in modules for reception and dispatch of ships in the ports of the country, which has allowed for improving transparency and productivity. As a conclusion, Talledo said that Peru opted to implement a Port Single Window. The development of the PSW took several years, and the most difficult barrier to overcome was reaching consensus on the legal regulations. At present, the Port Component is being completed by appointing missing authorities and a Port Community System (PCS) and Risk Management is expected to be implemented soon.
37. Carlos Martner Peyrelongue, Coordinator of Integration of Transport of the Mexican Transport Institute (IMT), made a presentation entitled: "Port Governance and Digital Ports: Status and Prospects of Mexican Ports". In view of the complexity of an intensification of the mobility of goods and acceleration of physical movement, the port can no longer be regarded as a unit in itself where goods enter on one side and are dispatched from another side (Point A – Terminal – Point B). Nowadays, a port is considered as a node within a logistic chain, so that transport and logistics are a strategic manoeuvre. The main achievements of Digital Ports are concentrated on the activities and operations of the first manoeuvre (ship yard and vice versa), with activities such as notice of arrival, anchoring permit, dockage and moorage manoeuvres, springing and use of infrastructure, among others. However, there are still many opportunities to improve the efficiency of the Second and Third Manoeuvre (system of appointments and warranties to products and containers), and to measure the port in an integral way, coordinate logistic chains, improve internal efficiency, and also connectivity with hinterland. Among the pending challenges in developing Port Single Windows, Martner mentioned improvements in the processes of quality assurance for export/import flows, improvements in regulations, coordination with customs digital services and integration between the PSW and the FTSW.
 38. The moderator thanked speakers for their presentations and invited delegates and participants to discuss about them.
 39. Carlos Flaquer, participant from Dominican Republic, asked about the initial challenges faced in implementing the SIGLOPORT system and requested to explain the governmental component and the fundamental steps to start up this system.
 40. Carlos Vera, representative of Chile, said that the Valparaíso Port has gone a long way. First, the customs service agreed to work with the port and with the electronic cargo manifest. In the second step, the customs created an advanced cargo removal system. Even though in some ports cargoes are not checked in order to expedite the process, in other ports they are actually checked to prevent drug trafficking. Health and customs services work together in a single place, which counts on State investments for such purpose. The objective is to shorten procedure times and make processes more efficient.
 41. Pedro Pablo Solis, Manager of Port Corinto, Nicaragua's largest port on the Pacific coast, asked César Talledo, of Peru, how the country made possible the implementation of the Single Window, and which the legal reference framework was for all the parties involved to make use of the Single Window.
 42. Talledo replied that legal aspects were not easy to solve. The only way to do it was to resort to sustainable legal support at the highest level. Initially, the process was carried out on a voluntary basis, without including the private sector. However, the most difficult barrier was the governmental sector, and a regulation with the status of law was issued to make the use

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of the system mandatory. Actual application of the regulation took four years. The legal framework should be structured with all sectors; in Peru it was done in synchronization with all the sectors involved: health, economy and customs, among others.

43. Raúl Cueto, Delegate of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, made two specific questions. The first one was: How has it been possible to identify synergies for collaboration among international organizations to promote best practices in ports? And the second one was: How, from an integral vision, has it been possible to work with the resistance of authorities to implement best practices? For example, he said, in Mexico there is a lot of resistance because of the interests of the private sector, so it is necessary to seek mechanisms to overcome such resistance.
44. In his reply, Octavio Doerr, of ECLAC, said the Network Project makes available the ability to disseminate and promote the initiative, thus contributing synergies to the region. With respect to the second question made by the representative of Mexico, Doerr pointed out that in several countries there is already a State policy aimed at improving competitiveness in the countries. The key is that this initiative must count on political will at the highest possible level. Finally, he said that there should be a consensus with the private sector, a vision of objectives aligned with the goals of the country. But in order to achieve this, the State must comply with its responsibility and the private sector should be in agreement and collaborate; otherwise, any partnership is doomed to fail. Public-private consensus is the only way to achieve the goal to make processes more efficient, reduce costs and thus make the necessary progress.
45. Jorge Durán, from the OAS, said that the experiences can be adapted to the needs, even though they may not be duplicated because of the differences existing between the ports. One major task – and the first step – is to raise awareness among stakeholders. The second task is to reach a political commitment on a country project. This requires a political champion who convenes all sectors, through technical assistance from the UN, ECLAC, IMO, OAS and SELA, by requesting assistance and creating a debate and dialogue at the political and technical levels. To do so, the countries could start by taking bilateral actions; for example, undertaking a project on port statistics to know the situation of ports. That information would be available to everyone on the Internet. In addition, the OAS also offers courses on the matter.
46. Julián Abril, from the IMO, said that resistance is a common problem among countries. It is essential to integrate the public and private sectors, but that is a decision of the countries, and political support is also necessary. It is not an easy task, but the IOM offers assistance to those countries that may so require.
47. At the end of the session, Carlos Vera made two final considerations. First of all, he said that the Single Window is not the only goal, but it is also necessary to optimize the information highway in order to reduce tensions among the sectors, so that each one can check what it needs. Optimizing the highway means ensuring compatibility between customs and ports, respecting the protocols, and eliminating unnecessary documents, duplications and procedures. Secondly, the port authority is the most important actor and it is the first link which must decide which direction it wants to take.

SESSION III: Areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean. The session was moderated by Mr Luis Ascencio, Consultant of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), who upon introducing the speakers planned for the working session gave them the floor. This session included international cooperation authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean and national port authorities attending the event.

