



LATIN AMERICAN
AND CARIBBEAN
ECONOMIC SYSTEM



Final Report

Intra-Regional Relations

Regional Meeting on Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence
Caracas, Venezuela
11 December 2015
SP/RRRMIS-ALC:AC/IF-15

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RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

1. The "Regional Meeting on Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" was held on 11 December 2015, and was organized by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) at its headquarters in Caracas. This event was conducted in response to the mandate of the Latin American Council issued at its XL Regular Meeting (Caracas, 26 to 28 November 2014) and reflected in "Project I.2. Considerations for deepening coordination and convergence among Latin American and Caribbean countries," included in the Permanent Secretariat's Work Programme for 2015.

2. Participants included delegates from the following SELA Member States: Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. There were also delegates from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA. The full list of participants is included in Annex IV.

3. The meeting was opened by José Carlos Herodier, Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of El Salvador in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and First Vice Chairman of the Latin American Council, who highlighted the importance of the meeting given that it was aimed at evaluating the degree of harmonization of the regulatory frameworks corresponding to the subregional integration mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the Pacific Alliance (PA). He pointed out that, in this way, SELA was starting the systematic study of the regulatory frameworks within the subregional integration mechanisms for the purpose of defining medium- and long-term strategies, following up on institutional changes, and evaluating their impact in the region. Subsequently, he submitted the Work Agenda (Annex I), which had been timely sent to the Member States, to the audience for its consideration and, since there were no objections, he declared it approved. His speech is included in Annex II.

4. José Carlos Herodier then gave the floor to Telasco Pulgar, Director (a.i.) of Relations for Integration and Cooperation at the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, who gave the most cordial welcome to the participants on behalf of Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, SELA's Permanent Secretary, and expressed his pleasure at how widely SELA's invitation had been received. In his speech, he emphasized that the very different regulatory legal frameworks in the region's integration mechanisms tended to become barriers and obstacles not only to trade and competition, but also to the movement of capital and the human factor, adversely affecting economic growth and, ultimately, social well-being in the countries involved. This fact, he added, had prompted SELA to study the harmonization of regulatory frameworks in greater depth and to move ahead towards future actions that would lead to eliminating or narrowing the existing gap between the need for coordination and the advances made in this matter, so as to achieve homogenization of the legal framework within the integration mechanisms in which the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean take part.

He made reference to the document "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" (SP/RRMRMIS-ALC: AC/DT N° 2-15), prepared by the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA with contributions by Latin American and Caribbean experts in the matter,

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commenting that it offered a clear and comprehensive overview of the advances and challenges in the dynamics that the legal framework imposes on existing subregional agreements. In this regard, he stressed the elements that stimulate or slow down the coordination and convergence of regional integration and the need for a progressive harmonization of the legal structure, taking into account some initiatives that are already under way in the region. Finally, he pointed out that the findings of the study aim to contribute to orienting decision-making in regulatory matters and to raise the debate on the problems posed by the asymmetries in the regulatory structures of the subregional integration mechanisms. His speech is included in Annex III.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEETING

SESSION I: HARMONIZATION OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION

5. This session was moderated by Telasco Pulgar, who gave an introduction to the subject and invited Virginia Cartaya, SELA's Consultant, to deliver the presentation of the study "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" (SP/RRMRMIS-ALC: AC/DT N° 2-15), prepared by the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, as the base document for the exchange of opinions and the debates on the matter and whose contents were dealt with in greater depth in the papers included in the Work Agenda.

Cartaya then gave a presentation in which she described the different aspects of the study in question and its conclusions.

6. The moderator thanked Cartaya for her presentation and then proceeded to invite the session's guest speakers to give their presentations.

The following presentations were delivered:

- a. "[Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Caribbean Community \(CARICOM\)](#)", by Ankie Scott-Joseph, Consultant to CARICOM.
- b. "[Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Pacific Alliance \(PA\)](#)", by Luz María de la Mora, Consultant to SELA.

Next, the Chairman congratulated the speakers on their presentations, gave a summary of them, and invited the audience to express their impressions and voice their concerns with regard to the proposals made by the speakers.

7. There was then a debate during which the following aspects were addressed, among others:

- a. Taking the presentation by Luz María de la Mora as the starting point, Virginia Cartaya stressed that Chile, as the country with the highest percentage of foreign direct investment (FDI) receipts, also has a high level of volatility and that countries with a lower FDI income as a percentage of their GDP, on the other hand, have much greater stability. She then asked the speaker to explain the phenomenon and asked whether it had to do with regulatory frameworks or other variables.

- b. Luz María de la Mora replied that the sectors that received most FDI were associated with the commodity markets and that all the countries were posting an upward trend and continued to be attractive to FDI. She added that it was correct to say that the volatility of FDI posed a risk, as FDI could enter and leave a country at any time depending on the conditions in the international market, but that this was a normal risk. She added that, the extent to which regulations were transparent, good practices were applied, and formalities were expeditious, so one would be better able to shorten the times of volatility, "which are inevitable in the global economy and that, nowadays, are seen at all times and every day." Finally, she emphasized that it was necessary to define institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks that would facilitate and promote better conditions in the countries to enable them to continue to attract investment.
- c. The Venezuelan delegation asked about handling the so-called "swallow" or speculative flight capital in the Pacific Alliance (PA), to which Luz María de la Mora replied by explaining that the financial volatility typical of this type of portfolio capital is observed in the stock market more than in productive investment because the latter has higher costs. She added that, in the Latin American Integrated Market (MILA), they were trying to create a market that would allow investors to stay in the country thanks to the attractiveness of the mechanisms offered over and above what the stock markets offered. It was a matter, she said, of creating a market that, thanks to regulatory cooperation, would facilitate the creation of those mechanisms.

Finally, she explained that MILA was currently under construction and that work was being done in terms of regulatory frameworks that would permit that integration without sacrificing macroeconomic stability or fiscal or monetary policy, while creating a regulatory framework that would permit dynamism and freedom of movement for a given sector, such as stock exchanges and pension funds.

- d. Viviana Santamaría, of SICA, pointed out that, unlike other integration schemes, the PA was more dynamic and asked the speaker how she visualized that dynamism *vis-à-vis* convergence in regulatory frameworks, because to some extent, she noted, the entry of new countries sometimes meant a step forward, but at others three steps back.
- e. Luz María de la Mora emphasized that the progress made by the AP was explained by its small number of member countries, only four, and by the close participation of the political leadership at the highest level in this process, commenting that the respective presidents met at least twice a year. However, she added, the busy agenda (now it not only includes trade, goods and services, investment, and free movement of persons, but also tourism and joint investment, business and other missions) could lead to that progress slowing down, which meant, she commented, that the work got done more slowly when there were more members. By way of illustration, she pointed out that European construction was much less expeditious today than in the past due to an overloaded agenda and the excess number of members, which, she ended by saying, if it were to happen to the PA, it could lead to a rethinking of the mechanism's institutional structure.
- f. When asked about how the customs issue was treated in the PA, she replied that, given that this mechanism was not a customs union, it did not aim to have a common customs tariff and that customs tariff agreements were done bilaterally.

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- g. Ramón París, from the Central Bank of Venezuela, commented that one of the elements that explained the progress made by the PA was its pragmatism in the way it operated, which, he argued, was evident in the fact that the border problems between some of its members did not affect the alliance and that the same could be said of conflicting political positions of long standing.
- h. The Brazilian delegation congratulated the Permanent Secretariat for holding the meeting and for the study that had been presented. It then referred to how the size of the different integration processes influenced regulatory cooperation and was of the opinion that this must have a very different meaning for each of these processes and asked: What are the differences in the harmonization of the regulatory frameworks as regards meeting the objectives of each integration process?
- i. On this matter, Virginia Cartaya replied that there was no comparison between one mechanism and the next as regards harmonization and that each one is addressed with its own strategies depending on the economies involved.
- J. In turn, Luz María de la Mora added that it was necessary to consider the level of institutional development, making special reference to juridical support.

SESSION II. HARMONIZATION OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION

This session was moderated by Virginia Cartaya, consultant to SELA, who gave a broad introduction to the subject.