48. Ship Captain José Alejandro Liriano Rodríguez, from Dominican Republic, made a presentation entitled: "Facilitation, protection and safety of commercial shipping." He noted that maritime transport in international trade is the backbone of the global economy, generates jobs and is critical to the globalized economy of modern societies in relation to transport costs. Captain Liriano made a brief description of the common points among foreign trade single windows (VUCE), which concentrates management of authorizations and certifications required by regulations; the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), which urges contracting governments to delegate to a Regional Port Office (OPR) the Port Facility Security Plan; and the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL 65), for which he recommended to create the National FAL Committees.
49. Raul Cueto, representative of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, made a presentation entitled: "Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Mexican ports." He pointed out that the national port system has 117 authorized ports and terminals. In 2014, the system moved more than 286 million tons of cargo. According to the index of the Global Competitiveness Report 2014, the Mexican port infrastructure ranks 62 in a list of 144 countries. Cueto said Mexican ports take advantage of ICTs in two ways: as a tool for streamlining operational and administrative procedures of the port and as an instrument for reducing times within the supply chain and making port services more efficient. Finally, he mentioned some port collaboration opportunities, such as: exchange of experiences regarding the use of ICTs in ports; analysis of the possibilities of sharing and creating ICT platforms and systems; and the use of ICTs to foster collaboration among Latin American ports for the benefit of the region.
50. Larry Casadiego, Coordinator of Port Development of the People's Ministry of Maritime and Air Transport of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, made a presentation entitled: "Areas for cooperation in the ports sector in Venezuela," in which he highlighted the port structure of his country. He stressed the importance of national ports and international cooperation with countries like China, Portugal and Russia, as well as organizations such as ALBA, MERCOSUR, CELAC, UNASUR, CARICOM, PETROCARIBE and SELA. As regards areas for cooperation, Casadiego stressed the need to look for agreements and partnerships to develop processes, adopt new technologies, review legal issues, and obtain the financial and logistical support needed to improve the port infrastructure. Finally, actions taken at this time by Venezuela are aimed at improving the National Committee for Simplification of Procedures, the FAL65 Coordination Committee, a national port development plan for 2019 and the automation of processes through new technologies.
51. The moderator of this Session thanked the speakers for their presentations and invited delegates and participants to comment on them.
52. Carlos Martner, of the Mexican Institute of Transport, made some comments about the presentation made by Raúl Cueto, indicating that the issue of ports is still at a very low level. According to the index of the World Economic Forum on port infrastructure, Mexico ranks

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62. However, Martner said the methodology used with these indices is a matter of perception. Then, he cited some cases of Mexican ports, such as the port of Lázaro Cárdenas, as an example of great infrastructure; the port of Veracruz and the port of Altamira, which replaced Tampico.

53. Raúl Cueto, of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, made some remarks about the document prepared by SELA, which offers a favourable review of his country. The government of Peña Nieto has done a great job in the field of ports. He stressed the need to work together on standardization processes.
54. Ana María Méndez Chicas, Deputy Secretary of International Cooperation of the Secretariat for Planning and Programming of the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala, commented on the common challenges and needs of countries and how the joint effort can promote financial and technical assistance in the matter. She also noted that very valuable contributions have been made, and this is the value added. In the case of Guatemala, the challenges are common, including the reform of the port sector and accesses, times, the single windows. She returns to her country with the expectation of forwarding all these concerns and suggestions of experts to the authorities.
55. Luis Ascencio, moderator of this session, stressed the need to materialize the Cooperation Network, so that it deals with the port dynamics. He also noted, as a preliminary conclusion, the bottlenecks that arise in the land area of countries, instead of the sea, and suggested that they can be removed through mechanisms for international cooperation.
56. Vanroy Hodge, of the Anguilla Air and Sea Port Authority and representative of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), said that the Eastern Caribbean has potential for the transshipment of vessels due to the geographic location of the islands, which allows interception of large commercial routes from southern Europe to Central America and regions of the United States and South America. However, he asked whether the use of these islands as transshipment ports had ever been considered, given their potential to increase the shipping industry and port development of Latin America and the Caribbean.
57. Mr Raúl Cueto explained that the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has several projects under review for a better interconnection of ports in the region. Thus, Mexico faces the challenge of encouraging this interconnection, which certainly covers the entire Caribbean basin, by strengthening the dialogue it has held with CARICOM in the field of ports. He also emphasized that Mexico is willing to share its experience with the region, the logistical and ICT issues, which I was commissioned to develop. Everything is in the presentation I made in this session, which is a modest contribution.
58. Jorge Durán, of the OAS, referred to the role of the OECS in negotiations with the shipping companies. He explained that Jamaica, for example, is positioned as a regional centre for the investment made by China. Thus, he said the OECS should organize itself and approach investors to expand its capacity, and observe what other countries in the region do and adapt these experiences.
59. Saúl Tejada, of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, noted that one of the main elements of concern are the training spaces to move beyond the political wills. Training activities play an important role, but the will of

cooperation of organizations such as the OAS, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, ECLAC and SELA are of the utmost importance. It would be advisable that, as a result of this meeting, training spaces are developed to make the acquired information available to governments and speak the same language in the field of ports.

SESSION III: Continuation: Areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean. The session was moderated by Joaquín Alberto Ramírez, Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECOOM) of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, who introduced the scheduled presentations and gave the floor to the speakers.