The following presentations were delivered:

- a. ["Central America: Status of regional integration"](#), presented by Viviana Santamaría, consultant to SELA
- b. ["Regulatory Frameworks for the Mobility of Productive Factors in the Andean Community"](#), presented by Gustavo Guzmán Manrique, consultant to SELA
- c. ["Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in MERCOSUR: Initiatives associated with the free mobility of labour and capital"](#), presented by Celina Peña, consultant to SELA

Next, the Chairman congratulated the speakers on their presentations, highlighted and summed up the most important aspects of each, and invited the audience to give their impressions and voice their concerns about the proposals made by the speakers.

Then, a debate was held during which the following points were discussed, among others:

- a. The Bolivian delegate conveyed his thanks to the Permanent Secretariat for organizing the meeting and mentioned the Reengineering of the Andean Integration System, a process that was started in 2012.
- b. Freddy Campos, a delegate from the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV) spoke highly of the value and usefulness of the paper presented by the Permanent Secretariat. He then asked: What is the long-term vision of the integration systems in Latin America and the Caribbean? And added that, in his opinion, LAC did not seem to have a long-term vision and that there

- was no appreciable harmonization in the integration mechanisms as regards fiscal policy matters.
- c. Viviana Santamaría stated that they had fallen into the trap of very ambitious short-term goals and that, nevertheless, each country was responsible for taking advantage of all the benefits of the regional integration processes. She underlined, moreover, that not all well-being can be generated through integration processes and that there was no political leadership in the region to harmonize other aspects of development, apart from trade, such as the fiscal, social, and environmental aspects, among others. Finally, she underscored that there was responsibility on both the regional and individual levels, both from the country perspective and from the perspective of the citizen.
 - d. The Mexican delegation pointed out that all the integration processes have evolved in accordance with the scope of the regulatory instruments. It stated that there were other regional bodies that dealt with social issues and cited CELAC as an example.
 - e. The Panamanian delegation referred to the tariff union that Panama is building with Costa Rica, which aimed to be, he said, "...if not perfect, more expeditious and, therefore, more commercial, more agreeable, more social, and more economic for the area."

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the proposals contained in the study prepared by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, the contributions made by the papers presented, and the debates held, the representatives of SELA Member States reached the following conclusions and made the following recommendations:

CONCLUSIONS

- a) The study "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" (SP/RRMRMIS-ALC: AC/DT N° 2-15), prepared by the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, represents a major step forward in understanding the challenges the region faces and the opportunities it has in the matter of regulatory harmonization.
- b) Economic integration is usually understood, in the first instance, to be through trade relations that result in the trading of goods and services between the different countries. Eventually, those trade relations take on financial and human aspects that make it obligatory to think about the complementarity of the goods, capital, and labour markets.
- c) The natural counterpart to market integration is the homogenization of certain rules as a *sine qua non* for taking advantage of economies of scale, reducing information costs, and improving levels of investment.
- d) Harmonization in regulatory frameworks is a reflection of the very forces that stimulate the creation of supranational institutions to which countries delegate decisions and actions, which implies a reduction in the relative power of domestic institutions in favour of a joint vision that is considered superior.
- e) One of the main challenges facing LAC countries is identifying and characterizing the major regulatory harmonization trends that have been initiated within the different regional integration initiatives.
- f) The issues worth emphasizing in the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) are that: i) nearly all the initiatives aimed at regulating the circulation of factors have turned out to be failures or have had little impact; ii) there are no community financial or investment regulations, but there are individual regulations with third parties; iii) labour regulations are submerged in

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bureaucratic mazes; iv) current health and safety at work regulations stand out; and v) the Community is only a marginal destination for Andean migrant workers.