60. Kenneth Atherley, Divisional Manager of Corporate Development and Strategy of Barbados Port Inc., made a presentation entitled: "Cooperation in Ports: Examples from Barbados and the Region." He stressed that his country has made considerable progress towards the establishment of an ESW³ system. At present, consultants are on board to guide the process, and customs system has upgraded to the software *Asyscuda World* in advance to the system. The design of the architecture and the installation of systems at stakeholders have still to be finalized. In addition, the potential for establishment of the ESW at the regional level should be explored. He also pointed out that international agencies and stakeholders should continue to work together to achieve efficiency in ports. The establishment of a Regional Logistics Committee for Cooperation has been proposed in the Caribbean, and ports should include cooperative strategies within business and strategic plans.
61. Francisco René Ramos, Coordinator of Investment and International Cooperation of the Autonomous Executive Port Commission (CEPA) of El Salvador, made a presentation on the areas for cooperation of CEPA and the relations it has established with different agencies in this area. First, he noted the best experiences with potential to be shared in the following topics: policies and legislation (the cases of Peru and Mexico are worth mentioning in this area), governance methodologies (Colombia). In addition, CEPA is preparing to have an active participation in Central America's Short Distance Maritime Transport (TMCD, Spanish acronym) project. Mr Ramos added that CEPA values ECLAC and SELA as instruments of support so that all levels of government become aware and take action in the context of facilitation of policies and institutional frameworks that promote the efficiency of the logistics chain and thus the proper inclusion of the region in intra-regional and global trade. ECLAC and SELA are excellent partners to seek cooperation with other regions. Finally, he referred to bilateral North-South cooperation; reimbursable financial cooperation; development cooperation; multilateral cooperation; and access to the Green Climate Fund.
62. Ximena Salvador Medina, Director of Ports of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MTO) of Ecuador, made a presentation on "Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Situation and prospect of digital ports in Ecuador," which makes a review of port institutions in Ecuador. In 2007, the MTO was created, and in June 2008, competences, responsibilities and powers are assigned to the new agencies created to perform the duties of the maritime authority and the national port authority. Ecuador has 4 commercial ports (Esmeraldas, Manta, Guayaquil, and Puerto Bolívar), 3 oil terminals (additional function of maritime police), 23 terminal ports (private ports), and 4 artisanal fishing ports built and 4 at the study stage. Among the areas for cooperation, the National Port Authority of Ecuador stressed the need to include the following topics: technological systems used in the sector,

³ Environmental Systems Workplace (ESW).

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interaction of the different authorities that converge in ports (overlapping of powers) and new regulations. In addition, the single window was created on 31 March 2010 by policy of Foreign Trade and National Strategy for Administrative Simplification. The portal on Foreign Trade and Single Window offers a service through which operating procedures can be carried out at anytime, anywhere and from any device. Finally, she noted actions taken recently by the port authority, which correspond to the creation of the Logistics Under-Secretariat at the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, the automation of processes and the implementation of technology that can be shared by the actors in the sector.

63. The moderator thanked the speakers for their presentations and invited delegates and participants to comment on them.
64. Jorge Durán, Chief of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the OAS, noted that all speakers throughout the meeting had stressed the importance of the participation of the private sector in this matter. In addition, he left open the possibility of collaborating with the training activities. Finally, he said there are some defined steps that should be materialized towards the creation of the Network, pointing out that many participants have good practices to share.
65. Raúl Cueto, Counsellor of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, was glad to share his country's experiences with the entire region. The logistical and ICT issues were developed in the presentation, which he considered a modest contribution to the matter. He expects to work closely with CARICOM and El Salvador on the issue of short-distance transport.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This session was moderated by Luis Ascencio García, SELA's Consultant. After thanking for the presentations delivered by all the speakers and the remarks made by the participants, Ascencio presented the main views of participants as general conclusions and recommendations, based on the debates of the two-day event, which are summarized as follows:

Conclusions:

1. The port system in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), particularly that associated with container traffic, consists of a total of 57 major facilities where four large blocs can be clearly distinguished: Mexico, Central America, Caribbean and South America; on two coasts: Atlantic and Pacific. In 2013, the total movement of containers in ports around the world, measured in TEUS, reached 46 million TEUs (ECLAC 2014), and the throughput of containers in LAC ports accounted for 7.1% of that total. During the period 1997-2013, the region experienced a growth of 253%, confirming the increasing importance of this industry for the interests of the region's foreign trade.
2. Interestingly, the regions that have developed better value chains within their geographical scope have the highest percentages of intra-regional trade. According to a publication by ECLAC in 2014, the share of intra-group exports in total exports for selected groups during the period 2008-2013 was as follows:
 - European Union: 63.4%
 - North American Free Trade Agreement: 48.5%
 - Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)+5: 49.1%

LAC as a whole is still far away from the figures of other consolidated global blocs, yielding a regional average of 19.7% by the year 2013. This figure is strongly influenced by the low share of exports from Mexico to the rest of the region, as the Mexican productive structure is much more connected to the North American Free Trade Agreement, and shows figures between 7% and 8%. A closer look at the regional sub-blocs reveals that Central America and South America have very similar numbers, around 35% and 36% out of the total exports, which indicates that there is an important basis for strengthening value chains operating in such geographical territories. The Caribbean as a region keeps an even lower trade exchange, due in part to the fragmentation of the territory into islands and their poor maritime connectivity, which otherwise would allow for reducing transport costs.

3. Logistics costs are an unresolved issue regarding foreign trade in Latin America and the Caribbean, as they are still very significant and reduce competitiveness of the region's export sector. According to the "Doing Business 2015" report of the World Bank, while the direct cost of exporting a 20-foot container can be classified as competitive with respect to the rest of the world's economies, there are some aspects – such as the number of documents, time frames for transactions and the additional costs arising from inefficiencies in land interfaces at ports – that make this indicator be higher than those registered for other developing regions, and affect the total logistic cost of foreign trade.
4. As part of the challenges of port cooperation, countries should promote a comprehensive internal review of their public policies and relationships between the public and private sectors, which allows the various national authorities in charge of sea and land transport, as well as customs and customs-related services, to search for **collaboration mechanisms** to harmonize views on trade and transport facilitation at the local level (port logistics communities located on coastal territories) and national level (Strategic Plans for Logistics Development). At the external level, it is important to coordinate institutionally the technical support for conducting these internal review processes by resorting to international technical cooperation, whether of a sectoral type (IMO, CIP, WCO, COCATRAM, or others) or of a cross-cutting type (SELA-FTSW, SELA-Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, Network of Caribbean Ports, ECLAC and UNCTAD-Trade Facilitation, or others).
5. The Program Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, which is being conducted through cooperation agreement between SELA and CAF, focuses on identifying and promoting the best collaborative practices, characterized by the use of new institutional mechanisms, ICTs for electronic exchange of data, efficient logistic processes and implementation of new and improved standards of cargo and transport services. In this connection, the Program highlights the need to manage the different **links of the port logistics chain**, where integration and interoperability between platforms such as the Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW) and the Port Single Windows (PSW) are fundamental elements.
6. Port systems in Latin America and the Caribbean have structural problems and competitive costs, and the solution to such problems involves making emphasis on the optimization of the institutional support and the technology support of new and better logistic and foreign trade services.
7. Modern ports are part of a national and international transport system which permanently requires support and technical cooperation. To date, there is a wide range of sectoral supports, but international cross-cutting technical cooperation is still fledgling. Such cooperation has begun to gain importance because, at present, ports have a more logistic operation, and therefore require new mechanisms that allow for making progress in

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strengthening their public-private governance, their focus on service levels, their operational integration, while expanding and improving community information technologies. This requires understanding the relationship between ports and innovation, and between ports and port logistic chains.

8. The elements that describe the importance of the regional port systems are: i) their relevance in the territorial development of nations, in continental countries with coast, in land-locked continental countries (international traffic), in island countries, and finally the increasing importance of inter-oceanic crosses and canals; (ii) the importance of the ports for trade facilitation and the increase in intra-regional trade; (iii) in general, there are still bottlenecks in the land interface related to port systems, which affect the total logistics cost; (iv) the public services and governments should give more space and importance to port logistic systems, since a higher level of both public and private investment deserves a new look from the State; (v) the increasing political importance of macro indicators of logistics, competitiveness and foreign trade, such as the Logistics Performance Index (LPI) and Doing Business.
9. In general, the countries' global objectives for their ports and associated logistics are related with reducing the total logistics costs of goods for import, export and international transit; inducing an increase in intra-regional trade in LAC; applying new models of collaborative governance for the continuous improvement of port systems; and finally, coordinating efforts to make progress as regards port cooperation in a systematic and sustainable manner.
10. **Towards the construction of digital ports, linking technological and management projects of FTSW and PSW.** The Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW) were constituted in Latin America and the Caribbean with the purpose of facilitating foreign trade (importers and exporters), not specifically maritime transport, ports and road transport associated with foreign trade. In a second phase, the national FTSW programs are advancing with aspects related to transport, but they have encountered weak counterparts in port systems (FTSW-logistics component). On the other hand, the FTSW do not include transport elements related to foreign trade. Finally, Port Single Windows (PSW), Port Community Systems (PCS) and other Interoperable Logistics Systems have started to emerge in various ports of the region (Chile and Mexico, for instance) without national strategic safeguards and, in some cases, even without the full support of port communities. These processes deserve to be supported from the central level, both in their conceptualization and feasibility stage and in their operation and continuous improvement.

Recommendations:

1. **The global challenges of cooperation to materialize digital ports and strengthen foreign trade.** Each National Authority related to transport, ports, customs and logistics in each country should be inserted into sectoral cooperation networks, and when necessary, into transversal cooperation. These sectoral cooperation organizations have all the permanent technical competences that allow for a long-term relationship. For example, port systems need to interoperate with a FOREIGN TRADE AND TRANSPORT SINGLE WINDOW, with governance of public services and logistics guidance. Transversal cooperation is the most appropriate mechanism to support such public policy initiatives, although it is also possible to move forward with sectoral cooperation. Logistic port communities, of a public-private nature, sponsored by national authorities, must rely on a mix of transversal and sectoral cooperation.