- g) The salient issues in the Central American Integration System (SICA) are: i) the notable progress in adopting the common external tariff and a more aggressive policy in terms of negotiations with third countries; ii) the promotion of cooperation programs in science and technology and programs for recognizing higher education qualifications; iii) each country's political-economic situation meant that some made faster progress than others in negotiations with third countries, despite the attempt to achieve a harmonized trade policy; and iv) the regulatory framework has been more a result of compliance with international standards adopted individually by each State than a process of endogenous gestation.
- h) As for MERCOSUR, some of the most outstanding aspects are: i) the efforts made to harmonize social, labour and migratory policies with a view to permitting the free movement of labour, residence, the right to work, and equal treatment; ii) the Residence Agreement as a fundamental step in the integration process, as it establishes MERCOSUR nationality as the main requirement for obtaining legal residence in the States; iii) the creation of the MERCOSUR Labour Market Observatory (OMTM) ; and iv) the creation of the High Level Group for MERCOSUR Employment Growth Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) For Latin America and the Caribbean to continue making progress in the matter of regulatory frameworks a map of similarities and differences in laws and regulations needs to be drawn up. This will make it possible to determine the gaps that still exist in the regulatory frameworks and their possible implications. For that reason it is of fundamental importance to move ahead with the statistical database that will make it possible to quantify the evolution of regional interdependencies, including not only the analysis of the regulatory framework and relevant institutions, but also the monitoring of migratory movements, FDI, and trade flows, identifying their different degrees of technological complexity, all aspects of the utmost importance for profound integration because they will allow the transactional costs of trade to be reduced, facilitate the movement of labour, stimulate FDI, and reduce economic uncertainty, all of which contributes to improving the well-being of the population.
- b) By the same token, it would be extremely useful to conduct a study that identifies, characterizes, and evaluates the different regulatory framework initiatives that have arisen in the various integration schemes in the region.
- c) With regard to the Pacific Alliance (PA), the recommendations are: i) creating work programs to promote initiatives resulting from public consultations through High Level Cooperation Councils in which both the public and private sectors take part, as well as academia; ii) promoting specific agreements for cooperation among relevant authorities in each matter, as well as coordination of the process of drawing up national regulations among the competent authorities on the national level and among the members of the PA in order to facilitate communication and cooperation among government authorities with regulatory powers; iii) creating mechanisms for disseminating information on the applicable regulations among businessmen and consumers; and iv) facilitating and promoting compliance with the regulations through agreements on the mutual recognition or harmonization of regulations and designing training courses and courses for exchanging experiences and good practices.
- d) In the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), it is necessary to reconcile the national development interests and priorities of member states while facilitating political arrangements and the establishment of institutions for administering, orienting and supervising policies and putting them into practice.

- e) In the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the construction of platforms for the development of Latin America would stimulate the capital market and promote regulations.
- f) In MERCOSUR, it is necessary to move ahead with implementing a work visa and recognition of academic qualifications, as graduate and postgraduate degrees are only recognized for continuing studies or for engaging in academic activities, but not for exercising a profession. Similarly, existing mechanisms in the area of irregular immigration need to be revised, disseminated, and activated and the statistical database needs to be improved by solving problems with inconsistency in the data.
- g) In the Central American Integration System (SICA), labour legislation and migratory policy needs to be tied in with the employment policies of each country, as an overall problem. By the same token, it is also necessary to strengthen the labour ministries
- h) It is necessary to thoroughly understand the nature and meaning of the ambitious institutional reforms that are taking place with regard to regulatory harmonization in the different integration efforts for the purpose of determining to what extent a structural change that will have a decisive influence on the economic, political, and social future of Latin America and the Caribbean is taking place in the practice of politics.

III. CLOSING SESSION

In his closing address, Telasco Pulgar thanked the speakers and delegates for their participation in the success of the meeting and highlighted the importance of SELA and the subregional Integration Secretariats continuing to work in concert on the issue of regulatory frameworks. He added that what had been done on regulatory frameworks in recent years had been done on the bilateral level, with work on the regional and multilateral levels having taken a back seat.

He added that it was necessary to move ahead towards progressive harmonization on the regional level in order to consolidate regulatory frameworks that, far from hindering the consolidation of the integration process, would facilitate it and make it viable, something that had been demonstrated in the presentations given and debates held at the meeting and that, in that regard, The Permanent Secretariat of SELA would continue to study this field in depth.