2. **Roadmap for International Cooperation Directors and relationship with digital ports.** Internally disseminate the need to start a transversal dialogue about the importance of foreign trade logistics, particularly in ports, in view of the meagre results of LAC in a series of global indicators such as LPI and Doing Business. Ports provide a good example of how to understand these new realities and to overcome the barriers to foreign trade. 2.- Explore the status of progress of the international and subregional technical cooperation in each national authority related to the port logistics chain. Reaffirm with each authority the need to continue to actively link with these sectoral cooperation agencies. 3.- Incorporate the country and its institutions in cross-cutting technical cooperation networks: committees on trade and transport facilitation; port logistics communities; coordination of public services related to foreign trade. 4.- If these internal instances do not exist, a suggestion is made to create them soon, providing them with minimum regulations, and then inserting them into international cooperation networks.
3. **Roadmap for regional, subregional and international technical cooperation agencies.** In general, these agencies are requested to further develop their initiatives in partnership with governments and national authorities related to foreign trade and logistics, with emphasis on the dissemination of international standards that will allow for the inclusion of Latin American and Caribbean economies in these global practices. Particularly, there are competences that should be shared with the new transversal technical cooperation agencies, which need support networks in order to improve their offer of support and collaboration.
4. **Roadmap for the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports in Latin America and the Caribbean as a new space for transversal technical cooperation.** 1.- The Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports emerges as a REGIONAL FORUM for port logistic communities and innovation centres linked to ports and intermodal transport. 2.- This network must be transformed into a transversal cooperation mechanism, with the support of sectoral cooperation organizations such as ECLAC, IMO, WCO, CIP, COCATRAM and financial banks, thus allowing for the implementation of collaborative projects at national and regional levels. 3.- This network will make contact with the Caribbean Port Integration Network in order to coordinate joint actions. 4.- The focus of attention will be local and national port communities, with a public-private orientation. 5. The work will start with the first nine (9) countries and their port communities (15 ports), and a group of observer countries.
5. Finally, **in order to strengthen the competitiveness of any Port Logistic Chain (PLC) of Latin America and the Caribbean**, the Program Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports promotes four pillars of work: i) Operational integration of the port logistic chain (advance processing of customs and customs-related services; synchronization of transport (Ship-Container-Truck-Railway); and logistics management of inspection and control systems; ii) Governance and institutional framework for logistics facilitation at the local level (port community), the subregional level (logistic corridors), and the national level (logistic councils); iii) Assurance of quality, safety and efficiency in logistic port services: guarantee of service in the port logistics chain; compensation rules; and KPIs in interface operations (time, cost and CO2) operations; and (iv) Electronic data exchange and interoperability: Port Single Window (PSW); digital coordination services, and interoperability between FTSW and PSW.
6. The cooperation authorities agreed to thank the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77 for the support it has provided to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Member States in the region in financing the meetings of International Cooperation Directors, and urged it to continue with such technical and financial support to future regional meetings of Directors dealing with high-priority issues for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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The International Cooperation Directors of the Member States of SELA, as well as the representatives from regional and international organizations and other participants thanked the Government of Dominican Republic, and especially the General Direction of Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECOOM) of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, for hosting this important event and for their hospitality during the event. They also thanked the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77 and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) for organizing and providing their technical and financial support to carry out this XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean.

III. CLOSING SESSION

After the presentation of the conclusions and recommendations, representatives of the international organizations OAS, IMO and ECLAC appreciated the intervention by Luis Ascencio and expressed their willingness to continue to collaborate. They also offered technical assistance and best practices regarding their experiences, and stressed the need to make this integration among all stakeholders a reality.

In the closing session of this "XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. Port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports: Status and prospects," Román Mayorga, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), took the floor on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of SELA, Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, and forwarded his fraternal and heart-felt greetings to all participants in this important event. Mayorga said the meeting had been a success due to the quality of presentations and information for the promotion of what can be done in public policies and international cooperation. He thanked the Government of Dominican Republic for its enthusiastic participation and the speakers for their excellent presentations, the high level of discussions, and the harmony and willingness of all participants to collaborate. He added that the organization of the event was flawless and recognized the incredible friendliness and cordiality of Dominicans, which was evident in the behaviour of the local counterpart staff. He also referred to SELA as a port of all countries, pointing to its foundations, objectives and activities. He also highlighted the collection of information that SELA offers through its portal. He pointed out that there will be a specialized portal on VUCE and a sub-portal on the network of ports. He referred to other issues of importance to the region that are being addressed within the framework of SELA. Finally, Mayorga referred to the issue of innovation and its importance for the development of the region. Technological change is an essential variable in innovation and is related to the productivity and growth of countries. In this connection, there have been discussions on the advisability for the next Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for LAC to focus on this matter. Participants would deal with public policies for the strengthening of innovation systems and environments among countries. The venue for the XXVII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for LAC will be decided later on in this event.

Afterwards, José Checo Frómeta, Director of Planning of the Directorate-General for Multilateral Cooperation and National Authorizing Officer of European Development Funds of the Dominican Republic, expressed his satisfaction and gratitude to SELA for the success achieved in organizing and carrying out this important event. He added that the topic of this seminar was addressed at the highest level, considering the quality of presentations and debates among participants, who shared enriching experiences from the countries they represented. Convinced that they have felt at home since this country is their second homeland, he expressed his deepest gratitude to all of them.

Finally, Inocencio García, Vice-Minister of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, greeted Román Mayorga and expressed the appreciation of the Dominican Government to regional institutions, governments and multilateral organizations that have organized this significant event together with SELA. He also noted that the Minister of Economy of his country, Juan Temístocles Montás, in recognizing the importance of this sector for the Dominican Republic, is interested in organizing a Seminar to gain knowledge about some Latin American experiences related to the development of his country. He suggested that SELA strengthens articulation with national authorities in the field of international cooperation. As a great contribution of this event, a connection could be established between the regional and the multilateral and bilateral levels, such as Mexico's proposal based on the capacity it has developed and the experience of the Valparaiso Port Authority. Our countries are bilaterally connected for better articulation in the field of cooperation. Finally, he wished all participants in this important meeting a happy return to their respective countries.

A N N E X I

AGENDA

**XXVI MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DIRECTORS
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**“PORT COOPERATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
DIGITAL PORTS: STATUS AND PROSPECTS”**

VENUE: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

DATE: 23 and 24 April 2015

Objectives:

The objectives of this regional meeting are as follows: i) Submit an assessment of the status of port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly on the initiatives in the area of digital ports; ii) Identify and list major successful experiences and best practices on port cooperation and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean; and iii) Identify areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports among the countries of the region and with other regions, particularly Asia and Europe.

Thursday, 23 April 2015

Morning

8:30 – 9:00

REGISTRATION

9:00 – 9:40

OPENING SESSION

- Speech by Román Mayorga, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)
- Welcome speech sent by the Chair of the Group of 77, Ambassador Kingsley J. N. Mamabolo
- Speech by Juan Temístocles Montás, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic

9:40 – 10:00

COFFEE BREAK AND AUTHORITIES ATTENDING THE OPENING SESSION BID FAREWELL

10:00 – 10:45

INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Moderator: Fernando Guglielmelli, Analyst of Relations of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

- Programme to create the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Strengthening logistic port communities, service standards and technological innovation for a globalized, logistically competitive and sustainable international trade. Presentation by Luis Ascencio, SELA’s Consultant.

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10:45 – 11:00

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

11:00 – 12:30

SESSION I: *Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital Ports. Initiatives promoted by Regional and International Organizations.* –**Moderator:** América Bastidas Castañeda, Advisor on Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic

- Jorge Durán, Chief of the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Ports of the Organization of American States (OAS)
- Octavio Doerr, Specialist in Ports of the Infrastructure Services Unit; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Otto Guillermo Noack, Executive Director of the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM)
- Julián Abril García, Secretary of the Facilitation Committee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)

12:30-1:00

DEBATE

1:00 – 2:30

LUNCH AT THE HOTEL'S RESTAURANTS**Afternoon**

2:30 – 4:00

SESSION II: *Port Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital Ports: Status and Prospects. National Prospects and Experiences – Port Community System or Port Single Window.* –**Moderator:** Héctor Vinicio Mella G., Vice-Minister of Industrial Development, Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Dominican Republic

- Héctor Tamburini, Senior Commercial Manager at DP World Caucedo of the Dominican Republic
- Luis Irene Rodríguez Hernández, Director of Transport and Insurance of the MINCEX of Cuba.
- Carlos Vera, Logistic Manager of the Valparaiso Port, Chile
- Guimara Tuñón Guerra, Deputy Director of Auxiliary Maritime Industries of Panama
- César Enrique Talledo León, Head of the Information Technology Office of Peru's National Port Authority
- Carlos Martner Peyrelonge, Coordinator of Transport Integration, Mexican Institute of Transport

4:00 – 4:15

COFFEE BREAK

4:15 – 5:30

DEBATE

6:30

DOMINICAN-STYLE WELCOME PARTY – Offered by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic (MEPYD) and the Director-General for Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECOOM)
Venue: Ágora Restaurant, Hotel Meliá Caribe Tropical

Friday, 24 April 2015**Morning**

- 9:00 – 11:00 **SESSION III: *Areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean.*** - **Moderator:** Luis Ascencio, Consultant of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)
- Panel with the participation of the International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean and the National Port Authorities
- José Alejandro Liriano, Ship Captain, Navy of the Dominican Republic
 - Raúl Cueto, Counsellor of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico
 - Larry Casadiego, Coordinator of Port Development of the People's Ministry of Maritime and Air Transport of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
- 11:00 - 11:15 **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11:15 – 12:00 **DEBATE**
- 12:00 - 2:00 **LUNCH AT THE HOTEL'S RESTAURANTS**

Afternoon

- 2:00 – 3:30 **SESSION III: *Continuation: Areas for cooperation in the field of ports and digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean.*** - **Moderator:** Joaquín Alberto Ramírez, Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECCOM) of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic
- Kenneth Atherley, Divisional Manager, Corporate Development and Strategy of Barbados Port Inc.
 - Francisco René Ramos, Coordinator of Investment and International Cooperation, Autonomous Executive Port Commission of El Salvador
 - Ximena Salvador Medina, Director of Ports of the Under-Secretariat of Ports, Ministry of Transport and Public Works of Ecuador
- 3:30 – 4:00 **DEBATE**
- 4:00 – 4:15 **COFFEE BREAK**
- 4:15 – 5:15 **SESSION IV: *CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.*** – **Moderator:** Luis Ascencio, Consultant of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

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5:15

SESSION V: *Venue and date for the XXVII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean.* - **Moderator:** Román Mayorga, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

5:30

CLOSING SESSION

- Speech by Román Mayorga, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)
- Speech by José Checo Frómeta, Director of Planning of the Directorate-General for Multilateral Cooperation and National Authorizing Officer of European Development Funds of the Dominican Republic (DIGECOOM)
- Speech by Inocencio García Javier, Vice-Minister of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic

A N N E X I I

SPEECH BY ROMAN MAYORGA, DIRECTOR OF RELATIONS FOR INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA), ON BEHALF OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE ORGANIZATION, AMBASSADOR ROBERTO GUARNIERI, AT THE OPENING SESSION

Your Excellency, Mr Juan Temístocles Montás, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic;

Honourable Mr Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77;

National Directors for International Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Ambassadors and Representatives of the Member States of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Honourable Representatives of regional and international organizations;

Ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, I am pleased to warmly welcome you to this "XXVI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean," whose central topic is "Port cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Digital ports. Status and prospects."

This Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean has been organized with the co-sponsorship of the Government of the Dominican Republic, through the Directorate General for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, as well as the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77.

Thus, we reiterate our most sincere appreciation to the co-sponsors and especially the Government of the Dominican Republic for hosting us in Punta Cana, a beautiful place with wonderful beaches, great wealth of flora and fauna, and other natural beauties.

As a traditional part of SELA's work, these Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean have been held on a regular basis since 1987. Every time this event takes place, a matter of common interest for all countries in the region is addressed with the aim of promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices on the subject matter.