A N N E X I

AGENDA

1. BACKGROUND

One of the priority lines of action of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has been complementarity, cooperation, and coordination among existing integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In paragraph 36 of CELAC's Charter, the Caracas Declaration, the signatories decided "to commit the willingness of our governments to guide the regional mechanisms and organisations, to promote among themselves communication, cooperation, articulation, coordination, complementarity and synergy, where appropriate, and through their respective executive bodies, in order to contribute to the achievement of the integration goals set forth in this declaration..."

At the Havana Summit, held in 2014, CELAC issued a Special Declaration on Strengthening Integration, which stressed the need to "seek practical ways to strengthen the efforts made to consolidate integration through, among other things, improving the levels of articulation, complementarity, cooperation, and convergence among regional and subregional integration mechanisms..."

Understanding the concepts of articulation, cooperation, coordination, and complementarity, both in theory and in practice, is of particular interest for the progress of Latin America's and the Caribbean's integration process. Likewise, generating a deep understanding of the economic and institutional factors that could facilitate or impede effective coordination among regional integration mechanisms is of fundamental importance.

In this regard, SELA, in its continuing interest in consolidating the economic integration of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, has organized this regional meeting for the purpose of presenting an analytical study of the regulatory frameworks of the subregional integration schemes and their progress towards harmonization and convergence. The existence of dissimilar elements in the legal and regulatory frameworks of the countries party to a trade agreement could mean a barrier to integration as conceived of in the subregional mechanisms. The existence of a uniform regulatory framework, on the other hand, would tend to reinforce competition, facilitate the entry of productive factors, and stimulate investment, all seeking greater economic growth for the regions and, via this path, fostering the growth of the population's socio-economic well-being.

The document prepared by SELA does an individual and joint characterization of the regulatory basis of the countries making up the Pacific Alliance (PA), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Subsequently, the Permanent Secretariat will prepare documents that will address existing regulations in other non-conventional integration mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the meeting is to evaluate the degrees of harmonization of the main markets' regulatory frameworks within the different subregional integration mechanisms. An analysis will be conducted of the achievements attained and the challenges they face in making progress towards a deeper integration. This event is an excellent opportunity for defining medium- and long-term strategies, doing a follow-up, and analysing the impact of the institutional changes in this matter.

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3. DOCUMENTS

The Permanent Secretariat will present the analytical document "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence," which will serve as the basis for the exchange of opinions and the debates during the event. Papers will also be presented by experts on each of the subregional schemes mentioned.

4. PARTICIPANTS

Participants in this meeting include representatives of SELA Member States and regional and international bodies, as well as experts in the matter.

5. VENUE AND DATE

The meeting will be held on Friday 11 December 2015 at the headquarters of The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, located at the following address: Ave. Francisco de Miranda, Torre Europa, Piso 5, Sala Andrés Bello, Urbanización Campo Alegre, Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Friday, 11 November 2015**Morning**

9:00 – 9:30

REGISTRATION

9:30 – 10:00

OPENING SESSION

Speech by José Carlos Herodier, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of El Salvador in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and First Vice-Chairman of the Latin American Council of SELA

Speech by Telasco Pulgar, Director (a.i.) of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

10:00 – 11:40**SESSION I: HARMONIZATION OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

10:00 – 10:10

Moderator: Telasco Pulgar, Director (a.i.) of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

10:10 – 10:40

Presentation of the introductory chapter of the document "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" by Virginia Cartaya, consultant to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

10:40 – 11:10

Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)", by Ankei Scott-Joseph (consultant)

11:10 – 11:40

Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Pacific Alliance (PA)", by Luz María de la Mora (consultant)

11:40 – 13:00

DEBATE

14**Afternoon**

13:00 – 14:00

BUFFET LUNCH

14:00 – 15:40**SESSION II. HARMONIZATION OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

14:00 – 14:10

Moderator: Virginia Cartaya, consultant of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

14:10 – 14:40

Presentation of the chapter "[Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Andean Community \(CAN\)](#)" by Gustavo Guzmán Manrique (consultant)

14:40 – 15:10

Presentation of the chapter "[Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Central American Integration System \(SICA\)](#)" by Viviana Santamaría (consultant)

15:10 – 15:40

Presentation of the chapter "[Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Common Market of the South \(MERCOSUR\)](#)" by Celina Pena (consultant)

15:40 – 17:00

DEBATE

17:00 – 17:30**CLOSING SESSION**

Speech by José Carlos Herodier, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of El Salvador in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and First Vice-Chairman of the Latin American Council of SELA

Speech by Telasco Pulgar, Director (a.i.) of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

A N N E X I I

**SPEECH BY JOSÉ CARLOS HERODIER, CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES OF THE EMBASSY
OF EL SALVADOR IN THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
AND FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF SELA**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Latin American integration is the series of actions for the purpose of consolidating the integration of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in accordance with their similarities, which may be political, social, economic, cultural, religious, linguistic, ideological, or geographical, among others. These actions usually consist of agreements among the different republics making up the subcontinent, in which the different previous agreements are realized, renewed or eliminated. Those agreements have diplomatic, economic and political ends.

The states of Latin America share, to a greater or lesser degree, similar historic periods: conquest, colonization, and independence. Following independence, the majority of the countries had political instability, which ended up in authoritarian governments of a conservative bent. After struggles that were not always peaceful, liberal governments prevailed throughout much of the 19th century. The 20th century was witness to the appearance of the middle classes and the social struggles of the deprived sectors of society against the governing oligarchies in all the countries. After World War One there were military dictatorships or populist governments. During the 1960s guerrilla groups and new military dictatorships emerged and in the 1990s there was an inverse process with the emergence of democracies. These and other common processes (such as migrations) have left Latin Americans with the notion of belonging to the same Great Fatherland.

Today, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) held the "Regional Meeting on Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence" for the purpose of evaluating the degrees of harmonization of regulatory frameworks in the integration mechanisms of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the Pacific Alliance (PA).

On the occasion of this meeting, a systematic study of the regulatory frameworks in the regional integration mechanisms will be initiated for the purpose of defining medium- and long-term strategies, following up on institutional changes, and evaluating their impact in the region.

Similarly, this meeting will analyse the achievements attained by the regional blocs and the challenges they face in making progress towards a deeper integration, by means of the document prepared by SELA "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence," which includes studies conducted by the consultants Gustavo Guzmán Manrique, Andean Community of Nations (CAN); Celina Pena, Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR); Ankie Scott-Joseph, Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Viviana Santamaría, Central American Integration System (SICA); Luz María de la Mora, Pacific Alliance (PA); and Virginia Cartaya, SELA.

If "harmonizing" is getting two or more things to agree with one another, "convergence" is the coinciding of ideas and social, political, cultural or economic trends. Consequently, the harmonization and convergence of subregional integration mechanisms will be the interesting and edifying subject about which we are getting ready to listen today in the different chapters that experts in the matter are to present.

Thank you very much.

A N N E X I I I

**SPEECH BY TELASCO PULGAR, DIRECTOR (A.I.) OF RELATIONS FOR INTEGRATION
AND COOPERATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF SELA**

Honourable José Carlos Herodier, Chargé d’Affaires of the Republic of El Salvador in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and First Vice-Chairman of the Latin American Council of SELA;

Honourable Pablo Pinto, Vice-Minister of Finance and Public Budget of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Honourable Ambassadors and Representatives of SELA Member States;

Honourable Representatives of Regional and Subregional Integration Organisations and Alliances of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Honourable Latin American and Caribbean Experts;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Ambassador Roberto Guarnieri, I have great pleasure in giving you the most cordial welcome to this Home of Latin America and the Caribbean and thanking you for the huge response that our invitation has had to this important “Regional Meeting on Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence,” a subject of particular relevance in the process of integration of our nations.

For SELA, the importance of moving ahead with the articulation, complementarity, cooperation, and convergence of regional and subregional integration mechanisms has become a priority since the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Caracas in 2011, given that it is an explicit mandate of its charter.