We welcome the Dominican Republic's initiative to propose the topic "Cooperation in the field of digital ports in Latin America and the Caribbean," whose importance lies in the fact that the new phase of modernization of Latin American and Caribbean ports, with increased incorporation of digital technologies, may lead to new service standards in sea and land transport, a reduction in costs and an increase in our competitiveness in international trade.

European and Asian experiences, among others, suggest that ports and port areas should become true critical links in global supply chains, where elements such as port single windows, interacting with foreign trade single windows, should be new drivers of competitiveness for a globalized foreign trade. According to international studies, it is estimated that for a day of savings in procedures of the export process, foreign trade could increase from 0.5% to 3% annually, depending on the country and region concerned. Countries such as China, India and Singapore are very active in the generation and implementation of national policies on technological innovation of ports, leading to the development of new business operating models to significantly improve their practices in this matter.

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In line with these international trends, SELA has organized this meeting, aimed at deepening the themes of technological modernization of ports, creation of efficient logistic-port communities and other issues related to international trade, with the aim of building intra-regional dialogue and promoting concerted action, such as the design of proposals for international cooperation in such areas.

To that end, we prepared an agenda that we have updated and shared with you through the minisite created on SELA's portal for this regional meeting and that has been in operation for several weeks.

In this agenda, we tried to include the views of port authorities in the region and regional and international bodies specialized in the subject matter. In addition, we incorporated some experiences of best practices for the technological optimization of ports and other aspects that facilitate trade and impact competitiveness in global value chains. For this purpose, the Permanent Secretariat entrusted Mr Luis Ascencio with the task of preparing a study on this topic, which will be presented by its author as a contribution to the discussions that will take place at this meeting.

In addition, this will be an excellent opportunity to bring to the attention of the international cooperation directors for Latin America and the Caribbean the achievements and results of the Programme for the Creation of the "Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Strengthening logistic port communities, service standards and technological innovation for a globalized, logistically competitive and sustainable trade", started by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in 2014, together with CAF-development bank of Latin America. We would like to express our gratitude to CAF for its valuable technical and financial support to this programme.

The Latin American experience as regards institutional improvement, business processes and technological innovation in ports is diverse and very uneven, as reflected in the poor performance of our region in indicators such as the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), of the *Doing Business Report* of the World Bank, and other indexes that measure transport and technological innovation variables.

We hope that the development of the agenda on these two sessions that we started today will provide as much information as possible to our national focal points in charge of cooperation, so that they can return to their capitals with better possibilities of promoting cooperation actions and public policies in this area.

I would like to briefly refer to the upcoming meetings of this forum of International Cooperation Directors in our region. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA would like to receive suggestions from the directors as regards the topics that they consider to be useful and important to discuss in the future. At the meeting for next year, 2016, we have thought to deal with the area of productive and industrial development in the region, as well as the issue of science, technology and innovation, which, as it is well known, is of crucial importance for the productivity and competitiveness of the productive apparatus of all countries and for the proper performance of practically all fields of development. In this technological age we live in, there are increasing opportunities for support and financial and technical cooperation in this field, from both bilateral and multilateral international cooperation agencies. We would be very interested in knowing the opinion of the directors about the desirability and the way to deal with these issues, which in our opinion should focus on how to ensure the existence and effective operation of strong innovation systems at the national, regional and subregional levels.

For the purpose of acquiring and maintaining technological capacity, any country now needs to have an institutional system that includes the universities, research and development centres (R&D), companies, information and extension agencies, financial entities with standards and quality controls, consulting firms, technical service laboratories, government agencies in charge of regulation, and other institutions that interact in a wide series of activities, ranging from the conception of an idea to its widespread use in society. If such a system does not exist or is too weak, the country is not able to select, absorb and properly handle foreign technology, and much less make efforts to adapt to technology or generate technology of its own. The weakness of those entities and their interactions – in what has been called the *national innovation system* – largely explains why the Latin American and Caribbean region has not reached a sufficient degree of endogenization of technological change yet.

To wind up my speech, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to collaborating institutions sponsoring this activity, as well as the rapporteurs and all of you, friends and participants, who have responded enthusiastically to this invitation. This will ensure that both the presentations and the discussions that may arise during these days will not only enrich the knowledge on the topic of the event, but will also increase the prospects for a growing interest and support from the countries of the region in promoting port integration and intra-regional trade. I am pleased to participate in this meeting and warmly welcome you all on behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

Thank you very much.

A N N E X I I I

**WELCOME SPEECH SENT BY KINGSLEY J. N. MAMABOLO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77**

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen:

In my capacity as Chair of the Group of 77, I would like to thank you for consistently inviting the G-77 Chair to your annual meeting which has been over the years supported by the Group of 77 through the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation. The Fund has always provided assistance to projects organized by SELA including six meetings of international cooperation directors of Latin America and the Caribbean. I would like to take this opportunity to share a few remarks on South-South Cooperation and in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The Group has reaffirmed the importance information and communication technology as a vehicle to contribute to both economic and social development. In the world of today, information and communication technologies are, indeed, essential to developing countries' participation in the global economy and for helping to harness the benefits of globalization. They hold tremendous potential not only for eradication of poverty and promotion of socio-economic development, but also for bridging the ever widening technological divide between developing and developed countries.

The Group of 77 has always stressed that a development-oriented information society is in the best interest of humanity. ICTs have proven instrumental to the socio-economic progress achieved by many countries, in both the developed and developing world. It is vital, however, to promote transfer of such technologies to developing countries in order to enable dissemination of such technologies within developing countries.

Considering the growing importance of South-South trade and the maritime transportation in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the need for significant investments to improve their infrastructure, digital cooperation and the sharing of experiences will enhance development in that region and accelerate their integration in the world economy. These experiences from Latin America and the Caribbean will prove to be important for other regions also.