At the Havana CELAC Summit held in 2014, a Special Declaration on Strengthening Integration was approved in which Member States issued a collective call to “...seek practical ways to strengthen the efforts made to consolidate integration through, among other things, enhancing the levels of articulation, complementarity, cooperation, and convergence between the regional and subregional integration mechanisms and the Presidencies and Pro Tempore Secretariats of those mechanisms.”

Specifically, and within the context of the subject that brings us together today, it is common knowledge that very different legal-regulatory frameworks tend to become barriers and obstacles not only to trade and competition, but also to the movement of capital and the human factor, adversely affecting economic growth and, ultimately, social well-being in the countries involved.

Hence the importance of studying the harmonization of the regulatory frameworks in greater depth and moving towards future actions that will lead to the elimination or narrowing of the existing gap between the need for coordination and the advances made in this matter, so as to achieve homogenization of the legal framework within the integration mechanisms in which our countries take part. One way or another, all Latin American and Caribbean countries take part in an integration agreement, whether regional or subregional, so the issue of regulatory frameworks affects us all.

On this occasion, The Permanent Secretariat of SELA is pleased to present the analytical study “Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the

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Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence," prepared by the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA with the valuable contribution of Latin American and Caribbean experts in the matter, which describes the present state of the regulatory frameworks of the countries making up the five subregional integration mechanisms under study: the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Pacific Alliance (PA), and the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). The study concerns itself with the legal basis that regulates investment, both financial and physical, the labour market, migratory policy, and competition policy in each case.

Each of the chapters of this study will be presented by the distinguished specialists who are accompanying us today and whose presence we greatly appreciate. These presentations will be complemented by different experts from Mexico and Colombia via the Internet.

The papers contained in this compilation offer a clear and comprehensive overview of the advances and challenges in the dynamic that the legal framework imposes on the existing subregional agreements in the spheres mentioned, with the purpose of highlighting the similarities and differences that contribute to or hinder the process of articulation and convergence of integration in our region and the need for a progressive harmonization of the legal structure, taking into account some initiatives that are already under way in the region.

The findings presented in the different chapters of this piece of research aim to contribute to orienting decision-making in regulatory matters insofar as they identify fields of action, the most urgent needs, and areas of opportunity. While the findings presented do not pretend to be limitative when it comes to the designing of public policies in the countries involved, they could contribute to raising the debate on the problems posed by the asymmetries in the regulatory structures of the subregional integration mechanisms.

It only remains for me to wish you every success in your deliberations and hope that the space for dialogue and exchange is conducive to productive debate in seeking solutions to the challenges posed by one of the top priority issues of regional integration.

Thank you very much.

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

SP/RRMRMIS-ALC: AC/DT N° 1-15	Agenda
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/DT N° 2-15	<p>"Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence"</p> <p>Virginia Cartaya, Consultant of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 1-15	<p>Speech by José Carlos Herodier</p> <p>Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of El Salvador in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and First Vice Chairman of the Latin American Council</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 2-15	<p>Speech by Telasco Pulgar</p> <p>Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation (a.i.) of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 3-15	<p>Presentation of the introductory chapter of the document "Regulatory Frameworks in the subregional integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean: Harmonization and Convergence"</p> <p>Virginia Cartaya. Consultant of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 4-15	<p>Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)"</p> <p>Ankie Scott-Joseph, Professor of the Department of Economics of the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus, Barbados</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 5-15	<p>Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Pacific Alliance (PA)"</p> <p>Luz María de la Mora, Director and Vice-Chair of LMM Consulting. International Affairs. Fundación Colosio, AC</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 6-15	<p>Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Andean Community (CAN)"</p> <p>Gustavo Guzmán Manrique, Internationalist, Consultant, Business Adviser, University Professor</p>

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SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 7-15	<p>Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Central American Integration System (SICA)"</p> <p>Viviana Santamaría, Consultant in International Trade. Founding partner of the consulting firm CA Trade Consulting Group</p>
SP/RRMRMIS-ALC:AC/Di N° 8-15	<p>Presentation of the chapter "Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)"</p> <p>Celina Pena, Independent External Consultant for several international organizations (IDB, INTAL, ALADI, UNDP)</p>
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