In fact, regional cooperation provides the most meaningful approach and effective conduit for the South to face the challenges of globalization and take advantage of its opportunities. We are all aware that capabilities and capacities to expand substantially exchanges of experiences and good practices, sharing technical resources and information, joint activities in research and development are constrained by lack of resources.

In this context, we call on the international community to provide much needed resources and partnerships to increase solutions to critical social and economic needs for the populations of the South. Special efforts should be made to build infrastructures and provide resources for capacity building to address these issues. Therefore, we encourage the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen their capacity building strategies in order to enhance economic, human and technological capabilities so as to contribute to overcome these great challenges and improve the living conditions of their populations.

In conclusion, let me underline that more concrete action and initiatives are needed in order to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation, consolidate and implement existing programs

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and plans of action. There is an urgent need to implement concerted policies, in a mutually supportive manner in order to ensure making concrete progress toward the realization of the established millennium development goals and targets which will be integrated into the new framework of sustainable development goals as the foundation of the new UN post-2015 development agenda to be formally adopted in September.

I wish all success to your deliberations.

Thank you.

A N N E X I V

**SPEECH BY TEMISTOCLES MONTÁS, MINISTER OF ECONOMY, PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Distinguished members of the head table;

Mr Román Mayorga, Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of SELA;

Mr Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77;

Distinguished representatives of SELA;

Distinguished representatives of the Member States of SELA;

Distinguished representatives of the national institutions participating in this event;

Distinguished officials of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development that have served as facilitator of this meeting;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Let me welcome all of you to this meeting. To all officials and delegates who have come to the Dominican Republic to participate in this activity, I wish to say the following: Enjoy the place, enjoy the environment and make the most of the sessions.

Until recent years, the Dominican Republic strived to promote a process that involved analysis, reflections, consultations and dialogues on the relevant issues of economic and social development. This process resulted in the formulation and passage into law of the National Development Strategy 2030.

From this perspective, the national commitment to sustainable development was established. Specifically, we were committed to *'a balanced, cohesive economic development. A productive development with innovation and quality, which is environmentally harmonious, generates employment and reduces poverty. A development based on getting the best out of market opportunities for a competitive insertion in the global economy.'*

One of the most pondered issues in this process, with a focus on the competitive economic development, was logistics development and trade facilitation as a vector of economic development. The premise has been the following: we want to be a developed, prosperous country. To achieve this, it is necessary to be successful in trade, because there is no development without trade. Thus, trade should be facilitated.

The point is that the development we look for should be obtained in a globalized and complex context, in which the major economies of the world are increasingly interconnected. Therefore, logistics development and trade facilitation are determining competitive factors.

What does it mean to facilitate trade? It means encouraging, with the appropriate logistical means, the processes of flow and storage of raw materials and components, stocks of goods under processing and finished products, ensuring that they are available in required quantity and quality, at the right place and at the right time.

The corollary is as follows: without a good supply of logistical facilities; without a logistics environment that facilitates efficient and low-cost business processes and services, steady progress towards achieving the development goals would be difficult.

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This development refers, among other components (as set forth in the strategic action lines of our National Development Strategy), to the development of “soft” components, such as administrative and customs procedures, organization and management of transport, packaging and inventory costs, tracking and tracing services and the use of ICTs throughout the process, in order to provide us with logistical facilities that promote the country’s trade competitiveness.

Of course, that competitiveness also includes the development of “hard” components. I refer to infrastructures for transport and roads, telecommunications and storage, which should enable connectivity throughout the supply chain.

The fact is that international trade increasingly takes place in an incessant dynamics of movements of goods in ports around the world. This creates compelling needs for development of these infrastructures in the countries of the region, specifically its two components I mentioned before (“hard” and “soft”), in order to promote the development we want.

The demand for flexible and efficient port services will increase in our countries. This is already requiring efforts in terms of investment and reforms to modernize port services with high impact on the use of spaces, port equipment, increased ship capacity, faster transit times, reduction in operating hours of ports and modernization of facilities for load transfer, among others.

Moreover, the new port developments should be consistent with the approach to the sustainable development goals and the Agenda Post 2015, currently in its final phase of negotiations by the international community in the context of the United Nations.

In this connection, these developments should take into account the natural environment, the care for the environment, preservation of coastal resources, compliance with safety standards, a better performance in social responsibility and the efficient use of information and communication technologies, as well as good business practices.

From this point of view, we salute the initiative of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), which, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, has promoted among its Member States this Meeting of Cooperation Directors on the topic: *“Cooperation port in Latin America and the Caribbean. Digital ports: Status and prospects”*.

This event is, in fact, a complement to the *Programme for the Creation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Strengthening logistic port communities, standards of services and technological innovation for a globalized, logistically competitive and sustainable trade*, financed by SELA and CAF-development bank of Latin America, through the Non-Refundable Technical Cooperation Agreement.

I already wished you the best of success. Take the greatest advantage from the excellent speakers that we will have. In addition to a good regional assessment, they will tell you about successful experiences and best practices, identifying those areas that may be subject to cooperation actions in the area of ports in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank you very much.

A N N E X V

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<i>SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/DI N° 1-15</i>	Speech by Román Mayorga. Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of SELA
<i>SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/DI N° 2-15</i>	Welcome speech sent by Kingsley J. N. Mamabolo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of 77
<i>SP/XXVI-RDCIALC/DI N° 3-15</i>	Speech by Temístocles Montás. Minister of Economy, Planning and Development of Dominican Republic
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